



# FAMILY MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

TRAINING MANUAL

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***CERTIFICATION***  
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A General Conference Department of Family Ministries publication

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# Preface

It is our joy to launch the Family Ministries Leadership Certification Program. We hope that with this 50-hour basic training program many more will join the ranks of family life educators throughout the world field.

The family was created by God as a center for discipleship, nurture, guidance, love, affection, and many other relational realities and it continues to be a principal target of the evil one. To be sure, marriage continues to decline as an option in the West as well as in developing nations all over the world. Out-of-wedlock births, the ongoing high rate of divorce, the skyrocketing rate of unmarried cohabitation and alternative living arrangements, all call for more attention to family, the foundation of our society.

To this end the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs a multitude of trained facilitators who can help bring healing to the brokenness in our midst. Our hope is that this resource will help us accomplish a very important part of this vision as training events proliferate across the 13 world divisions and attached fields.

We take this opportunity to thank Karen and Ron Flowers, former directors of the Department of Family Ministries of the General Conference, for their labor of love in gathering and developing much of the information in this resource during their time in office. We stand on their shoulders and other Family Ministries ancestors who walked this

road before the Flowers, who developed materials to help strengthen families in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and beyond.

It is a verified truism, when we have strong marriages we are more likely to have strong families. And strong families are still more likely to disciple their children in the ways of the Lord, practice faithful stewardship, and have a strong witness to share with their relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Ellen White's declaration of more than a hundred years ago is still applicable today: "One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached" (The Adventist Home, p. 32).

Our prayer is that God will bless the efforts employed to develop this leadership training resource, by adding to our church hundreds and probably thousands of additionally trained Family Ministries workers who will join those already committed to the task of stronger and healthier families. With more hands the work of making a difference will be lighter as we help hasten the coming of Jesus Christ.

Maranatha!

Willie and Elaine Oliver, Directors  
Department of Family Ministries  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
Silver Spring, Maryland



# Certification Program Requirements

- The ten modules contained in the Family Ministries Leadership Certification Program should contain 50 contact hours consisting of lectures and reading assignments. Therefore, 5 hours should be allotted to each module.
- Each module training lecture should be 3 hours maximum.
- Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:
  - Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
  - Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
  - Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.
- The independent learning of Module 10 should include a practicum, where the new Family Ministries Leader actually presents a Family Ministries seminar (not to exceed 45 minutes) to a group. The remaining hour may be used preparing the presentation.
- When a student attends all lectures and fulfills the independent learning requirements of all ten modules, and has had their program card completed and signed, he/she is eligible to receive Family Ministries Leadership Certification.

Certificates will be presented by the Mission, Conference, Union, or Division Family Ministries office.



## Session Program Outline

The Family Ministries Leadership Certification Program may be offered over 2 weekends, one-week or two-week schedule, or as arranged by the organizing group.





## Module 1

# Biblical and Theological Foundations for Family Ministries

## Introduction

*“Family Ministries upholds the biblical teaching related to the family and lifts up God’s ideal for family living. At the same time, it brings an understanding of the brokenness experienced by individuals and families in a fallen world...It fosters reconciliation between the generations promised in the Elijah message of Malachi 4:5, 6 and extends hope and support to those who have been hurt by abuse, family dysfunction, and broken relationships.”*  
(Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, Revised 2010)

This course on biblical foundations will look at several aspects of the relationship between the Bible and our work for families:

- How to make the most of the Bible as our textbook and discover the ways truth for family living has been revealed in Scripture.
- An introduction to a biblical theology of the family.

- A consideration of several major motifs in Scripture which serve as pillars for ministry to families.

## The Bible as a Textbook on Family Relationships

Family ministries helps the church to take a fresh look at Scripture, to put on what we might call “family glasses” and to see in the Word of God its profound teachings about family relationships. This new look will not restrict or impair our theological vision; it will cast a relational hue over familiar passages upon which we may not have focused in such a special way.

### Relational directives

Scripture presents its view of human relationships in a variety of ways. The first example of Scripture teaching on family can be found in what are called relational directives. Relational directives are commands intended to create a basic framework for living in relationship with fellow human beings. These are scattered

throughout Scripture and can be grouped into several categories. Some are very generic and apply broadly to all relationships, others are more specifically directed toward people in particular relationships—married couples, parents, children, neighbors, friends. A good example of a generic relational directive is the golden rule: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

Other examples include the following:

- “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:40).
- “Love your enemies” (Luke 6:27).
- “In humility consider others better than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3).
- “Live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18).
- “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).

There are specific relational directives for families. Consider these references to marriage:

- “Rejoice in the wife of your youth” (Proverbs 5:18).
- “Wives, submit to your husband as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...” (Ephesians 5:22-25).
- “Husbands ... be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life ...” (1 Peter 3:7).

Several directives address parents, for example:

- “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your heart. Impress them on your children. Talk about them ...” (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).
- “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Children also receive directives:

- “Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction; pay attention and gain understanding” (Proverbs 4:1).
- “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord” (Colossians 3:20).

At least three of the decalogue directives, the ten commandments, are specifically intended to protect, preserve and enhance life in the family:

- “Honor your father and your mother ...” (Exodus 20:12).
- “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14).
- “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife” (Deuteronomy 5:21).

All of the biblical directives regarding our relationships presuppose that the good news of God’s love and grace has been received in our hearts. God’s directives are set within the context of life in the redeemed community of His people. They are intended to be a response to the salvation He has provided (Exodus 20:2). “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15).



## GROUP EXERCISE

Among other things, the Bible is a textbook on human relationships, particularly family relationships.

God created family relationships to be a blessing. Yet in today's world, alienation and tension often exist between family members. Select one of the following areas of family life. List the family relationship principles you discover in the texts. What key directives do these texts provide to your family?

### Husband's Responsibilities To Wife

Gen 1:28; 2:24, 3:17-19; cf 2 Thes 3:10; 1 Tim 5: 8; Rom 7:2-3; Eph 5:25-31, 33; Col 3:19; 1 Pet 3:7; 1 Cor 7:3-5.

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### Wife's Responsibilities to Husband

Gen 2: 18-24; 3:16; Ex 20:14; Mal 2:14; Mat 20:25-8; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Cor 7:3-5; 11:3; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:22; 4:33; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 5:14; Tit 2:4-5; Heb 13:4; 1 Pet 3:1-7.

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### Parental Responsibilities to Children

Gen 18:19; Deut 4:9-10; 6:6-9; 1 Sam 2:22-5; 3:13; Ps 127:3-5; 128:1-4; Prov 13:24; 19:18, 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; Mat 12:25; Lk 15:20-24; Eph 6:4; 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15; Heb 12:5-11; Jam 2: 8-9, 12.

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### Children's Responsibilities to Their Parents

Ex 20:12; 2 Chron 26:3-4; Prov 1 :8; 6:20-23; 15:5; 23:22; Mat 15:4; Lk 2:51; Jn 19:25-27; Acts 5:29; Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20; 1 Tim 5:4, 8, 16; 2 Tim 3:1-2.

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### Relational laws and probabilities

A very different category of scriptural instruction about relationships, including relationships in the family, is found in the Bible's presentation of relational laws and probabilities. The book of Proverbs is the greatest collection of this material. Here are unfolded universal psychological principles, insights into the

laws implanted within human beings by the Creator which govern emotional and social responses. Ellen G. White has noted that all parts of the human organism including "the senses, the faculties of the mind ... were placed under law" (The Ministry of Healing, p. 415). Here are a few samples of this kind of scriptural material:

- “An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up” (Proverbs 12:25).
- “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).
- “Gossip separates close friends” (Proverbs 16:28).
- “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Many of these statements are not so much promises or guaranteed responses as they are probabilities. It’s as if we’re being told, “Given the complexity of the human mind and emotions, this is what is likely to occur when such-and-such happens.” To understand and apply the insights we can gain from these relational laws and probabilities is to discover the divinely revealed keys to improved relationships in our families.

### Narratives

The narratives or stories of Scripture are one of the primary ways truth about family relationships

is conveyed. Stories and parables are universally appreciated as a means of conveying lessons to people of all ages. The actual historical stories of individuals and families are intended to instruct and inspire us (Romans 15:4), to rebuke, correct and train us in right living (2 Timothy 3:16). We find ourselves in these stories and parables; we take comfort that our life experience is not unique.

Somehow, hearing very forthrightly about the human weaknesses and mistakes of others, our minds become receptive and we learn how we can avoid some pitfalls. Thus we grow from the errors and failures portrayed in the family lives of Bible characters. We also recognize their good qualities and seek to model our lives after them. We marvel in the long suffering of God with them and take courage that He will do the same with us.

The book of Ruth is an example of a biblical story that reveals much about family living and the needs of individuals in families. From it we can also learn something about ministry to families.



### GROUP EXERCISE

Divide into four groups, with each group having as its assignment the reading and study of one chapter of the book of Ruth. Each group will read and discuss its assigned chapter, listing the family-related issues that are indicated or suggested by the chapter. Summarize as a whole group after all have had an appropriate length of time (approx. 10 minutes) to complete their assignment.

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## The Song of Solomon

One whole Bible book is devoted to unfolding the mysteries of human bonding and the delights of conjugal love in marriage. Some of Scripture's best insights on how we form and maintain close relationships, especially in marriage, are found in this special piece of divinely inspired Hebrew poetry. In the Song of Solomon we discover that the God who created human sexuality in the beginning and declared it to be very good (Genesis 1:31) has not changed His mind about the unitive purpose of the conjugal relationship.

**The delights of love in marriage.** Though the Song has frequently been treated allegorically as a symbol of the relationship of God and His people or of Christ and the Church, it is first of all a poem on the love found in the very real human relationship of a man and woman. Solomon and Shulamith court (2:8-14), wed (3:6-11), consummate their marriage (4:12-5:1) and continue to enjoy each other's charms (5:10-16; 7:1-9). Within the Song can be found a portrayal of male-female differences in emotional and sexual response. We find also examples of the kind of communication that facilitates intimacy. Some of the anxieties that accompany marital difficulties and conflict are also portrayed (1:7; 3:2, 3; 5:6, 7).

**Compelling evidence for premarital chastity.** Some of Scripture's most compelling evidence for God's plan that we remain sexually chaste until marriage is found in the Song of Solomon. We find references to Shulamith's childhood, when her brothers wondered whether she would be a "wall" or a "door" (8:8, 9), i.e., whether she would remain chaste until marriage or be promiscuous. As an adult woman, she affirms that she has maintained her chastity and comes unspoiled to her husband: "I am a wall..." (8:10). Her husband asserts on their wedding night that she is "a garden enclosed ... a spring shut

up, a fountain sealed" (4:12), i.e., a virgin. On three occasions in the Song, when the couple has been sexually intimate, a poetic device is used whereby Shulamith addresses a group of women called the "daughters of Jerusalem." In these instances, she counsels them to not arouse the intense passion of love until the appropriate time (2:7; 3:5; 8:4), i.e., until they find themselves safely within the intimate covenant of marriage as is she.

**The structural key to understanding the Song.** It is helpful to understand that the Song of Solomon does not unfold the relationship of the couple chronologically. Rather, this remarkable piece of biblical literature is fashioned according to a unique poetic structure called a chiasm (See Handout #1 The Chiastic Structure of the Song of Solomon). Rhythm in Hebrew poetry is achieved through parallelism. One kind of parallelism arranges parallel thoughts in reverse order. This kind of parallelism has been called chiasmic, from the Greek letter X (chi) with its crossing lines. The poetic form has a point of intersection around which the material is organized. The segments on one side of the chiasm's intersection are generally arranged in reverse order to those of the opposite side. Corresponding sections show similarity in content or contain parallel ideas. The intersecting point of the chiasm represents the hub or central statement and serves as a key to understanding the meaning of the whole. The mid-point in the Song of Solomon comes at 4:16-5:1. Exactly 111 lines of Hebrew poetry precede 4:16 and 111 lines of Hebrew poetry follow 5:1.

## Developing a Biblical Theology of the Family

As we consider the Bible as our source for a framework to understand God's plan for marriage and family, it will be important to remember that

the Bible is the combined product of a special divine-human interaction: “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21, NKJV). In the Scriptures the divine mind and will are combined with the human mind and will. The utterances of man are the word of God. The writers were “holy,” used by God for a special purpose, yet were fallen human beings “with a nature like ours” (cf. James 5:17; 1 Timothy 1:15). The very Bible they penned is the record of God’s relationship with people whose natures and circumstances were shaped by the presence of sin. Coexisting together within the pages of the Word of God are both the way the world is and the way it should be.

### First and second messages

Scripture reveals God’s creation intent for family living. That is what we call the first message of Scripture. The Bible also tells the tale of family relationships gone sour. It tells of a God who is longsuffering with imperfection and preserves in His Word the saga of less-than-ideal family relationships. It tells of a God whose absolute love for human beings and His redemptive intent are equally unchangeable with His creation intent. This is Scripture’s second message. In Jesus Christ, God’s creation intent and His redemptive intent are bound together (Psalm 85:10; 1 John 2:1, 2). Scripture ever holds in tension the divine ideals on the one hand and the divine reaching down to human frailty and brokenness on the other. There is compassion for the frailty and yet commitment to the ideals. Our ministry to families must cope with the same tension. We must minister to families where they are, yet always with an awareness of the loftiness of their calling in Christ, a goal that is shaped by the continual searching for and unfolding of the divine ideals.

### Christ’s ministry our pattern

In the redemptive ministry of Jesus we find our pattern for holding ideals and realities together in an appropriate tension. Christ constantly elevated the divine ideals, as for example in the Sermon on the Mount sequence of Matthew 5:21-48 when He repeats, “You have heard it said ... but I say ...” Yet in His ministry to people, He was often misunderstood as setting ideals aside for compassion and fellowship. He was able to take a woman caught in the very act of adultery and say, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” He mingled (dare we say “partied”) with the gluttonous and the wine drinkers (Matthew 11:19). He was often found discussing and teaching in the midst of the “problem” people of his time—tax collectors, outcasts, lepers, and demoniacs. Of such ministry He once said, “Wisdom is justified by her offspring” (Matthew 11:19). Perhaps He meant that the wisdom of His course of action would be borne out by the response of those to whom He brought hope and healing. He ministered to people in all walks of life—a couple on their wedding day, a disconsolate mother who had lost her only son, two grieving sisters, a five-time divorcee, a learned rabbi struggling in secret with great internal upheaval. No doubt Jesus wished to bring people into a full understanding of His message and God’s ideals, however, He seemed content to lead them as far as they could go at the time and to trust that the seed thus planted would yield an abundant harvest.

### Family: Human expression of the relational nature of God

If we excavate to the foundations of the Biblical understanding of family we find that it is an expression of the self-giving love and relational nature of God. “God is love” declares the apostle John (1 John 4:8, 16), that is, His nature is that of agape—

self-giving love. In His Word God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This perfectly harmonious and loving Trinity exemplifies the essence of self-giving love which finds expression through the fellowship of persons in relationship.

In the beginning of Creation the triune God speaks, “Let us make mankind in Our image, according to our likeness ...” (Genesis 1:26). Humanity is thus fashioned with the capacity and need for harmonious and loving relationships integral to their very being, reflecting the Creator’s own relational nature and thus bringing glory to Him. Scripture affirms that human beings were not created for isolation, but for intimately satisfying interpersonal relationships. “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Elsewhere the Bible tells us, “God sets the lonely in families” (Psalm 68:5, 6). Family is the word which Scripture uses to describe such human fellowship. “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named ...” says Paul (Ephesians 3:15). Whether in this macro, cosmic sense or in the micro relationships of our individual families, the ideal of Scripture that these relationships be characterized by companionship and self-giving love is the same. The safeguard and surety of these relationships was a sustained, loving relationship with the Creator (1 John 4:7-12).

Broken relationships between the Creator and humankind and among human beings were the tragic outcome of the Fall into sin. “Your iniquities have separated you from your God,” states Isaiah 59:2. Mistrust, hostility and estrangement marked family living from the time sin entered human hearts. Genesis 3 records the blaming, defensiveness and struggle for power that emerged between the first husband and wife. A few verses later, Genesis 4 records the tragedy of the murder of Abel by his older brother Cain.

Jesus’ mission to earth was one of restoring agape-love relationships. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,” He taught. “This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40). Elsewhere He said, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Christ established His Church as an ongoing extension of His work in healing and restoring broken relationships. The New Testament repeatedly calls believers to recover through faith in Christ the original creation ideals (Colossians 3:1, 2, 8-10).

### **Toward a theology of family**

Several major assumptions drawn from biblical study and theological reflection undergird Christian family relationships.

1. God is a relational being who has made human beings for relationships (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18; Ephesians 1:4-6; Revelation 4:11). God often reveals Himself to us in family terms. From Him we learn of marriage (Isaiah 54:5) and the parent-child relationship (Deuteronomy 1:31; John 20:17).
2. The family was instituted by the Creator as His primary setting for human development and nurturance (Genesis 2:18-25; Psalm 68:5, 6). Since family is the primary place where the capacity for love and intimacy with God and other human beings is developed and where spiritual values are transmitted across generations, it is central to the disciple making process (Matthew 28:19; John 8:31; 13:35).



3. The image of God is expressed in human beings as male and female. The Creator's act of bringing the two together as equals in a monogamous, heterosexual union established the pattern for marriage. This union provides for companionship, fulfillment and the perpetuation of the human family (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18, 21-25). The relationship of the sexes in marriage has been distorted by sin (Genesis 3:16), but redeemed by Christ (Matthew 20:26, 27; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:21-31). Christ makes a difference in the marriage of Christians. A mutuality prevails that restores the Edenic ideal. Husbands and wives are "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7).
4. The covenant of marriage rests on principles of love, loyalty, exclusivity, trust and support upheld by both partners (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 5:21-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7). When these principles are violated through abuse, abandonment or other instances of unfaithfulness to the marriage vow, the essence of the marriage covenant is endangered. Despite the high biblical ideals for marriage and the divine power that is available to enable marital commitment to endure, some individuals will not survive in marriage. At times, irretrievable breakdown of the marriage can occur. Scripture acknowledges that tragic circumstances may destroy the marriage covenant. Jesus taught that the marriage covenant may be irreparably broken through sexual immorality (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Paul indicated that death brings the marriage covenant to an end (Romans 7:2, 3), as does desertion by an unbelieving partner no longer willing to be married (1 Corinthians 7:15). The above do not exhaust the destructive factors that may lead to brokenness and divorce. Despite the heartbreak, loss, disruption and long term consequences of divorce, within the context of redemption, divorce and marriage to another that may follow are not viewed as unpardonable sins beyond which there is no spiritual life and fellowship. Through repentance, confession, and the appropriate bearing of responsibility, grace can bring assurance of pardon, healing and new beginnings (1 John 1:9; 2:1).
5. While marriage is a part of God's original plan, singleness is within the divine design as well. It may be in the best interest of certain individual Christians to live singly (1 Corinthians 7:7). God's special acceptance and protection are over those who by choice or circumstances face life alone (Psalm 68:5, 6; James 1:27). Friendship is a source of intimacy and of experiencing family. The fellowship of the Church, the household of God, is available to all regardless of their married state (1 John 1:3).
6. Our sexuality lies at the heart of our essence as human beings (Genesis 1:27). Our gender qualities find expression in many arenas of our existence. Sexual intimacy, however, is reserved for marriage (1 Corinthians 7:2-6). Expression outside of marriage is contrary to the divine purpose (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 5:1-18; 1 Corinthians 6:15, 16). Sexuality serves a unitive function in marriage which is distinguishable from the procreative function. Joy, pleasure and delight are intended for married sexuality (Ecclesiastes 9:9; Proverbs 5:18, 19; Song of Solomon 4:16-5:1). God intends that couples have on-going sexual communion apart from that utilized for procreation (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). This strengthens and protects marriage from inappropriate bonding with one other than one's spouse (Proverbs 5:15-20; Song of Solomon 8:6, 7).
7. Bearing children is an option through which couples who are able and choose to do so

participate in the blessing God intended children to be (Psalm 127:3-5). While marriages generally yield offspring (Genesis 1:28), procreation is not viewed as an obligation incumbent upon every couple in order to please God. God values children (Matthew 19:14). Children help parents understand about loving and trusting God (Psalm 103:13). They encourage the development of sympathy, caring, humility, and unselfishness in families (Psalm 127:3-5; Luke 11:13). Parents are to provide, teach, and correct their children so they may come to know God, choose biblical values and be prepared for responsible interdependence with others (Deuteronomy 6:6-25; Proverbs 22:6).

8. God's covenant love with His people is the basic principle which undergirds and serves as an illustration for Christian family life. In God's covenant we experience love, forgiveness, commitment, acceptance, intimacy, and even sacrifice, that our deepest needs might be met. As we experience the Gospel and seek to reflect it in our families, our relationships with each other are fashioned after the likeness of the divine relationship with humanity. Christian family members are called to love, to serve one another, and to forgive just as He loves, serves and forgives us. Strength and grace from God are promised to accomplish that to which God calls us (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 20:26-28; Ephesians 4:32; Hebrew 8:10-12; 1 John 3:16).
9. Broken relationships with God and with fellow humans were the tragic outcome of the Fall (Isaiah 59:2). Jesus' mission restored agape-love relationships (Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:35; 15:12). His Church is an extension of His work in maintaining strong relationships and restoring those who have been damaged (John 20:21). As part of its mission, the Church seeks to be an active agent

in building, maintaining agape-love relationships and in healing and restoring relationships that have been broken (John 10:10; 20:21; Galatians 6:2; James 5:15).

## Pillars Undergirding Family Ministries

### PILAR 1:

#### The Spiritual Significance of Relationships

A rabbi once asked his students, "How can you tell the moment of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?" His students pondered the question. One replied, "Is it when you can tell the difference between a vine and a fig tree?" "No," replied the rabbi. Said another, "Is it when you can tell a dog from a sheep?" "No," said their teacher. "Then we do not know," chimed the students, "Please tell us." "It is when you are able to look into the face of another human being and recognize him as your brother," responded the rabbi. "Until then, the darkness is still with us."

Whether this discerning rabbi had read 1 John 2:10, 11 we do not know, but he echoed its profound truth: "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light ..." The first foundational pillar for family ministry is the biblical injunction that we love one another (John 15:12). It has been said that Family Ministries is the custodian of the Church's relational theology. Family Ministries focuses on the building of close family relationships, especially in the home, but also in the church family.

**Jesus elevated human relationships to a high moral plane parallel with our relationship to God.** (Matthew 22:37-40). As was true in the time of Christ, religious convictions and customs today can often stand in the way of basic human caring and

compassion (Mark 3:1-5; 7:10-13; Luke 13:10-17). In some religious systems, the human connection with the divine becomes all important, often to the minimization or exclusion of human to human relationships. Jesus taught that the way we relate to one another has deep moral significance in the eyes of God. (Matthew 5:23, 24; 25:34-40). As prophets of old had done and apostles later would do, He focused upon human relationships as integral to spiritual life.

In doing this, He affirmed what God had revealed to prophets of old (Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:10) and would again reveal to the writers of the New Testament (Romans 12:10; Ephesians 4:32; I John 3:23; 4:21). At one point, Paul summed up the whole law as being fulfilled in love for our fellow humans (Galatians 5:14). He understood that this is the true evidence of whether we love God. Love for one another presupposes a loving relationship with God, in which He pours His love into our hearts enabling us to love others (Romans 5:5; I John 4:7-11).

We are to be courteous toward all men, tenderhearted and sympathetic; for this was the character Christ manifested when on earth. The more closely we are united with Jesus Christ, the more tender and affectionate will be our conduct toward one another (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 377).

#### **Jesus reaffirmed the family as an institution.**

Marriage and family are primary structures for human relationships which were instituted in Eden for the benefit of humanity. Jesus, by His reference to families and family members, reaffirmed the institution of the family.

**Jesus affirmed marriage.** When discussing marriage, Jesus affirmed God's plan by pointing His hearers back to the creation of this institution and God's commandments regarding it (Matthew 5:27-

32; 19:4, 5; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 18:20. cf. Genesis 1:27; 2:24). At Cana, Jesus announced that His ministry would endorse and uphold marriage as it was meant to be (John 2:1-12). "He who gave Eve to Adam as a helpmeet, performed His first miracle at a marriage festival ... Thus He sanctioned marriage, recognizing it as an institution that He Himself had established" (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 356). "Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 64).

**Jesus affirmed children.** Jesus loves children. While on Earth He identified closely with them, bade them come to Him, elevated their faith as the standard for entrance into His kingdom, and issued a severe warning to anyone who would cause their feet to stumble. His statements indicate that their families are extremely important to them. There they are to be treated with dignity, respect, and love (Matthew 18:3; Mark 9:37, 42; 10:14, 15). "Children are the heritage of the Lord, and we are answerable to Him for our management of His property" (Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 159). "Christ placed such a high estimate upon your children that He gave His life for them. Treat them as the purchase of His blood. Patiently and firmly train them for Him. Discipline with love and forbearance" (Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 279).

**Jesus affirmed family life and family responsibilities.** Jesus affirmed the responsibility of adult children toward their parents by citing the fifth commandment as He rebuked the Pharisees for the practice of corban, an offering which enabled adult children to skirt their appropriate financial duty toward parents (Mark 7:9-13). Touched by the

death of the widow's son and recognizing that she would be all alone in the world with no male family member to care for her in her old age, Jesus showed compassion on her by raising her son from the dead (Luke 7:11-17). Later, He made arrangements for the care of His own mother at the time of His crucifixion by commending her into the care of John and commending him to her (John 19:26, 27).

### THE "DIFFICULT SAYINGS"

It should be noted that there are several references by Jesus to family relationships which have been called "difficult sayings" (Garland and Pancoast, 1990). Some verses seem to imply that Jesus "cared little for the relations of kinship" of His own family (Mark 3:33-35; Luke 11:27, 28; John 2:4) or the families of others (Matthew 10:35-38; Luke 9:59-62; 14:26; 18:29, 30; 20:34-36). David Garland discusses each of the difficult sayings of Jesus regarding the family and concludes that Jesus did not hold a view of family that was subversive, nor did He see the family as a petty concern or an impediment to commitment to God. Far from undercutting the valuable nurture, support and strength to be gained from membership in families, Jesus addressed the exclusive attitudes of those who trusted implicitly in biological kinship. He redefined family loyalties, putting them in perspective against the higher loyalty to God. He opened the way for service to God to be done, not only within the structure of the biological family, but also in the wider circle of the church, the family of God.

Have participants use concordances to search for "one another" passages in the New Testament or use Handout # 2 "New Testament One Anotherings" and invite participants to discuss the emphasis that the Bible places on human relationships as indicated in these verses.

### PILAR 2:

#### The Elijah Message: A heart-turning message for the time of the end

At the close of the Old Testament writings we find the prediction that before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," which we believe to be the Second Coming of Christ, the Lord will send His people a message which will "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," i.e., it will be a reviving, reconciling message which will draw families together across generations (Malachi 4:5, 6). Here is a prophetic message that undergirds family ministry.

**The original message of Elijah.** A study of the first Elijah and his ministry can help us understand what the final Elijah message is about. Beginning with his very name, which means in Hebrew "Jehovah is my God," everything about Elijah and his work was a foundational attack on the pagan worship of Baal. The pagan worship of Baal, the Canaanite rain god, skewed the religious focus of the people toward the myths behind the phenomena of nature and fertility. It held a sensuous fascination for its followers. Sexual sin of all kinds, including incest, prostitution, sodomy and homosexuality were practiced as part of its rites. It seemed modern, in tune with the times, in contrast to the archaic worship of Jehovah. It seemed liberating and freeing, whereas Jehovah worship appeared closely proscribed and restrictive. The values of Jehovah, including marriage, family and sexuality, were lost among Baal worshippers.

The withholding of rain (1 Kings 17:1) was a visible, tangible assault on the false religion of the rain god Baal. The religion was thereby unsettled and disrupted and the people's faith in the pagan religion shown to be unfounded. During the ensuing drought, two experiences of Elijah highlight the special focus of his ministry and help us to understand his message.

**Resurrection at Zarephath.** The first experience is recounted in 1 Kings 17:17-24 while Elijah stayed in the home of the widow of Zarephath. We can imagine that Elijah taught her about the true God. However, when her son died, she became distraught. Her cry in verse 18 reflects a belief rampant among the heathen that sin on the part of parents required sacrifice. From time to time children were even taken from their parents and offered as living sacrifices (Jeremiah 19:5, Micah 6:7). Even if children died prematurely, it was believed that Baal had taken them as a propitiation to himself.

Verses 21-23 exalt Jehovah as the true Life-giver, the Life-restorer, the One who brings the family together again. In verse 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. Ephesians 1:19-2:9).

**Turning hearts to the heavenly Father.** In the episode depicted in 1 Kings 18:20-45, there is a striking similarity to the parable of the prodigal son which Jesus told (Luke 15:11-32). The Israelites 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 of a waiting Father. The great burden on Elijah's 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 (1 Kings 18:29). To do so now centers attention on God's redemptive plan. The invitation, "Come here to me (verse 30)," 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.

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 the Israelite equivalent of our putting the gospel of Jesus Christ 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. Elijah helps them remember their salvation 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*, p. 196).

Elijah recalls the fathers of the nation to whom God had made known His covenant. His prayer is that the people will know that God has turned their hearts back to Him and will recognize God's mighty act of salvation as being for them also. Then the fire falls. It does not consume the guilty sinners, but consumes the sacrifice. We are reminded that 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 Corinthians 5:21). 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. Then the people made their

confession of faith, turned from their false religious leaders, and soon the rains came again.

**Family ministries and the Elijah message.** Family ministries builds upon the foundation of the Elijah message and conveys this message to families. That message is first of all the message of God's reconciliation with humankind through Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:19) followed by the heart-turning in our homes that the acceptance of the gospel brings.

*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 (Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 179).

### **PILAR 3:**

#### **The Gospel Commission to Make Disciples**

Ministry to families is central to the mission of the Church. In His great and final commission, Jesus directed His followers: "Go and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:19). God intended the family to be a natural setting for carrying out this directive. "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" (Child Guidance, p. 476).

**Disciples hold to the teachings of Jesus.** In at least two instances our Lord was specific about what He meant by disciples. First, a disciple is one who adopts his teacher's values and lifestyle as his own. Jesus explained, "If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples" (John 8:31). Family is the primary place where values are caught. Families need the support of the Church and the Christian school, but the single most significant factor in the transmission of values and faith development remains the quality of family relationships. In the family the foundations of a person's value system are laid. It is in the family that these values are tested and tried and shaped by the challenges of life. It is the family that is best equipped to pass these values from one generation to the next.

God intends for families to instruct one another and to model His values and principles within the household (Deuteronomy 6:4-25). Family ministry helps families to fulfill the biblical mandate to make disciples of their members.

**Disciples know how to love.** Elsewhere, disciples are presented as those who love God and others. Jesus cultivated a loving relationship with His followers. There was a close, intimate fellowship, the kind known only to the dearest of friends. It was a relationship that reached the deepest levels of trust and openness. "I have called you friends," He said, "for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). The disciples could risk being fully known, because with Jesus there was ready acceptance and complete assurance that, strengths and weaknesses together, they were fully loved. It was in this intimacy that the yearning to forsake all and follow Him in the founding of His Church, the larger family of God, was born (Matthew 19:27; John 6:68). What happened in the lives of these earliest followers of Jesus gives us our most complete definition of discipleship, for a disciple



in the fullest sense is someone who knows how to be intimate with Jesus Christ.

Love for others is the earthward expression of this love for God and intimacy with Jesus Christ. “Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). “All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another,” said Jesus (John 13:35). Family again takes center stage as the primary place where, for better or worse, the capacity for warm, loving, close relationships with God and with others is developed.

*The family is key in its significance because it is the place where [relational] skills are learned well or learned poorly...If the family is the social organization in which these skills are learned first, and thus most essentially, then the family becomes central to the process of disciple making. It is a place where disciple-like relational skills are learned, and it is a primary group in which disciple-making takes place (Guernsey, 1982, p. 11).*

**Upbringing affects religious experience.** Ideally, everyone should be disciplined, i.e., invited to be a disciple of Christ and encouraged to grow in discipleship, within his or her own family. Family ministries works to increase the number of families where discipleship takes place, where children grow up to become responsible adults, to enjoy warm loving relationships with God and others, and to internalize Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. Out of a joyful, vibrant relationship with parents or marriage partner most naturally grows the same kind of Christianity in children and adults. Family members who experience affirmation, encouragement, gentle touch, focused attention, loving discipline and satisfying relationships at home will themselves likely continue in their discipleship.

They will likely be successful in discipling their own children and mates, and they will likely be able to form those close friendships in the community around them that most naturally lead to fruitful witnessing.

Sometimes, however, despite the greatest efforts, it just doesn't work out this way. For some, family experience leads comfortably to faith. For others, it creates a huge stumbling block surmountable only by a miracle of grace.

*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 (Strauss, 1975, p. 23, 24).*

Our relational experience at home profoundly influences our relationship with God. Ellen White sums it all up in one pithy sentence: “Their whole religious experience is affected by their bringing up in childhood” (Child Guidance, p. 473).

### Families are not alone

What of the parents whose souls ache for wayward children and often ask, “What did we do wrong?” What of the spouses who have prayed so long, but with no response? The good news is that families aren't alone in their disciple making tasks, nor are they given a one-time chance, one at which they either succeed or

fail by the time adulthood is reached. The good news is that while on-going relationships may be painful—for rejection of one’s values often seems to be rejection of ourselves—the hope of an on-going opportunity to disciple can ease the load and make it worth the pain. The good news is that as long as there is life there is hope, for only death ends the discipline process. And

warm close relationships will always offer the best hope that a dear one will one day yet be disciplined by Jesus Christ.

Family ministries addresses the issues of disciple making in the home and seeks to help parents grow in their personal faith and relationship with Jesus and to learn how through their parenting to extend the invitation to their children to follow Him also.



## GROUP EXERCISE

Choose one of the following to discuss:

1. How can we help Adventist families to become disciple making units?
2. How was your image or understanding of God influenced by parents or caregivers?
3. Describe the ideal Christian marriage in your culture.
4. What are the biblical principles for building strong committed, disciplined families?
5. How has Christianity, or specifically the Adventist Church changed your family life?

## Conclusion

There is much in psychological and sociological literature than can and must inform our ministry to families. However, it is our firm grasp of Scripture and our connection with the biblical authority that provides our unique identity. Scripture forms the canon for our faith and practice in family living and in our ministry to families. A continuing task for Family Ministries leaders will be to stand firmly on the biblical foundation while speaking clearly and relevantly to the current generation of families. We may paraphrase Elizabeth Achtemeier:

*The Scriptures are handed on to us as a confession of faith and as a witness to the quality and mode of life when it is lived in faithfulness to the Father who has made himself known to us in his Son through the Spirit. Our whole task as preachers [and family ministries leaders], then, is to pass on the confession and the witness. Our task is to preach not ourselves, or our society's ways, but Jesus Christ as Lord, that hearing Him our people may trust and, trusting, may be given the power to live abundant and joyful lives of faithfulness to their God (Achtemeier, 1987, p. 16).*



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## Biblical and Theological Foundations for Family Ministries.

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

Balswick, J. O. and J. K. (2007). *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home, 3rd Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Flowers, K. and R. (2005). *Family Faith*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association.

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For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

# HANDOUT #1

## The Chiastic Structure of the Song of Solomon

<p>SONG 1:2-2:2</p> <p>Wife's desire for her husband (1:2)</p> <p>Solomon named (1:5)</p> <p>(A)</p> <p>“My own vineyard” (1:6)</p> <p>(A)</p> <p>Silver (1:11)</p> <p>“My breasts” (1:13)</p> <p>Evaluation of her (favorable) (1:15, 16)</p> <p>Cedar (1:17)</p>	<p>SONG 5:2-7:9</p> <p>Dream II, encounter-search (5:2-7)</p> <p>Charge to Jerusalem girls (5:8)</p> <p>(C1)</p> <p>Praise of Solomon's person (5:9—6:3)</p> <p>(C1)</p> <p>Praise of bride's character (6:4-10)</p> <p>Dance of Mahanaim (6:11-13)</p> <p>Praise of bride's beauty (7:1-9)</p>
<p>SONG 2:3-17</p> <p>The apple tree (2:3-5)</p> <p>Charge to the Jerusalem girls (2:6, 7)</p> <p>(B)</p> <p>The beloved visits her home (2:8, 9)</p> <p>(B)</p> <p>His invitation to an outing (2:10-15)</p> <p>Marriage covenant formula (2:16)</p> <p>SONG 3:1-4:15</p> <p>Dream I, search-encounter (3:1-4)</p>	<p>SONG 7:10-8:5</p> <p>Marriage covenant formula (7:10)</p> <p>Her invitation to an outing (7:11-13)</p> <p>(B1)</p> <p>A wish that he might visit her home (8:1, 2)</p> <p>(B1)</p> <p>Charge to Jerusalem girls (8:3, 4)</p> <p>The apple tree (8:5)</p> <p>SONG 8:6-14</p> <p>Cedar (8:8, 9)</p> <p>Evaluation of her (unfavorable) (8:8, 9)</p>
<p>Charge to Jerusalem girls (3:5)</p> <p>(C)</p> <p>Praise of Solomon's procession (3:6-10)</p> <p>(C)</p> <p>Wedding scene (3:11)</p> <p>Praise of bride's beauty (4:1-7)</p> <p>Praise of bride's character (4:8-15)</p> <p>SONG 4:16</p> <p>(D)</p>	<p>(A1)</p> <p>“My breasts” (8:10)</p> <p>(A1)</p> <p>Silver (8:11)</p> <p>“My own vineyard” (8:12)</p> <p>Solomon named (8:12)</p> <p>Wife's desire for her husband (8:14)</p>
<p>(D1)</p> <p>Her invitation (4:16)</p> <p>(D)</p> <p>SONG 5:1</p> <p>His response (5:1)</p> <p>(D1)</p>	<p>*Adapted from William H. Shea, “The Chiastic Structure of the Song of Songs,” LAW 92, 1980. Note: Variations within the chiasm exist. The overall order of segments in C1, for example, are not the reverse of C, as is the case with the other segments.</p>

# HANDOUT #2

## New Testament One Anotherings

1. Love one another  
1 Thessalonians 3:12
2. Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you  
Romans 15:7
3. Greet one another  
2 Corinthians 13:12
4. Have the same care for one another  
1 Corinthians 11:33
5. Submit to one another  
Ephesians 5:2
6. Bear one another in love  
Ephesians 5:21
7. Confess your sins to one another  
James 5:16
8. Forgive one another  
Ephesians 4:32
9. Build one another  
Ephesians 4:29
10. Teach and admonish one another in all wisdom  
Colossians 3:16
11. Exhort one another  
Hebrews 10:25
12. Instruct one another  
Romans 15:14
13. Speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, always giving thanks  
Ephesians 5:19
14. Comfort one another  
1 Thessalonians 4:18
15. Serve one another in love  
Galatians 5:13
16. Bear one another's burdens  
Colossians 3:13
17. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling  
1 Peter 4:9
18. Be kind to one another  
1 Thessalonians 5:15
19. Pray for one another  
James 5:16
20. Do not judge one another  
Romans 14:13
21. Do not speak evil of one another  
James 4:11
22. Do not murmur against one another  
James 5:9
23. Do not bite and devour one another  
Galatians 5:15
24. Do not provoke and envy each other  
Galatians 5:26
25. Do not lie to one another  
Colossians 3:9

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## Module 2

# Family: A Center for Evangelism

### Introduction

Emissaries from Babylon once came to King Hezekiah of Judah out of interest in his miraculous recovery from a fatal illness and the supernatural sign linked with it—movement ten degrees backward of the sundial shadow. Hezekiah happily received these guests but seems to have been silent about his healing experience. He evidently put little or no emphasis on the things in his house that would have opened the hearts of these inquiring ambassadors to the knowledge of the true God. The contrast between his gratitude for being healed, which is recorded in Isaiah 38, and his silence about it in Isaiah 39, is striking. Hezekiah gave the ambassadors a tour that showcased his armory and expansive treasure. When they had left, the prophet Isaiah confronted him with a penetrating question: “What have they seen in your house?” (Isaiah 39:4). The question was sobering. Too late Hezekiah realized that his pride had led him to give away state secrets of national wealth and armaments. Even more importantly, he had missed a rare opportunity to share the truth about God with these foreign ambassadors.

This state visit was a significant occasion, yet there is no record of Hezekiah’s seeking special guidance about it in prayer from prophets or from priests. Nor did God intervene. Alone, out of the public eye, with no consultation with spiritual advisors, the work of God in his life and the life of his nation was not on his agenda. The intent of the historian in 2 Chronicles 32:31 may have been to show how easily God’s blessing can be taken for granted and how prone are the recipients of his mercy to become self-sufficient and fail to give praise that is due Him.

### What Have They Seen in Your House?

Some lasting lessons of faithfulness in witnessing from our home life that can be gleaned from the experience of Hezekiah:

- Every visit by individuals to the homes of Christians is an opportunity for them to be exposed to followers of Christ, their way of life and the Gospel message.
- Since few visitors are likely to open conversation about spiritual things, Christians must find ways that are sensitive and appropriate to the occasion to share the good news.

- Christians are not called to show off their material prosperity or accomplishments, though they may recognize these as blessings from God. They are called to declare the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His wonderful light (1 Peter 2:10). Or, to use Hezekiah's experience as a symbol, to declare that they were dying, but Christ has healed them; they were dead in sin and Christ resurrected them and seated them in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:4-6).

## Families With a Mission

### Fields of mission

In this presentation, we want to explore concepts of family and mission that include evangelization of family members within our homes and evangelization by family members of others outside our homes. Ellen White addressed both these emphases: "Our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home ... There is no missionary field more important than this...." (The Adventist Home, 1965, p. 35). "The mission of the home extends beyond its own members" (p. 31).

### The gospel commission

In all our faith-sharing efforts, whether within our homes or outside them, our message and mission must be clear. Jesus identified the mission of His followers as proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 24:14) and making disciples (Matthew 28:19). Paul synthesizes for us what the message is and what the ministry entails:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ,

not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21, NIV)

Here the message is defined as the incredible good news of God reconciling the world to himself through Christ. The mission is defined in terms of being ambassadors carrying that good news of reconciliation to others.

## Thinking Again about the Gospel and the Plan of Salvation

### The evangel

The root word from which we get our word evangelism is an Old English word *evangel*, which was used to translate the Greek word *euangelion*. Contemporary translations typically use the word "gospel" to translate the Greek. When we evangelize people, we are really "gospelizing" them, bringing the evangel, the gospel, to them (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15; Matthew 24:14; Acts 8:4).

The first to deliver the evangel were the angels who announced Jesus' birth (Luke 2:10-14). The *eudokia* of verse 14, translated "good will" (KJV), really means God's favor, not mankind's favor. The word is typically used in the New Testament as God's good pleasure. The good pleasure, the good will, is on His side. Compare Luke 12:32: "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (See also Ephesians 1:5, 9; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11). It is not until much later in the history of Christianity—the fourth and fifth centuries—when

the Roman church introduced the concept of men having to be of good will as an element decisive for salvation that we find *eudokia* being interpreted as “men of good will.” Contemporary versions capture the sense of the original: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests” (NIV). “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!” (RSV). “Men” could be translated “humankind” to be gender inclusive.

### **The second Adam**

God had a plan to save us from the beginning (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4). Because Adam sinned, and we as his children were all in him, we were doomed to die before we were even born (Acts 17:25, 26; Romans 5:12-19). God in his mercy and grace saved us by giving the human race Jesus. Christ is the second or last Adam, embodying in Himself the human race just as the first Adam embodied the race originally (1 Corinthians 15:45; Faith and Works, p. 88). From God’s perspective the whole human race is in this second Adam, Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30; cf. Genesis 2:7; Acts 17:26; Hebrews 7:7-10). The human race has a new history because of Christ’s righteous life. His atoning death on the cross was for every one (2 Corinthians 5:14). By his death the whole of humanity—the world—stands reconciled to God (Isaiah 53:3-5; Romans 5:9-11; Colossians 1:15-23; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, 21). Adam’s race died on the cross with Jesus, was resurrected with him, raised with him and is seated with him even now in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:4-6). We are complete in him (Colossians 2:10), perfect from God’s perspective (Romans 5:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10:14). Because we are in Christ, no one stands condemned by the law (Romans 8:1-3).

### **Human will and freedom of choice**

God calls us to believe in Jesus and what he has done for us (John 6:29). “This is my beloved son; hear Him” (Mark 9:7). He is “the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except by Him” (John 14:6). By faith we are to put off the old way of life, since we died in Christ and identified with his death through baptism. We are to live now with Christ in us (John 15:4; Romans 8:10, 11; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). By the power of his indwelling Spirit, we live new lives worthy of His marvelous gift to us in Christ (Romans 5:5, 6:1-3, 11-14, 12:1, 2; Ephesians 4:22-5:10; Colossians 3:1-10). The Scripture anticipates a process of spiritual growth in believers by the power of his Spirit that leads toward mature faith (1 Corinthians 3:1, 2, 13:11, 14:20; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:11-15; 2 Peter 3:18). We are safe all the while because we are not saved by our own works; we are saved by faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8). He alone is our righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9).

Don’t miss how good the news is! We are safe and our children are safe in Christ (Isaiah 49:25). While Scripture clearly calls believers to turn from sin, to grow in our understanding of truth, and to walk in harmony with God’s estimate of us and what he has declared us to be in Christ, our salvation does not depend upon our growth. The growth to which God calls us is always the work of His grace in us, the fruits of the salvation that is already ours.

### **The only way to be lost**

God put us in Christ while we were still powerless, sinners, God’s enemies, dead in sin (Romans 5:6-10; Ephesians 2:5) because he loves us and our children (Isaiah 43:1-7; Mark 10:13-16; John 3:16; Roman 5:8; 1 John 4:9, 10) and does not want anyone to

die but for all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). A person can only be lost if he or she does not respond to Christ, but deliberately, persistently, and ultimately refuses the benefits of God's saving act for there is no salvation apart from Christ (Mark 1:15, 16; John 3:18, 36; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 2:1,2, 10:26, 35-39). If we insist on rejecting Him, God will respect our choice. He will not force anyone to accept his gracious gift in Christ but will reluctantly let us go (Hosea 11:1-8; Matthew 23:37). However, God is long-suffering and patient and does not let anyone go easily (Numbers 14:18; Psalm 86:15), certainly not one of his beloved children (Mark 10:13-16). Now that's GOOD NEWS!

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power, save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to choose another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking into Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand (Steps to Christ, (1892), p. 72).

The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary (Gospel Workers, (1915), p. 315).

The end is near! We have not a moment to lose! Light is to shine forth from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. The instrumentalities to be used are those souls who gladly receive the light of truth

which God communicates to them. These are God's agencies for communicating the knowledge of truth to the world. If through the grace of Christ His people will become new bottles, He will fill them with the new wine. God will give additional light, and old truths will be recovered, and replaced in the framework of truth; and wherever the laborers go, they will triumph. As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the scriptures to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error. And every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other, Christ our righteousness (Sons and Daughters of God, (1955), p. 259).

### Runners with a message

Christian families today join a long line of runners proclaiming, He is risen, as He said (Matthew 28:7). The reality of his resurrection makes credible everything else Jesus said about Himself, about God and His love for sinners, about forgiveness, and about the assurance of eternal life by faith in Him. Scripture gives glimpses of the gospels sweeping effect on the lives of Jesus early followers—homes open for Bible study, prayer and meals together, shared money and resources, and great care taken for each other. Were they suddenly flawless people? No. Were there conflicts and discord among them? Yes. But somehow these followers of Christ were different. They acknowledged their needs for God and for each other. They put a priority on unity and harmony at home and at church, endeavoring to fulfill the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus (John 17:20-23). They witnessed to each other and to unbelievers with boldness, even putting their lives at risk for their beliefs.



longs to fill human hearts with excitement about the gospel. When the good news really becomes as good in our hearts as it is within the Word, sharing will be spontaneous and unstoppable.

## Putting Family and Evangelism Together



**Have the participants get in small groups to discuss the following questions:**

- We tend to think about evangelism in more personal terms.
- The relational dimension is more in evidence.
- There is multi-generational appeal.
- Family strengthening and restoration from emotional wounds is implied.
- It is a work of introducing families to Jesus.
- The product/statistic approach is gone.
- There is added warmth and more time taken to extend the impact to all family members.
- It is a needs-based approach.

## Our Mission Inside Our Homes

### Family first

The most natural first recipients of our gospel sharing endeavors are the people in our households (John 1:40-42; cf., Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; Ruth 1:14-18). There is no more important mission field than this (Adventist Home, (1952), p. 35). John's account captures the exuberance of Andrew when he met the Savior. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon ...

Andrew reacted to learning that Jesus was the Messiah in a way that is common when one has really

good news. The news cannot be contained; it simply must be communicated to those who are near and dear to us. Andrew went beyond mere reporting. He arranged for Simon to be introduced. An enthusiastic report about Jesus and an introduction to him as a person—what a simple formula for sharing the gospel with relatives in our homes! After the introduction, Andrew stepped back. From there on, Jesus and Peter had a relationship between themselves that was unique to them.



### GROUP EXERCISE

**Have each participant (or couple ) write a family evangelism mission statement.**

Family evangelism mission statement example: The mission of our family is to model Jesus love to each family member and to share the Gospel message to friends, family and neighbors through a life of sharing.

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**Then have participants list at list five things they can do to accomplish this mission.**

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## Helping children to a place of faith

Children in the home can often be overlooked as fitting recipients of gospel sharing efforts. Parents mistakenly assume that children will simply absorb family spirituality. This must not be taken for granted. While children and young people learn from the modeling they observe, it is also true that these younger members of the Lord's family need individual attention and opportunity to be personally introduced to Him. Deuteronomy 6 is insistent on this point: attention is to be given to the most effective kind of religious education. Regular spiritual habits of personal and family worship are to be encouraged in the home. Time and earnest efforts must be put forth on behalf of children and youth that the next generation may also become people of faith.

Ruth saw Naomi at the lowest of moments when she tried to push her daughter-in-law away and when, angry and depressed, she lashed out against God by recounting her losses (Ruth 1:15, 20, 21). No more eloquent testimony than Ruth's can be given to show that youth and young adults can meet and make a commitment to a perfect God, even when introduced to him by an imperfect parent or relative.

## The blessing of a Christian partner

Sadly, acceptance of the gospel message can lead to disruption in families (1 Corinthians 7:12-15; 1 Peter 3:1, 2). The New Testament wrestles with the dilemma that is faced by some converts to Christ. The choice to follow Christ could jeopardize their marriage, the institution Christ Himself created. The New Testament provides counsel for marriages divided by religion.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul responds to converts' concerns that staying married to an unbelieving spouse might be offensive to God or bring defilement upon themselves and their children. Not so says Paul.

The sacred state of marriage and its intimacies are to continue after a partner's conversion. The presence of one Christian partner sanctifies the other partner and the couples' children, not in the sense of changing their standing before God, for that involves their personal response to Christ, but in the sense of being a source of blessing and bringing unbelievers into contact with the realm of grace. Heartrending as it is, the unbelieving partner may decide to abandon the marriage. Though consequences will be serious, the merciful word of God to the unbeliever is let him do so and to the believer, he or she is not bound in such circumstances (1 Corinthians 7:15).

The preference of the Word of God is that, despite the challenges of a spiritually divided home, a way might be found for the peace of Christ to reign there. The hope is to keep the marriage intact, to give evidence of the triumph of the gospel in the midst of difficulty, and to promote the comfort of the partner with whom the believer is one flesh, though they be unbelieving. Loving kindness, unwavering fidelity, humble service and winsome witness on the part of the believer create the greatest likelihood of winning the non-Christian spouse. The submission of Christian marriage partners to each other is mutual and out of reverence for Christ (cf. Ephesians 5:21). When a spouse relates with Christian submission to an unbelieving partner, the first allegiance is always to Christ. Faithfulness to the claims of God on one's life does not require a spouse to suffer abuse at the hands of a violent partner.

## Families Reaching Families

### Family life is for sharing

The New Testament emphasis on imitation acknowledges the important role of modeling in the learning process. (Ephesians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Hebrews 6:12, 13:7; 3 John

1:11). People tend to become like whom or what they watch. This principle applies to relationships generally and especially to the home, where imitation is common: children imitate their parents and siblings; married partners often imitate one another. This concept provides an important clue to how couples and families can bear Christian witness to other couples and families.

### The power of social influence

We witness from our homes when we provide opportunities for others to observe us, to share in some way in our home experience. Many simply have no good example of marriage or family relationships to follow. In our homes they may see how the spirit of Jesus makes a difference. “Social influence,” wrote Ellen White, “is a wonderful power. We can use it if we will as a means of helping those about us” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 354). “A Christian home should be, in fact, a center of contagious friendliness, with open doors toward all human need” (Mace, 1985, p. 98).

As married couples invite others for meals, fellowship, Bible study, or when they attend a marital growth program together, the visitors see a model. The display of mutuality, affirmation, communication, conflict-resolution and accommodation of differences testifies of their life together in Christ. Parent classes and support groups where Christians and non-Christians mingle do the same thing. Family-to-family modeling takes place when Christian families invite

other families for meals, recreation, or for family worship. All human examples are flawed; however, the witness of the Christian home is not about modeling absolute perfection. The New Testament notion of imitation is a call for individuals to follow believers who follow Christ. The idea is that individuals will grasp the faith as they see it demonstrated in the lives of others who are human and fallible as they are.

### Hospitality evangelism

The importance of hospitality is evident throughout Scripture: Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18:1-8); Rebekah and her family (Genesis 24:15-20; 31-33); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9). Compare with these Bible passages: Isaiah 58:6, 7, 10-12; Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9. Hospitality meets another’s basic needs for rest, food and fellowship. It is a tangible expression of self-giving love. Jesus attached theological significance to hospitality, when he taught that feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty were acts of service done to Him (cf. Matthew 25:34-40). Using one’s home for ministry may range from the simple offering of a drink of water to a child or inviting neighbors to a meal or to the radical hospitality of lending a room to an abuse victim while he or she is rehabilitated. It may involve simple friendliness or the opportunity to offer prayer with someone or to conduct Bible studies. True hospitality comes from the hearts of individuals who have been touched by God’s love and long to give tangible expression to that love in words and action.

## GROUP EXERCISE

**Ask the participants about acts of hospitality that have been offered to them. Have them pair with the person next to them to discuss the specific acts and how the act(s) impacted them.**

Peter addressed an apparent reticence on the part of some to offer hospitality (1 Peter 4:9). Contemporary families are sometimes reticent also, complaining that they lack the facilities, the time and/or the energy to offer hospitality. Others feel awkward, unskilled and unsure about reaching beyond what is familiar in

order to associate with unbelievers. Some wish to avoid the complications to their lives that may ensue from involvement with others. Many contemporary families confuse hospitality and entertaining. The following chart indicates the potential for ministry in hospitality compared to entertaining:

	Entertaining	Hospitality
Priorities	Things	People
Motives	Self-centered: To impress To exhibit home and accomplishments	Other-centered: To give to others To enjoy mutual fellowship
Requirements	Beautiful home Fine decorating Gourmet cooking	People looking for fellowship Simple food
Focus	Make an impression	Minister to people's needs
Outcomes	Hosts lauded House and furnishings	

### The power of the home to evangelize

“Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives... 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” (The Ministry of Healing, (1942), pp. 352, 355).

The Christian home is, in fact, by far the most powerful evangelizing agency in the world. Its evangelism however is not aggressive; it is persuasive. It proclaims its message not by words, but by deeds. It does not tell others what they should be; it shows them what they could be. By their gracious influence, Christian homes win more converts than all the preachers put together. Give us enough of them, and the world would soon be

a Christian world; for the world's life rises to the higher levels only as its homes do so (David Mace and Vera Mace, In the Presence of God: Readings for Christian Marriage, (1985), p. 113).

### Tools and Methods for Family Evangelism

There are many ways that families can reach out to others. Here are just a few ideas:

- Modifications to traditional evangelistic series messages. Adding family illustrations. Making family applications of usual topics. For example, Sabbath is the family day; tithes and offerings are important to family finance; prayer to God and marriage/family communication have aspects in common.

- Adding family topics (family nuggets) as an alternative to health nuggets as part of a traditional evangelistic series.
- Specially-designed family seminars and Bible studies that are evangelistic.
- Programming for whole families by age group or multigenerationally, so that there is something for every age group, i.e., family camps, children's sessions in evangelistic meetings.
- Parent education that focuses on disciple-making in the home.
- Involvement of friends, neighbors and the community in church sponsored family activities, e.g., parenting classes, marriage enrichment, thirteenth Sabbath programs, VBS programs and graduations, athletic events such as fun runs, etc.
- Support groups for interfaith marriages.

## **GROUP EXERCISE**

**Divide participants into groups. Have each group brainstorm additional tools and methods of family evangelism. Have each group share several of their best ideas with the entire group.**

## Understanding Family as an Evangelistic Objective

### Working for whole households

Two important characteristics of evangelism are found in the New Testament. First, it was common for evangelists to proclaim the gospel in household settings. Secondly, whole family groups responded together.

- The Jewish nobleman who sought Jesus to heal his son returned home to find him well. As a result, his whole household believed (John 4:46-53).
- Cornelius, who with all his family were devout and God-fearing, invited his relatives and close friends to hear the preaching of Peter. The Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message and they were baptized (Acts 10:2, 24, 44-48).
- Lydia responded to Paul's Sabbath message by the river in Philippi and either then, or soon after, she and her household were baptized (Acts 16:11-15).
- Entire households believed—of the synagogue ruler Crispus (Acts 18:8); of Aristobulus (Romans 16:10), of Narcissus, whose household was said to be in the Lord (Romans 16:11), of Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 4:19); of Stephanas, who were baptized by Paul (1 Corinthians 1:16) and referred to as the first converts in Achaia. (1 Corinthians 16:15). Traditionally, the household of Stephanas has been thought to be the jailer's household of Acts 16.

## Impact of individualism

The rise of individualism in recent centuries has had an adverse effect on attitudes toward the family. Bellah (1996) traces the modern emphasis on individualism to John Locke, a seventeenth-century philosopher who was enormously influential in seventeenth-century England and America. Locke proclaimed the rights of the individual. The individual, he said, is the foundation of the society. The individual is prior to society and social groups such as families come into existence only through the voluntary contracts of individuals trying to maximize their own self-interest.

Individualism is typically regarded as a desirable quality among Adventists, for it is often necessary for an Adventist to swim against social and theological currents. This idea is often furthered by contemporary Adventist evangelism that tends to call for individuals to follow, even at the cost of family relationships. We have to face the point made by Bellah when he says that wherever the modern philosophy of individualism is found, some appreciation for the family as a group has been lost. Individualism does impact our thinking about our

family and it does change our behavior toward them and within them.

To be sure, Scripture recognizes each person as an individual:

- Individuals are valuable, possessing a free will (Jeremiah 1:5; Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 10:30, 31; Acts 2:39).
- Jesus and the apostles gave personal attention to individuals (cf. Mark 3:14-19, 10:46-52; John 3:1, 4:7, 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon).
- Salvation must be individually received (Romans 10:13, 17; Revelation 22:12).

Yet Scripture also affirms the value to individuals of social groups, among which the family is primary:

- There is value in being connected to others (1 Corinthians 12).
- We are called to minister to one another (John 15:17, Romans 15:14; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:32).
- The significance of families is affirmed and, as we have noted, there is evidence of many families being brought into the church together.



## GROUP EXERCISE

**With the entire group or in small groups, discuss the idea of individualism.**

**Does individualism vary within cultures?**

**How might this impact family evangelism needs and methods to specific cultures?**

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Adventists clearly face a challenge to hold in balance the biblical emphasis on the individual and the emphasis on the family group. Emphasis on the individual can help to swing the pendulum back from the extremes of enmeshment, co-dependency, and loss of individual personhood in families, but the family group must also be upheld and supported as an incomparable center for nurture, support, socialization and transmission of values across generations.

### Risks when one is baptized alone

When individuals from families make the decision to join the church, there is often a change in the family dynamics.

- Family members are often set in opposition to one another.

- Over time, communication often lessens, thus reducing opportunities for discipling additional family members.
- The new believer often feels torn by the separation from family, even guilty for having in some way abandoned them.
- Changes in values and lifestyle as well as active participation in the program of the church may dramatically cut back on time and activities the family share.
- Negative attitudes toward the church may form among family members and, as a result, difficult barriers may be raised to discipling them for Christ and drawing them into the community of faith.



## GROUP EXERCISE

Have participants list additional risks. Have participants share with the group or the person next to them.

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### Looking again at Matthew 10:35-37

Family resistance to the changes that are called for when the gospel touches the heart of an individual within the family can be interpreted as homeostasis, the natural inclination toward stability and steadiness and resistance to change that is a characteristic of all systems. To counter this resistance, the verses of Matthew 10:35-37 have sometimes been cited as evidence that true believers must pull away from families, as though families per se were their natural enemies.

However, Scripture here is not casting families per se as enemies of the gospel. William Barclay (The Gospel of Matthew, vol. 1, 1975) explains that these verses are evidence given by Jesus that the Messiah has come and that He is that Messiah. His call to discipleship demands a response that will cut into every social group. Because some will respond to his call and some will not, division will be seen throughout society, unfortunately including, in some cases, people's very homes.



The Jews believed that one of the features of the Day of the Lord, the day when God would break into history, would be the division of families. The Rabbis said: “In the period when the Son of David shall come, a daughter will rise up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” “The son despises his father, the daughter rebels against the mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and the man’s enemies are they of his own household.” It is as if Jesus said, “The end you have always been waiting for has come; and the intervention of God in history is splitting home and groups and families into two” (Barclay, 1975. p. 393, emphasis supplied).

Our ultimate allegiance is the family of heaven. Certainly the strong bonds that bring families together must not be allowed to hinder anyone from making a full and complete commitment to God. However, while the reality of a sinful world means that following the spiritual call of Jesus may mean leaving others who make a different decision regarding Him, especially those who would be spiritually abusive or destructive of Christian faith, efforts should be made to help individuals as much as possible retain their connections with their families.



## GROUP EXERCISE

**In small groups or pairs, have participants share what they have done to make family or friends that are not Adventists a welcome or unwelcome part of their (participants) lives?**

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### Continuing to think family when there are individual decisions

Also, there is a need to think again about our commitment to evangelizing whole families together and to finding the best ways of sharing the Good News with entire households. When we have done all we can toward holding families together, and individuals decide to part with their families in their commitment to Christ, we need to find better ways to replace the support they once received from their family. We also need to explore with them how they can maintain as much as possible of their family ties.

As family evangelists, we may face some ethical dilemmas when it appears that elements of Adventist

lifestyle conflict with a new member’s family life. In such times, let us not be quick to pass moral judgment upon those things in diet, dress, recreation, or other family lifestyles which, if they were cause to cease, would threaten to diminish marital or family bonds.

### Recognizing the centrality of the family to fulfilling the gospel commission

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). A disciple is someone who is discovering God’s truth and the principles of His kingdom

and is growing in his or her ability to make these values a personal way of life (John 8:31). There is no influence greater than that of family in the development of a person's values.

Jesus also marked disciples as people whose love for people is so unusual, it makes a deep impression on others (John 13:35). It is in the family that individuals learn first, for better or for worse, about relationships and about love. Families can either set the stage for family members to understand and experience God's love, or they can make such understanding and experience a virtual impossibility but for a miracle of grace. Families also have the primary opportunity and responsibility to be agents of the Holy Spirit in the cultivation of self-giving love in their members, the kind of love which makes for winsome witness within the family and in the neighborhood. Thus it can be seen that the family is central to the fulfilling of the gospel commission:

If disciples are those who relate with their teacher in the context of a primary relationship, then the capacity to form primary relationships is necessary to the process of disciple making. Secondly, if primary relationships consist of relationship skills that are generalized from one primary group to another, then the family is key in its significance because it is the place where those skills are learned well or learned poorly. And last of all, if the family is the social organization in which these skills are learned first, and thus most essentially, then the family becomes central to the process of disciple making. It is a place where disciple like relational skills are learned, and it is a primary group in which disciple making takes place (Dennis Guernsey, *A New Design for Family Ministry*, 1982, p. 11).

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 parent 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 are hard to please, he usually has the nagging notion that God is not very happy with him either (Richard Strauss, *How to Raise Confident Children*, 1975, pp. 23, 24).

Early family experience determines our adult character structure, the inner picture we harbor of ourselves, how we see others and feel about them, our concept of right and wrong, our capacity to establish the close, warm, sustained relationships necessary to have a family of our own, our attitude toward authority and toward the Ultimate Authority in our lives, and the way we attempt to make sense out of our existence. No human interaction has a greater impact on our lives than our family experience (A. Nicholi, *The Fractured Family: Following It into the Future*, 1979, p. 11).

### **Harnessing the power of family support**

Human behavior in family groups is governed by rules and laws that were implanted in the human heart by the Creator. Because human hearts are sinful, these rules and laws often are made to serve selfish purposes. We must understand these rules and the effects of sin if we hope to influence human behavior in families. "He who seeks to transform

humanity must himself understand humanity” (Education, p. 78).

A family is not just a collection of people living at one address. A family is a group that is typically connected to each other in unique ways. Understanding these dynamics will help us as we seek to evangelize families. The following characteristics are important to remember:

- Look for ways to reinforce the strong bonds of attachment and loyalty to one another that are typically formed in families. We are relational beings by God’s design. We should try to work with the natural laws of family loyalty in every way we possibly can, rather than work against them.
- Since family members typically look to each other first for support and companionship, we can help them develop more intimate relationships. Family members, who are aware of one another’s strengths and struggles, are uniquely able to provide spiritual nurture and support for one another in living the Christian life. The church harnesses the family’s potential for disciple making when it helps family members develop skills that enable them to in every way “encourage each other in fighting the battles of life” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 360).

- Parents typically want the best for their children; family evangelism helps them with their parent-child relationships. This parental desire to provide the best for their children is part of the natural script imprinted on human parents by God (Matthew 7:9-11; 1 Timothy 5:8). Providing for the total wellbeing of children includes their spiritual nurture (Ephesians 6:4). Family evangelism helps parents provide spiritual nurture for children. This takes place as the parent’s own spiritual nature is developed and as positive relationships in the family and the modeling and teaching of parents is improved (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). The process of discipling children for Christ begins with parents taking their own spirituality and commitment to God seriously (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; cf. 2 Timothy 1:5). To empower parents for their task is the best way to cooperate with God in leading children to accept Him personally.

How much more effective would be our efforts to share the gospel if whole families could become disciples together. How much better if ways could be found to elevate the significance of the family, to understand the relational principles at work in the family system, and to cooperate with these principles and build on them, rather than ignoring or working against them.



## GROUP EXERCISE

**Divide the participants into groups and assign each group of the family dynamics/ characteristics. Have each group identify specific ways to use the characteristic in family evangelism. Have the groups share one or two of their ideas with the entire group.**

## Toward reconciliation in families

In the work of sharing the gospel and helping people to receive the good news, we focus most often on reconciliation with God and forming a relationship with him. Often, however, people cannot fully complete that task; sometimes they cannot even undertake it until they have been reconciled with the people who are closest to them. Jesus acknowledged this reality when he said, “First go and be reconciled to your brother” (Matthew 5:24). Intergenerational reconciliation between the members of different generations and intra-generational between the members of the same generation are areas of evangelistic endeavor that are largely undeveloped. They are crucial. The Christian gospel must be brought as a healing

balm for the real hurts and wounds in the family.

This kind of evangelism will require new approaches, new skills, and much patience with a process that is undoubtedly more complicated than an evangelistic process that relies more on sharing information and educating people. But such evangelism has the potential for great success as greater numbers of individuals in families come together in the Lord. Where such evangelism has gone on, whole households have made decisions for Christ. We pray for far more households to come to Christ together. The falling away that many times eventually occurs in circumstances in which one person has been garnered out of a family will be lessened. The family as a whole stands together as a source of support for each other.



### GROUP EXERCISE

**Give each participant the handout “101 Ideas For Family Evangelism” (at the end of this module). Have them circle three things they will begin with their family this month.**

## Conclusion

Before we consider linking family with evangelism, we must first address ourselves to the task of making sure families have something to share. Two Old Testament stories in 2 Samuel: 18 and 2 Kings 7:3-11 come to mind. The first story counsels against running without good news. Ahimaaz ran as a courier, but he had no good news to share. Contrary to the popular myth that involvement in evangelism will solve people’s family problems, we would suggest that individuals in families who have not experienced the gospel in ways that have positively affected their worldview and brought radical renewal to their relationships are like runners with no good news to share. We ought not to set them running.

In the second narrative, the desperate lepers of Samaria stumble upon the abandoned camp of the Aramean army. Though at first overwhelmed with their good fortune, they eventually realize that they have found a prize that must be made public. We’re not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves... Let’s go at once and report this... (2 Kings 7:9, NIV). Indeed. When the news gets as good in our hearts as it is in God’s Word, we cannot help but share it. We are confident that when God gets His good news through to families, there will be no way they can be kept quiet. As we challenge families in the arena of evangelism, let us determine to send them forth as a major source of really good news.

# 101 Ideas for Family Evangelism

The Christian home is, in fact, by far the most powerful evangelizing agency in the world... By their gracious influence, Christian homes win more converts than all the preachers put together. Give us enough of them, and the world would soon be a Christian world. (David and Vera Mace)

## Personal Preparation

1. Study carefully such Bible verses as Ephesians 2:4-8, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:21;
2. Romans 5:12-20; 8:1, which convey the good news of salvation in Christ.
3. Reflect on the love of God. What human instruments have profoundly influenced you in your understanding of God's love? How is your understanding of God's love growing?
4. Prayerfully develop your personal testimony of faith and assurance of salvation in Christ. Writing your testimony may help you to think it through.
5. Make a personal list of Bible verses which speak to you of God's love. Study and memorize these for sharing with your personal testimony.

## Sharing Faith in Marriage

6. Share your testimony with your spouse. Listen to your spouse's testimony. How has the gospel influenced your relationship?
7. Give evidence of God's grace at work in your life by your empathy with your spouse, in sharing thoughts and inner feelings together.

8. Take time to communicate about the meaning of your faith with your spouse. How does your faith affect the way you handle anger, resolve conflict, and deal with depression?
9. Endeavor to uplift and encourage your spouse with affirmation and appropriate compliments.
10. Worship and pray together regularly.
11. Winning Ways with Unbelieving Spouses
12. Be a source of emotional and spiritual encouragement for your non-believing spouse. Strive not to be judgmental of his/her behavior, but offer compliments and affirmation regularly.
13. Provide an example of your belief in God's grace by living your Adventist Christianity before your spouse honestly. Be candid about weaknesses and faults, recognizing these as areas where Christian growth is needed.
14. Communicate 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.
15. Make extra efforts to identify and emphasize the things you and your spouse have in common. Seek points of agreement.
16. Enter willingly and happily into every possible aspect of your spouse's life which you can without compromising principle.
17. Discover together new activities and friends to replace those that may have been left behind because of your beliefs, realizing that the strength of your love bond

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

18. As you develop acquaintances at church, invite men to befriend your husband, or women your wife.
19. Invite your spouse to participate in activities of church life: social activities, health seminars, family life events, retreats, camp-outs, or church building/maintenance programs.
20. Encourage the participation of your spouse by recruiting and enlisting his or her expertise in some aspect of church life.
21. Evangelistic Parenting
22. Prepare a list of changes you would like to make to give a more evangelistic approach to your parenting.
23. Make the gospel attractive to your children by your positive relationships with them, by smiling often, by entering into your child's feelings.
24. Sing songs to your children which tell of God's love.
25. Pray with each of your children, rehearsing God's love and your love for your child in your prayer.
26. Tell your child in simple terms about God's love as described in His Word.
27. Ask forgiveness of your child for something you have done which brought pain to him or her.
28. Show unconditional love and acceptance of your child. Avoid conveying the message, "I will love you if ..."
29. Plan ways for giving each of your children special opportunities to make their decisions to trust in Christ personally.

### Relatives

30. Pray regularly that relatives will accept the gospel.
31. Work together as a family to prepare a list of specific efforts your family can make to lead unsaved relatives to Christ.
32. Plan ways for making contact with each relative for whom the family is praying—by phone, by letter, by

personal visit—to give, first of all, an expression of your love and to share encouragement.

33. Friends and Neighbors
34. 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.
35. Discuss as a family the prospective spiritual interest of individuals in work, neighborhood, school, family circles.
36. Start a prayer list on which are the names of your 10 closest neighbors.
37. During family worship talk about special ways of witnessing to the individuals on the prayer list.
38. Encourage your children to do little errands of love and mercy for those less fortunate than themselves.
39. Cooperate with your child in some task of Christian service to which their abilities, strengths and interests are suited and from which they will gain success and joy.
40. Assist your older children and young people to form missionary bands with their playmates and schoolmates for some task of Christian help work.

### Spiritual Gifts

41. Spend some family worship periods reading and studying the Bible texts on spiritual gifts—Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12, 13; Ephesians 4. Discuss: How do these texts help us to identify our spiritual gifts?
42. Read biographies of Seventh-day Adventist pioneers or other notable Christian leaders whose spirit of service and spiritual gifts will inspire and encourage your family.
43. Think together, pray about and discover what each family member's talents and abilities are. Thank God together for these gifts and abilities of each one.

44. The gifts that God has given your children may differ from yours as parents. Invite other Adventist Christian relatives or church members who may have spiritual gifts and abilities more nearly like those of your children to share their experiences to help provide models and examples for your children.
45. 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.
46. Think and pray together about how the special abilities of father, mother, sister, brother or other household member could be used by God in the home, in the church, in missionary work in the community.
47. Recognizing personal talents and abilities, let each family member prepare a simple plan of one or two specific things he or she could do to witness for God. Small children may draw pictures depicting their contributions.
48. Ask family members to share on a regular basis how God has prompted them to use their talents and abilities in their everyday activities.
52. Pay a friendship visit to a shut-in.
53. Do grocery shopping for a shut-in.
54. Write a letter of encouragement to a bereaved, grieving or discouraged family.
55. Visit someone who is sick.
56. Provide a no-interest loan to a financially struggling family.
57. Bake a loaf of bread for a homeless person.
58. Prepare sandwiches for distribution to homeless individuals.
59. Offer a food basket regularly to one or more families in need.
60. Do grass-mowing, leaf-raking or other yard work for an elderly person.
61. Provide once-a-week child care for a single parent.
62. Distribute gospel literature home to home regularly in a specific part of town.
63. Sing or play musical instruments at a nursing home or retirement center.
64. Give a few hours of service on occasion to families needing assistance in child care, home remodeling, and financial management.
65. Provide foster child care for a young person in need.
66. Give new or used clothing to persons in need or donate such items to an appropriate distribution center.
67. Go Ingathering as a family.
68. Address invitations to evangelistic meetings.
69. Enroll neighbors in a Bible correspondence course.
70. Distribute invitations to evangelistic meetings.
71. Invite younger family members to share toys with children of needy families.
72. Use the family car to transport individuals to evangelistic meetings.
73. Invite friends to a health fair or cooking school.
74. Invite one or two of your children's friends to church and a meal on Sabbath. Provide transportation if needed.

### A Family Missionary Project

49. Plan to involve the family's various talents in a special family missionary project. Get suggestions from church leadership on projects that might be helped by your family's involvement.
50. 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.
51. Read the Bible or gospel literature to an elderly or visually impaired person.

75. 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?
76. If there are aspects to the missionary project which can be done during family worship, such as preparing mailings or developing Bible studies, plan for some special worship time which will incorporate these, giving family members time to discuss their feelings about the missionary activity.

### Family Stewardship

77. Plan a special gift for the current thirteenth Sabbath mission offering.
78. 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.
79. 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.
80. In addition to regular family tithes, offerings and church commitments, pray about missionary work with which your family might become sacrificially involved.
82. 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.
83. Take a “Congratulations on your new baby” gift to a family with a newborn.
84. Take a “Congratulations on your wedding” gift to a newly wedded couple.
85. Take an appropriate expression of sympathy to a family who has experienced some loss.
86. Invite your neighbors to church programs, i.e. Vacation Bible School, holiday celebrations, socials, etc., so you will be prepared to invite them to evangelistic meetings and worship services.
87. Take a gift of food to a neighbor. Allow your children to have a part in its preparation and its presentation.
88. 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, and a recipe for one who enjoys cooking.
89. 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.
90. Ask your neighbors for a favor. Show them that you need their friendship and help as a family. This will place you on common ground with them and open the doors for fellowship.
91. 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.
92. 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

### The Art of Evangelistic Visiting

81. Ask an individual successful in visitation to take your family, or members 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.



for listening or readings tailored to the age and interest level of those present.

93. Invite others to your home for a meal. Offer friendship and modeling about temperance and healthful living through the meal which is served.
94. Invite others to join you in a family outing or recreational activity that is typical of the wholesome times your family spends together.

### Reaching Out to the World

95. 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.
96. Obtain addresses and write regular letters of encouragement to foreign missionaries.
97. 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.
98. Discover from your pastor or church leadership where there are areas un-entered 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.
99. 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.
100. 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.

101. 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.
102. Pick a block in your town where there are no Adventists living and consider this your “un-entered” area in which to make missionary visits, distribute literature, etc., to win individuals for Christ.
103. 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?
104. 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.
105. 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

Taken from Flowers, K. and R. 101 Ideas for Family Evangelism.

Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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## Family: Center For Evangelism

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Barna, G. (2003). *Transforming children into spiritual champions*. Ventura, CA: Regal.

Barna, G. (2011). *Revolutionary parenting*. Vereeniging: Christian Art.

Belvedere, D. (n.d.). *Personal Evangelism Series*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource.

Braham, B. B. (2014) *A practical guide to evangelism: How to win and keep new members*. Doral, FL: Inter-American Division Publishing Association.

Byrd, C. P. (2009). *Contemporary evangelism for the 21st century*. S.l.: Hardnett Publishing.

Cameron, E. P. (1996). *Evangelism in today's world: Attracting evangelistic audiences in a secular society*. Oshawa, Ont.: Maracle Press.

Flowers, K., & Flowers, R. (2003). *Family evangelism: Bringing Jesus to the family circle*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Family Ministries Dept.

Manspeaker, B., & Washington, P. (2009). *A quick start guide: Child evangelism*. Lincoln, Neb.: AdventSource.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2012) *Revival and reformation: Families reaching out*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2013) *Revival and reformation: Families reaching across*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2013) *Family to Family: mission to the cities, Church guide*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2013) *Family to Family: mission to the cities, Family guide*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Sahlin, M. C. (1988). *Friendship evangelism seminar: A lab school for reaching out to the unchurched*. Siloam Springs, AR: Concerned Communications.

Sahlin, M., & Sahlin, N. (2001). *Practical guide to personal ministries*. Silver Spring, MD: Church Resources Consortium, North American Division.

### Websites

Happy Family Life Seminars International: [www.happyfamilybsi.com](http://www.happyfamilybsi.com)

General Conference Adventist Family Ministry: [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

General Conference Total Member Involvement: [tmi.adventist.org](http://tmi.adventist.org)

North American Division Evangelism Institute: [Nadei.org](http://Nadei.org), Articles, resources, and newsletters

Seventh-Day Adventist Church Revival and Reformation: [www.revivalandreformation.org](http://www.revivalandreformation.org)

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

## Module 3

# Families in Society

### Introduction

Throughout our lives, many of our most profound joys, deepest sorrows, or ordinary moments have been associated with family relationships. It is not often that we pause to reflect on the influence that society has on these family experiences.

This module explores the importance of families in society. It is designed to assist students in developing a greater awareness of the impact of societal influences on families, from a global perspective to a local cultural perspective. The students will consider cultural and religious traditions and how these traditions have shaped current views and beliefs about families. It will also describe what is meant by a family system and help students to recognize the unique differences within family systems. Particular appreciation will be given to the structure and diversity of family types and how families change. The students will also be provided a basic introduction to several models for understanding how families deal with life-issues.

### Families in Context

The last 50 years have brought unprecedented and profound changes to the family. The civil rights

movement, women's rights, alternative family structures, global economic challenges, wars, terrorism and other challenges of the 21st century have created an expanding "carte du jour" for constructing families. We all have expectations of what shape and form our family will take; however, family makeup is subject to significant societal and cultural influences.

### The Need For Global Awareness

We live in a complex world. As such, understanding other cultures and individuals is critical. It is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. It is important for family life educators to be culturally competent.

We need to recognize that the world is now a small world: the World Wide Web and increases in technology have led to a far greater awareness of issues and concerns around the world. Civil unrest and riots, major world-events such as tsunamis and earthquakes, wars and royal weddings are all televised around the world – often 'live!' We see the action "as it happens."

Many countries are rapidly becoming multi-cultural with ensuing clashes over styles of religious and cultural expressions such as dress, worship, and morality.

## Global trends in marriage and family

- Increase in female-headed households
- Variety of intimate relationship structures
- Aging and elder care
- Women's participation in the labor force
- Same-sex families
- Other political and socio-economic issues impacting families:
- War and armed conflict
- Poverty
- Migration



## GROUP EXERCISE

Discuss the following questions with whole group or divide into small groups:

- To what extent do these trends represent the society in which you minister?
- What observations can you make about additional trends in your place?
- Why is it important to be aware of global trends even if they have not yet impacted your society?
- Why is it important to understand the demographics and trends impacting families both nationally and globally?
- What are the implications for Family Ministries of the current demographics and trends in your region?
- What aspects of your current Family Ministries program do you see as directly responding to current issues facing families?
- What adjustments to you see as necessary?

## What is a Family?

The study of marriage and family is complicated by the fact that every person has a different image of what a family is. Today's families are diverse, not much different than families in the past. However, in the past most single parent families existed due to a

parent's rather than divorce or out-of-wedlock birth. Couples without children either had no children yet, lost their children to death, or their children had left home. The point is that societal norms have greatly influenced the definition of family.



## INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE

What is your definition of a family? Who makes up the members of your family? How did your family of origin (the family of your childhood) influence your idea of family as an adult? How have other families, our culture, or society influenced your idea of family today?



## GROUP EXERCISE

Have class spontaneously divide into various family formations that exist today. Be creative and think broadly of the various family types.

### Discussion:

Who makes up a family? Who is included, who is excluded?

Are grandparents, cousins, uncles included?

How is your own family different or the same to the family your parents grew up in?

How do you feel about single parent families, same-sex families, polygamous families, etc.?

How will family ministries minister to the various family types?

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It is difficult to agree on one definition of family. However we define family, many individuals spend a significant part of their lives belonging to both a family of origin and a family of procreation. To be sure, some choose to spend part of their lives living alone, but still belong to a family of origin.

For legal purposes, a more precise definition of family is required so that a clear distinction can be made between a family group and other types of groups. This is needed for inheritance rights, hospital visitation rights, health insurance rights, and various other legal issues. For other purposes, a basic definition of family most can agree on defines a family as a group of individuals who interact in a close, personal way, who share goals and values and have long-term commitments to one another. All definitions of family are greatly influenced by the values of those doing the defining. Thus, as Christians we must

consider a definition that incorporates the values of our worldview. A definition that is grounded in the revealed purpose and will of God; one that emphasizes the first message which is God's ideal and is inclusive of the second message, that which allows for God's redemptive grace.

## The Importance of Family

*"The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other... the well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influence." Ellen G White, The Ministry of Healing, 349*

*“The Christian home is, in fact, by far the most powerful evangelizing agency in the world. Its evangelism, however, is not aggressive; it is persuasive. It proclaims its message not by words, but by deeds. It does not tell others what they should be; it shows them what they could be. By their gracious influence, Christian homes win more converts than all the preachers put together. Give us enough of them, and the world would soon be a Christian world; for the world’s life rises to the higher levels only as its homes do so.”*  
*David & Vera Mace, In The Presence of God, 113.*

## Functions of The Family

1. **Procreation** – family reproduction (Gen 1:23; Gen 2:24)
2. **Emotional Support** – regulating sexual/emotional relations (Gen 2:18)
3. **Physical Care** – providing security, stability and care of each other (1Tim 5:8)
4. **Socialization** – teaching the individual to be human (Deut 6:4-8)
5. **Transmission of Values** – passing on family values (Deut 6:4-8)
6. **Identity** – establishing one’s identity, kinship and social status

### Contextual Influences

Christian families are confronted with the challenge of knowing how to relate to the world around them—to resolve the tension of being “in the world” but not “of the world.”



## GROUP EXERCISE

**Divide into groups of 3-5.**

**Choose five of the following texts and make a list of principles for how Christian families are to relate to the society around them. Share your reflections with the class.**

**Matt. 5:13, 14 2**

**Col. 3:1-3**

**Rom 12:1, 2**

**Cor. 5:17-21**

**Acts 1:8 2**

**1 John 2:15, 16**

**Matt. 28:19, 20**

**Tim. 4:10**

**Rom. 13:1-7**

**Phil. 3:18, 20**

**Acts 17:22-34**

**Rev. 18:1-5**

**John 17:11-18**

**Heb. 11:7-10**

**1 Cor. 9:19-23**

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## Christianity and Culture

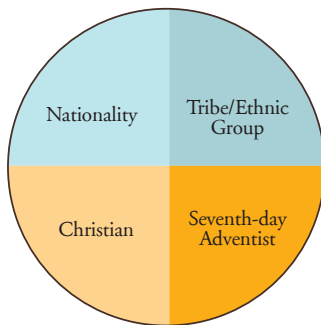
The family as an institution is the cradle of any culture. How we relate in family is deeply influenced by our own cultural bias. This bias is primarily influenced by our family of origin, which socialized its members into the specifics of the culture. These biases were developed in response to the layers of nationality, ethnicity or

tribal group, religion and other social indicators. Thus, too often it becomes a challenge to distinguish between cultural norms and biblical absolutes. When culture is superimposed on Scripture, we comprise the influence that biblical truths have to bear on family issues and effective solutions that can be provided.



### GROUP EXERCISE

**Small group exercise. In terms of defining a person's identity, rank the following in order of importance beginning with the most important. Come in consensus in your group.**



*"Belief in him [Christ] and loyalty to his cause involves men [women] in the double movement from world to God and from God to world. Even when theologies fail to do justice to this fact, Christians living with Christ in their cultures are aware of it. For they are forever being challenged to abandon all things for the sake of God; and forever being sent back into the world to teach and practice all the things that have been commanded them"*  
H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 29.

### "Searching for Silver"

*"The coin, though lying among dust and rubbish, is a piece of silver still. Its owner seeks it because it is of value. So every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God's sight accounted precious. As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness."*  
Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 194.



Christian believers need to live “in the world.” Most choose not to live in caves or communes! This will mean we interact with ‘the world’ – we carry out business with other people, we play sport, shop, go to cultural and recreational events, and talk with our neighbours. This means we need to be very clear as to how we relate to others. Old Testament prophets challenged the Children of Israel many times on their habit of being exclusive and regarding non-Jews as ‘lessor’ people – as not being as valuable to God as themselves (Consider the way the Jews regarded the Samaritans).

Christian believers need to ‘search for silver.’ They need to see non-Christian people as equal to themselves, and just as valuable to God. They need to:

- Affirm the good (1 Thess. 5:21)
- Remember the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8, 9)
- See all people of different cultures as “fallen image bearers.”
- Uphold and strengthen that which is good in the culture and in keeping with biblical principles (Acts 17:23-28; Rom. 13:1-7)
- Confront aspects of culture which need to be challenged by the gospel (Col. 3:1-17).



## GROUP EXERCISE

Discuss the following questions with the whole group or divide into small groups:

1. How did your family discover world-events when you were a child -- radio, TV, newspaper, other?
2. How did your family feel about the non-believers who lived in your community? Were they considered a positive influence or a negative influence?
3. How might the Adventist Church be more involved in ‘the world’ with the specific intent of influencing those aspects of the culture that might be considered non-Biblical?
4. If you could change one major negative cultural influence in your current society, what would it be -- domestic violence? pornography? child abuse? alcoholism? other?
5. How might the Adventist Church care for the following goals:
  - i) help believers affirm a Christian world view
  - ii) help families find the “silver” in their families, and to affirm, strengthen and preserve the good from their culture
  - iii) help families cope with change
  - iv) help church members develop the capacity for principled thinking
  - v) increase levels of family support

## Theories on Family Structure and Management

As a Family Life Educator, it is important to be familiar with the basics of various theories about families and to select from them ideas and strategies that can be used in family life education.

### 3 Perspectives in Studying Family

1. A Time Perspective: Looking at families from a developmental or life-cycle approach
2. A Structural Perspective: Looking at the way families are structured and shaped
3. An Interactional Perspective: Looking at the way families interact and the processes that create shared meaning

### Developmental Theory

This theory considers 'family' from a developmental perspective. It looks at families across the life-span in a lineal fashion – from 'birth to death.' It recognizes that individuals and families develop differently based on various values and conditions in their cultures, such as:

- Prenatal development
- Early childhood experiences
- Adolescent changes
- Adult development
- Family customs

### Eco-System Theory

This theory looks at individuals and families from a holistic view in their association with the total environment in which they live. Individuals and families are viewed as interacting with their environment – parts and wholes are interrelated and interdependent. The family carries out certain essential physical, biological, economic, psychosocial, and nurturing functions for its members and for the larger society.

An ecosystem perspective seriously considers the complementary needs of the individual with the needs of the global ecosystem.

### Family Systems Theory

Rather than look at families as a collection of individuals, Family Systems theorists view the family as having almost the same kind of organized integrity that the biological organism has. The family functions as an entity, as a "whole," with its own structure, rules, and goals. System thinking considers the interrelatedness of the parts. Instead of seeing isolated and unrelated parts, it looks at the whole picture.

When considering how families function, it is important to remember that there will be a whole range of emotional and behavioral actions or reactions in any given interchange. For example, when someone in the family gets angry, other family members will react in some way to the emotion of anger. Some may get angry in return, some may walk out of the room, and some may pretend they didn't see or hear anything! All family members develop different ways of coping with family stress.

Family Life Educators also need to think in broader 'Systems' terms rather than in a 'Linear' form when considering the ways families respond to various issues. For example, when a 16 year-old teen comes home late there will no doubt be multiple reasons why! 'Linear' thinking looks only for 'cause and effect': she is late, therefore she is irresponsible and should be punished.

A 'Systems' approach will require a deeper level of consideration: Who in the family might be making home uncomfortable for the teen? In what ways are the other family members behaving that may make the teen feel unwanted or frightened? In what ways might the teen be a 'distraction' for the

family from some other key issues that are not being addressed?

Family systems theory also looks at the dynamics at work in a family which have a profound influence on the persons in that family which affect the process of growth and change in them. The value of an individual or the responsibility that belongs to an individual is not to be discounted. Each individual must make decisions, take personal responsibility, make changes and grow while living in his or her family. Family systems theory considers the factors at work in the family unit as a whole which can empower or restrain the individuals in the family and enhance or diminish their well being.

## Defining the Concept of a Family System

### A way of seeing a whole

“A system is by definition any identifiable whole which is composed of interrelated individual parts” (Balswick and Balswick, 1991, p. 36). “System thinking considers the interrelatedness of the parts. Instead of seeing isolated, unrelated parts, we look at the whole” (Steinke, 1993, p. 3). For centuries biologists thought that a pond in the woods was merely a breeding ground for many different species of plant and animal life. Scientists studied each of these living things in isolation from one another.

Although they gained vast knowledge using that method, they ultimately came to see how limited it was. They discovered that the very process of looking at each living thing separately seriously limited their ability to learn about it. To fully understand an organism they needed to see how it acted and reacted to the presence of other living things around it.

Today we no longer think of a pond as just a collecting pool of many isolated species. Instead, we see it as a network of living entities that depend on each other. We call this network an ecological system.

This same additional perspective has been applied to the way we look at families. Rather than seeing the family as a collection of individuals, social scientists have begun to view the family as having almost the same kind of internal make-up as one would find in a pond or, for that matter, in any biological organism. The family functions as an entity, as a “whole,” with its own structure, rules, and goals. Another way of saying this is that the family is a system (Napier and Whitaker, 1978).

The apostle Paul used the systemic functioning of the human body when he spoke about the way church members relate to each other in the Church, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 21:14-26). “The functioning of each separate part affects the body as a whole, and the body as a whole has an impact on the way the separate parts function.



## GROUP EXERCISE

**Invite several volunteers to represent a family of at least three generations. Use pieces of string to connect each person with every other in the group. Note the complexity of the network that is formed, the multiple connections that characterize the family and the influences that each exerts on the others.**

## Influence of the context

To understand people and their behaviors, we must look at their context, that is, the environment around them, their relationships with other relatives and members of their household.

“From a systems perspective, the functioning of particular family members, to some degree, is shaped by the family unit. How individuals behave is understood and assessed in terms of their functioning within the total family matrix, rather than as persons separate from the family group” (Blevins, 1993, p. 14).

One interesting way to think about context is to see that each person is not only part of a larger system, but is himself or herself a complex system of systems and is influenced from “below” as well as from “above” (See Handout #1).

An elementary school teacher one day became very aware that the children she taught were affected by their environments. “Dear Teacher,” wrote one little boy. “Thank you for helping me when I got troubles. I got so much troubles. Love, John.” Wise is the teacher who realizes that some of the behavior she is observing is likely related to other contexts in which her pupils live beyond her classroom.

The late Dennis Guernsey, for years a professor of family sociology at Fuller Seminary, tells of an experience he had early in his career as a youth pastor when he made friends with a troubled teenager at odds with the law. Wanting more than anything to see the youth make a new start, he encouraged him to take care of his body, provided him with some new clothes, helped him get a part-time job, and drew him into the inner circle of the church youth group and his own family. Dennis was so proud of the progress he saw in the young man that he began telling his story as a testimony to the power of God. Then the phone rang at midnight. It was

the police department. They had his young friend in custody. Arriving at the station where he faced the boy in whom he had invested so much, Dennis’ eyes reflected the questions of his heart. Why? “You just don’t understand,” the boy muttered, scarcely lifting his head. “You don’t live where I live.”

## Putting an spotlight on the “and”

We know that families are made up of husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and so on. Let’s not rush too quickly past the word and. Families are made up of husband and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters. When we think about families from a systems point of view we come to understand that the “and” is very significant. Sir Arthur Eddington, a famous British scientist, expressed the idea this way:

We often think that when we have completed our study of one we know all about two, because “two is one and one.” We forget that we still have to make a study of the word “and”. . . The study of “and” [is the] study of organization (Sir Arthur Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* quoted in Anderson and Guernsey, 1985, p. 7, 8).

When we think about a family as a system it’s like putting on a special pair of glasses. These glasses help us to see a dimension beyond individual persons, to see relationship patterns, to see the interaction occurring between the members of the whole. We look more at the linkages, the connections between persons. Systems thinking puts the highest priority on relationships as the key to understanding the family.

## Family Systems Dynamics

### Linear vs. co-causal relationships

The linear model of family structure views family relationships as being in a chain. A locomotive with

a train of cars illustrates this traditional way of thinking about families. Usually, the father holds the place of the locomotive, standing at the head or top of the line. Mother follows, the eldest child is next, and the remainder of the children follow in the train according to the order of birth. Culture or family favoritism may rearrange the order, but the end result is a straight line, hierarchical model of family functioning.

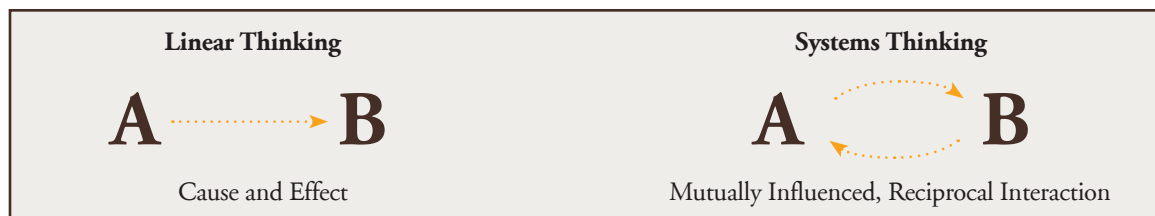
Linear or straight-line thinking is highly focused on individual roles. Optimal functioning is believed to occur when family members are supportive of the linear structure and fulfilling their responsibilities and tasks as defined by the head of the structure. Linear thinking would hold that the central task of family ministries is to get father to take up his proper role in the family. With the locomotive in place, the whole train will understand what it's supposed to do. In linear thinking, the first link in the chain causes an effect on the second link,

which causes an effect on the third link, etc. Father influences mother, mother influences the firstborn, the firstborn influences others, and so on. Change in the system is the prerogative of the first link. Linear-style family relationships tend to show little tolerance for initiatives toward change from members down-the-line. Frustration, blaming and faultfinding often are directed from those lower in the hierarchy toward those at the upper levels. Lower members resort to inappropriate means such as manipulation, nagging, and assorted acting-out behaviors to get attention and make their influence felt.

Instead of thinking of influences going in only one direction, i.e., A causing an effect on B, system thinking sees A and B as having reciprocal effects on each other.

Loops between A and B indicate that A and B both influence and are influenced.

They are "co-causal" (Steinke, 1993).



### Feedback

Families monitor and inform themselves regarding their internal and external situation by means of a circular feedback system. One member picks up cues from another's words, tone of voice and body language and reacts. The other person notices the reaction as it is expressed in words, tone of voice and body language. These cues elicit another response and the cycle continues. Feedback can be of two types—negative and positive.

### Negative and positiv feedback

Negative feedback does not mean bad or critical communication. Negative is a technical term meaning that no change is needed. For example, when a test for a medical condition is taken and the results come back negative, it means that everything is functioning normally; no change is necessary. Positive feedback is sometimes thought of as affirmation. Instead, it is the kind of information which says it is time to change. A positive result

on a medical test means that you are not all right. Adaptations must be made if the system is to survive.

The household thermostat and its reciprocal interaction with the room temperature is a classic example of a circular feedback loop. When the temperature in the room decreases (A), it triggers the sensor in thermostat (B). The thermostat activates a process whereby warm air is generated by the furnace and sent through the heat vents. This increases the temperature in the room (A) and again triggers the thermostat (B) which then deactivates the production of warm air (Brown and Christensen, 1999).

Families need both negative and positive feedback. Negative feedback comes as affirmations which assure each other that things are going well. Positive feedback, which indicates that things are not going so well, is vital, though it may be difficult to give. A family needs communication and listening skills, as well as the time to communicate, so that both kinds of feedback can inform the system of its condition.

### Homeostasis

It is the nature of systems to seek stability, equilibrium, a resting state. Just as natural laws cause water to seek its own level, or a mobile that has been stirred by the breeze to finally stop moving when the breeze is gone, so family systems are constantly attempting to find equilibrium and remain there. The internal interactional process that helps maintain family balance whenever that balance is disrupted is called homeostasis.

Normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit and the body seeks to maintain this homeostasis through several homeostatic mechanisms. When a hot sun beats down upon the body, it causes sensors in the skin to send

a positive feedback message it's "hot" ("reduce heat") to the brain. The brain sends messages to various organs—heart, blood vessels, sweat glands, muscles—to dilate the blood vessels so heat is kept near the skin surface, to perspire so cooling is helped by evaporation of water from the body surface, to fan air over the skin, or move into the shade. As cooling occurs, the skin sends a negative feedback message "OK" to the brain. Adaptations which needed to be made have been made and the system has stabilized.

We see the systemic process of homeostasis at work when anxiety levels increase, such as when an accident occurs to a family member and emergency assistance is requested, family members attempt first aid, seek to comfort the injured, and provide reassurance to each other.

Anxiety need not reach this proportion, however, for homeostatic mechanisms to be activated. Whenever behavior or events deviate from the accepted range—when someone monopolizes the telephone, continues watching TV when the dinner bell has been rung, or raises his voice in anger when quiet voices are the norm—the family unit will attempt to reestablish balance.

*Consider a family which has a rigid rule that everyone must be home and be seated at the table at exactly 6:00 p.m. for the evening meal. Other members of the family may be willing to wait for about thirty seconds for Mary to get off the phone so they can begin. But they most certainly will not tolerate a five-minute delay. The system will draw upon its storehouse of memories and choose an action to correct the undesirable behavior. It*

*may be that Mary's siblings will put pressure on her to hang up, or that her parents will warn her that she won't get anything to eat unless she hangs up immediately. In either case the system works as a whole to shape her behavior (Balswick & Balswick, 1999, p. 41).*

The desire for stability and equilibrium in families is a valuable characteristic in that “it helps families maintain a steady state in the presence of significant internal and external pressures and function effectively in stressful situations” (Blevins, 1993, p. 27). Also, stable families bring stability to a community or to a church. The downside of homeostasis appears when families fear change, when they resist changes that could be helpful to them, or even disdain the positive feedback which indicates the need for change. This may account for some of the reluctance on the part of some to get involved with family ministries programs, for example. Families will go to great lengths to cover up any unsettledness that may exist. They will make great efforts to adjust internally without any outside support. Dysfunctional families may maintain an equilibrium for years, distressed, managing to cope, but far from enjoying optimal emotional, social or spiritual health. However, homeostasis by itself is not the same as healthy family functioning.

The challenge to family ministries is to gently, but surely introduce positive feedback to disturb the status quo in spiritual and emotional health and in their growth toward intimacy into which many households have settled. As families make adjustments following the positive feedback, a window of opportunity opens. It is during this time that the best hope exists that they can be stimulated to experiment with new ways of relating, to absorb

new information, to learn new skills, to grow, and to reach a state of equilibrium in which they function more effectively and more closely attain the biblical ideals for intimate family living. An awareness of the dynamics of homeostasis can influence the kinds of topics and programs that a family ministries committee may offer in a local setting. Some themes may more effectively lure the reticent ones, such as grief recovery, divorce recovery, coping with loss, and handling life transitions successfully.

## Subsystems

Within the family system are subgroups, known as subsystems. These subsystems are miniature systems within the overall family system. As a comparison, the human body is a complex system comprised of subsystems which are systems within their own right: circulatory, digestive, respiratory, and so on. Each subsystem has identifying marks and has certain functions for which it is responsible. So it is in the family. An easy family subsystem to spot is the marital subsystem (sometimes called the spousal subsystem), comprised of the husband and wife. Brothers and sisters constitute the sibling subsystem.

Subsystems may consist of one individual, a pair of individuals, or a group. Subsystems may form by generation, by gender, by interest, or by function. Just as the body's circulatory and nervous systems join in the functions of digestion and respiration, for example, so family members often participate in several subsystems simultaneously. A husband and wife are a marital subsystem. If they have children, then they are the parental subsystem at the same time. Taking up responsibilities of leadership, they become the family's executive subsystem also. If several families live together, the executive subsystem will be comprised of the individual or individuals who have the responsibility for leadership.



Certain family systems theorists pay special attention to the structure and alignment of family subsystems. For optimal functioning of the family, they see three subsystem units as having special significance: the marital subsystem, the parental subsystem, and the sibling subsystem (Brown and Christensen, 1998; Minuchin and Fishman, 1981). Family members' experience is believed to be directly related to the family organization. Some types of family organization appear to be related to poor functioning of family members. When significant family interactional patterns are changed, significant changes in the symptoms also occur (Minuchin, 1978).

The marital subsystem has the function of providing mutual satisfaction of the couple's needs. That function is separate from the parental function. The parental subsystem is vital to children and adolescents, carrying out the functions of nurturance, guidance, and discipline. The functioning of the parental subsystem profoundly affects the growth, development and functioning of the sibling subsystem. The parental subsystem may be comprised of both parents, it may largely exclude one parent, or it may be composed of a single parent. It may include such persons as a grandmother, aunt, or a parental child to whom caretaking authority over other siblings has been granted. The children themselves belong to the sibling subsystem. In the sibling subsystem children find out how to relate to peers, acquire the social skills necessary for life in community, develop respect for authority, and learn the value of play.

### **Boundaries and differentiation**

The interaction of two powerful forces, togetherness and individuality, regulate all of our emotionally significant relationships. The togetherness force stems from our social nature, our dependence and connectedness with one another.

It reflects our desire to be with people, to think, feel and act like them, to want them to like us and be like us. The individuality force arises from the unique personhood and value that is characteristic of each of us. It reflects our desire to have a sense of personal identity, to make our own decisions, to be independent, to stand out from the crowd. Optimal functioning can take place when there is an ideal balance between these two forces (Blevins, 1993). The experience of knowing oneself as separate from a family group is called differentiation. (Brown & Christensen, 1998).

Boundaries enable individuals and subsystems within systems to maintain a healthy balance of togetherness and individuality, i.e., to be differentiated. We can illustrate boundaries by thinking of a house with rooms. Each room is like a subsystem within the overall system of the house. It becomes a room, connected yet separate from the rest of the living space, by virtue of its walls, doors, and windows. These boundaries define the space known as the room. Because of them, the room can offer privacy and security inside.

From a systems perspective, boundaries are "interactional rules that tell each family member who participates in interactions, under what conditions, and even how they should participate" (Brown and Christensen, 1986, p. 56). Boundaries create a "room," a space for the subsystem to be itself and to carry out the tasks that are appropriate to it without hindrance from other subsystems. For example, a father and mother go out alone to their favorite restaurant to celebrate their anniversary, leaving their children in the care of a competent sitter. Though the children may want to go too, mother and father explain that this is their special time. They are maintaining a boundary around the spousal subsystem in the family, a boundary which



gives the married couple space and time to attend to that which is essential for them, to strengthen the attachment between them.

Salvador Minuchin, a systems specialist well known for his work on structural family systems, has said, “For proper functioning, the boundaries of subsystems must be clear. They must be defined well enough to allow subsystem members to carry out their function without undue interference, but they must allow contact between the members of the subsystem and others” (Minuchin, 1974, p. 53).

The boundary separating siblings from other subsystems is an example of one that must be kept clear. Siblings, especially as they grow older, should be able to play together, relate to each other, and work out problems and conflicts together without inappropriate interference from adults in the family. When parents open their children’s mail,

read their diaries, or invite themselves into their teenager’s conversations, they violate this special boundary. A “generation line” exists between the siblings’ subsystem and the marital and executive subsystems. Violations of this boundary occur when marital problems cause a dissatisfied marital partner to seek emotional closeness from one of the children, making him or her a surrogate marital partner. Similarly, the parentified child, upon whom has been laid executive tasks when a parent has emotionally abandoned the children or abdicated this position in the home, is another all too common breach of the sibling subsystem boundary.

### Types of boundaries

Boundaries may be of three types: permeable (open, diffuse), impermeable (closed, rigid), or semipermeable (flexible, porous).



Using our illustration of the room in the house, an impermeable boundary is one in which the room is completely walled off with no windows and no doors, or, if there is a door, it has been locked. Relationships are either cut off or characterized by poor communication or no communication, as well as rigidity and indifference. The individuality value prevails over the togetherness value. A permeable boundary is just the opposite; it is one with weak boundaries. The room has insufficient walls, or perhaps walls with multiple doorways, but no doors. Passage in and out is completely unrestricted. Togetherness is all important; individuality tends to be sacrificed. Relationships are about feeling, thinking and doing everything together.

Semipermeable boundaries enable a healthy balance between togetherness and individuality. The room has

some windows and a door or doors that can be opened at times and closed at other times. An individual can be free to be himself and yet fully engaged as a member of the group. Semipermeable boundaries are characterized by open communication, a healthy sense of self, and the ability to distinguish between one’s own thoughts, feelings and problems and those belonging to others.

As noted in the above figure, boundary functioning falls along an a continuum. At the extreme ends of the continuum, relationships result which are either enmeshed (boundaries extremely permeable) or disengaged (boundaries extremely impermeable). Pathology and family dysfunction may be indicated in these types of relationships (Minuchin, 1974).

Enmeshment refers to boundaries that are diffuse or blurred, characterized by a “tight interlocking” and

lack of differentiation between subsystems (Hoffman, 1981).

**Illustration:** Invite several volunteers to represent a family of four or five members. As the group is clustered tightly together, wind string or cord tightly around them to represent enmeshment. Ask one to fall down (carefully) to further illustrate what happens when one in the family has a problem. The tightly enmeshed family are likely to all be taken off balance since they do not have sufficient differentiation to help the distressed one.

Disengagement, by contrast, refers to impermeable or rigid boundaries. High levels of autonomy exist, but support of one another is lacking as members have only minimal contact with one another. Functional families have well-defined and flexible boundaries. Stresses in the family system develop and functioning is impaired when boundaries are either too rigid or too permeable (Gurman and Kniskern, 1991).

**Illustration:** Invite two volunteers to represent two family members. As the two face each other, tie each one to the end of a stick or rod long enough to separate them so that their hands cannot touch. Invite one or the other to fall down (carefully). Observe that the one cannot do anything to help the other. They are related, as shown by being tied to the stick, but their disengagement keeps them from being able to help one another.

## System roles

Family members often play roles on behalf of their families that are difficult, stressful, and lifealtering. The roles consist of expected behaviors which preserve the family's uniqueness, its sense of identity and its equilibrium. These roles are unconsciously assigned and may affect a person's personality throughout life (Blevins, 1993). Most prominent of the roles which are often repeated in families are caretaker, hero, scapegoat, mascot and lost child.

Caretakers perform a multitude of tasks ranging from meal preparation to listening, reminding, or peacemaking. Often ignored by others in the family, they assume others' responsibilities to the neglect of their own physical and emotional well-being. Over time they often experience frustration, fatigue, and chronic anger, yet feel selfish when they consider doing something for themselves.

The hero shoulders the responsibility for maintaining the family's integrity and making it look good. They are people-pleasers and overachievers, feeling good about themselves only when they live up to others' expectations. They neglect their own needs and ambitions in order to give to others. Heroes are vulnerable to guilt and depression when they fail at some task.

Mascots seek by clowning and entertaining to distract the family from its internal pain. They have difficulty expressing their own real feelings since they have learned to mask emotional pain and anger with humor and comic routines. Though they strive to be the center of attention, they are often unable to ask for help for their own needs.

The scapegoat draws the blame for system difficulties to himself or herself and achieves a kind of harmony among others because the family focus has shifted to the scapegoat's misbehavior. Scapegoats accept blame for anything that goes wrong. They typically suffer from a sense of personal worthlessness and carry a profound sense of guilt and shame at the core of their being. They may be vulnerable to chemical abuse, other compulsions, or may become antisocial.

The lost child copes with the family system by avoidance. He or she withdraws from conflict and shuts down emotionally in crisis. As children they are quiet, mild-mannered and inconspicuous; as adults they may be isolated and unattached, and hesitate to express emotions or disagree with others.

## Triangulation

The final dynamic of systems that we will consider in this presentation is triangulation. Triangles are a way that individuals deal with conflict or discomfort in their relationships with others.

*The basic law of emotional triangles is that when any two parts of a system become uncomfortable with one another, they will “triangle in” or focus upon a third person, or issue, as a way of stabilizing their own relationship with one another (Friedman, 1985, p. 35).*

We have already seen that conflict or dissatisfaction in the marriage may result in a child either intentionally or inadvertently being drawn into the marital relationship as a surrogate spouse. This is a type of emotional triangle. Triangles also develop when two individuals are in conflict or have difficulty communicating and they use a third person as an ally or a “switchboard” to accomplish some communication between them. In the illustration below, A and B are in conflict. Unfortunately, instead of dealing with their conflict directly, they engage C in a triangle.



The instruction on resolving conflict found in Matthew 18:15 is designed to avoid triangulation: “Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.” It is as though God knows the human tendency to form emotional triangles. He is aware of the pain and stress borne by the individual who gets trapped in the middle. He would have us learn to communicate and to take responsibility for resolving our conflicts with

one another directly, in ways that will avoid drawing others into them unnecessarily and will leave our family relationships stronger.

## Systems-Sensitive Family Ministries

The insight brought to us by our family systems study is vital to an effective ministry to families:

- It affords additional understanding of people and their behaviors. We now view persons in a family in a new dimension. By contemplating the impact and influence which relationships with others have upon them we see more clearly the reasons for their behavior patterns.
- It helps bring the primary target of family ministries into focus. While we do not lose sight of what can be done to assist individuals to grow, we become aware that the primary target of family ministry is the family itself and the complex relationships that exist within it.
- It points to the need for a more specialized methodology which will enable families to develop socially, emotionally and spiritually. Programs are needed which will engage the family system as a whole, or family subsystems (married couples or parents with their children) in relational growth. Enrichment-style programs, which are experiential in nature, have demonstrated that couples and families can experience significant breakthroughs in their relationships. Support groups using enrichment-style formats can help couples and families solidify attitudinal changes into longterm growth.
- It enables us to cooperate with the relational laws at work in systems to help families grow in grace and in their discipleship with Christ. Systems thinking helps us understand how important affirmation (negative feedback) is to families. Families need

the encouragement that comes from knowing what their strengths are. Systems thinking helps us to build on their strengths. Systems thinking also helps us understand the nature of the resistance to growth and change that is characteristic of systems.

These characteristics of systems give us strong clues as to the types of resources, offered in materials and programs, that will be of interest to families, i.e., resources that help build relational skills, resources that help families anticipate and cope with crises and change, resources that help with recovery from grief and loss.

## Conclusion

Looking at families from a systemic point of view is like learning to see with a new kind of eyeglasses. It takes getting used to. Traditional thinking in western civilization has focused on individual health and functioning. It has been observed that wherever the philosophy of individualism has been given priority, some appreciation for the family has been lost. The greater the emphasis on individualism, the less attention tends to be paid to the strength and benefits found in the family system (Bellah, 1985). M. Scott Peck (1993) goes so far as to speak of a “lack of group consciousness” altogether. This he calls “the hole in the mind” which has contributed to the loss of civility in society. In his view, the route to recovery of group consciousness and to the cure of ills which plague society must involve a re-emphasis on the family as the basic group or system within which individuals live. Family ministries leaders who have an appreciation for systems thinking are able to retain the individual perspective and also to see a larger picture of the individual in context. They are on their way to a fuller appreciation of the benefits and blessings of family as the primary setting for living.

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# HANDOUT #1

If the family were a container, it would be a nest, an enduring nest, loosely woven, expansive, and open.

If the family were a fruit, it would be an orange, a circle of sections, held together, but separately—each segment distinct.

If the family were a boat, it would be a canoe that makes no progress unless everyone paddles.

If the family were a sport, it would be baseball: a long, slow, non-violent game that is never over until the last out.

If the family were a building, it would be an old, but solid structure that contains human history, and appeals to those who see the carved moldings under all the plaster, the wide plank floor under the linoleum, the possibilities...”

—Letty Cottin Pogrebin

# HANDOUT #2

## Family Systems Theory – A Summary

The family systems theory is a theory introduced by Dr. Murray Bowen that suggests that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from one another, but rather as a part of their family, as the family is an emotional unit. Families are systems of interconnected and interdependent individuals, none of whom can be understood in isolation from the system.

### The family system

According to Bowen, a family is a system in which each member had a role to play and rules to respect. Members of the system are expected to respond to each other in a certain way according to their role, which is determined by relationship agreements. Within the boundaries of the system, patterns develop as certain family member's behavior is caused by and causes other family member's behaviours in predictable ways. Maintaining the same pattern of behaviours within a system may lead to balance in the family system, but also to dysfunction. For example, if a husband is depressive and cannot pull himself together, the wife may need to take up more responsibilities to pick up the slack. The change in roles may maintain the stability in the relationship, but it may also push the family towards a different equilibrium. This new equilibrium may lead to dysfunction as the wife may not be able to maintain this overachieving role over a long period of time.

There are **eight interlocking concepts** in Dr. Bowen's theory:

### Triangles:

The smallest stable relationship system. Triangles usually have one side in conflict and two sides in harmony, contributing to the development of clinical problems.

### Differentiation of self:

The variance in individuals in their susceptibility to depend on others for acceptance and approval.

Nuclear family emotional system: The four relationship patterns that define where problems may develop in a family.

- Marital conflict
- Dysfunction in one spouse
- Impairment of one or more children
- Emotional distance

### Family projection process:

The transmission of emotional problems from a parent to a child.

### Multigenerational transmission process:

The transmission of small differences in the levels of differentiation between parents and their children.

### Emotional cutoff:

The act of reducing or cutting off emotional contact with family as a way managing unresolved emotional issues.

### **Sibling position:**

The impact of sibling position on development and behavior.

### **Societal emotional process:**

The emotional system governs behavior on a societal level, promoting both progressive and regressive periods in a society.

(Many of these concepts are discussed in the context of genograms in the book *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention* by Monica McGoldrick, Randy Gerson and Sylvia Shellenberger.)

### **Family systems therapy**

One of the best ways to begin therapy and to gain understanding of how the emotional system operates in your family system is to put together your family genogram. Studying your own patterns of behavior, and how they relate to those of your multigenerational family, reveals new and more effective options for solving problems and for changing your response to the automatic role you are expected to play.

[www.genopro.com/genogram/family-systems-theory](http://www.genopro.com/genogram/family-systems-theory)

# HANDOUT #3

## Planning Family Ministries for Our Family Systems

How does an understanding of family systems help explain life in the following families? How would a sensitivity to family systems make a difference in the plans for family ministries in a church with such families? What programs and activities would likely be most helpful?

1. Susan, age 40, is in her third marriage to Ralph, age 45, who has also been married twice before. Susan and Ralph have two children of their own, David, 4, and Jennifer, 3. Darren, 17, and Monica, 15, Susan's children from her second marriage, live with her and Ralph. Ralph has custody on weekends of Danielle, 17, and Bonnie, 15, children from his second marriage. Darren's and Monica's dad, Steve, has not visited them in over six years. Ralph believes Susan is too permissive in her parenting style. Almost constant conflict has prevailed between Ralph and Darren, whom Ralph believes is the product of Susan's permissive parenting. Monica is also angry with Ralph who has difficulty relating to her with the warmth he has for Danielle and Bonnie. "I'm his child, too," she says. Recently, Ralph and Darren exchanged angry words and scuffled with each other. Ralph sent Darren out of the home. Susan arranged for Darren to visit an aunt. Susan now visits Darren at the aunt's home, since Ralph will not allow him back home.
2. Jessica tells you about her daughter, Kelly, 14, who is not doing well in school, is obsessed with boys (has, in fact, already lost her virginity) and has been picked up twice for shoplifting with a girlfriend. Jessica gave birth to Kelly at the age of 17, in an early marriage to a man she later divorced because he beat her. Jessica is remarried, somewhat unhappily, to a solid citizen who doesn't share much with her emotionally. Kelly is the main interest in her life. Jessica wants for her and Kelly to be best friends.
3. Jason, 25, lives at home. He is out of college and has a good job. His parents have had a troubled marriage for years. Whenever Mom and Dad deal directly with each other, they fight, and the fights can be quite ugly. In order to avoid that ugliness, the family has fallen into a pattern whereby Mom and Dad communicate through Jason. He feels he helps preserve peace in the family. Now Jason is afraid to leave home. "I can't move out! If I leave, they'll either get a divorce or they'll kill each other. I couldn't bear to have that on my conscience."
4. Dawn is an only daughter who has been in contact with home by visiting or by phone every day of her 28 years. For a while she lived with her husband in another state, but she felt guilty in being so far from her parents and so convinced her husband to move back. She now visits her parents twice a week and washes and sets her mother's hair. She feels smothered by the relationship and angry from a recent reprimand from her father about her not calling one day. When she told him she had been ill, he barked, "You'd better come over here and tell your mother yourself!"





## Families In Society

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Balswick, J. O. & Balswick, J. K. (2007). *The family: A Christian perspective on the contemporary home, 3rd ed.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Blevins, W. L. (2005). *Your Family Your Self.* New. Oakland, CA: Harbinger Publications

Chibucos, T. R., White, R. W., & Weis, D. L. (Eds.). (2005). *Readings in family theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gabler, J. (2010). *Sociology for dummies.* Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishing.

Garland, D. (2012). *Family Ministry: A comprehensive Guide. (second edition).* Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity Press.

Gane, R. E., Miller, N. P. & Sawson, H. P. (2012). *Homosexuality, marriage, and the church: Biblical, counseling, and religious liberty issues.* Berrien Springs, MI. Andrews University Press.

Hennson, C. H., Wilson, S. M. (2008) *Families in a global context.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Klein, D. (2003). *Family theory. MacMillan reference USA's international encyclopedia of marriage and family.*

Kriste, R. C. & Marshall, M. (Eds.). (1999). *American anthropology in Micronesia: An assessment.* Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Powell, L. H. & Cassidy, D. (2007). *Family life education: Working with families across the life span. (second edition).* Long Grove, IL. Waveland Press, Inc.

Petersen, G. (2009) *Traditional Micronesian societies: Adaption, integration, and political organization*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Steinke, P. L. (1993). *How your church family works: Understanding congregations as emotional systems*. The Alban Institute, Inc., Bethesda, MD 20914-3341.

Trent, J. (1994). *LifeMapping*. Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family Publishing.

White, J. M. & Klein, D. M. (2008). *Family theories, 3rd ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

## Module 4

# Marriage and Family Dynamics

## Introduction

The Bible opens and closes with marriage. In the book of Genesis, marriage is the first institution established by God at creation while in the last chapters of Revelation marriage is presented as a metaphor to portray the relationship between Christ and His people. Marriage is uniquely positioned at the end of creation week as a declaration of God's ideal for the human race. "Marriage is the foundational human relationship God gifted humanity with as the locus for developing and keeping a meaningful connection with Him" (Oliver & Oliver, 2015).

This module provides an introduction to biblical concept of marriage and key issues at the core of marriages and families. It outlines the characteristics

of healthy marriages and families and ways in which these institutions created by God can be enriched and strengthened.

## The Biblical Concept of Marriage in the Bible

The foundation for marriage in the Bible is found in the story of creation and serves as the foundational pattern for all later biblical teachings on marriage (Mueller & Brasil de Souza, 2015). This is the first time in scripture that the concept of marriage occurs. Marriage exists because God designed and instituted it in Eden. It was God's idea and His gift to humankind.



## GROUP EXERCISE

**Divide into groups of 3-4 individuals. Read the Genesis 2:18, 20-25.**

**What key elements of marriage can be identified in this passage?**

**Discuss the relevance of these elements for marriage in contemporary times. How has postmodernism impacted these foundational principles found in this first marriage in Eden?**

Marriage is depicted in scripture as the foundational structure of community for human beings and the family that grows out of it—“be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). The manner in which God created Adam and Eve also reveals His design that in marriage there should be male and female. God saw that it “is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper fit for him” (Gen. 2:18 ESV). God created human beings in His own image—“in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27), thus confirming that since the beginning human nature consists of being male or female.

The only aspect of God’s creation that He evaluated as “not good” was the man’s loneliness. God solved this by creating one woman to be a helper who was “suitable for him” (Gen. 2:18). For this reason the bible rejects homosexual and polygamous partnerships as not reflecting the divine pattern created by God in Eden. Only the union of a man joined to a woman has the God-given potential to be “fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28).

## Leaving, Cleaving, and Becoming One

The creation account of Genesis 2 draws attention to humans as cultivators of relations—it highlights the relationship between God and His creation and then the relationship between man and woman. The poignancy of this story is that after creating the woman, God Himself brings her to Adam; in essence God pronounces the first marriage union in history. It should be further noted that the relationship between this man and woman had to naturally be expressed in marriage since they were given the charge to procreate and subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28).

The narrative leads to Genesis 2:24, “therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and holds fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” and mentions three important aspects that are constitutional for the biblical view of marriage: leaving, cleaving, and becoming one. Leaving parents, clinging to mate, and becoming one flesh in marriage. With these words the permanent union of marriage is described in Scripture—two beings as a single organism sharing in each other’s lives as though it were one joint life. This awesome and sacred oneness includes sexual union as an intimate and exclusive giving of oneself in love to the other.

Illustration:

### ‘LEAVE’

- A public announcement
- Clear boundaries/separateness
- Separate identity/individuation

### ‘CLEAVE’

- “Be glued to”, “to be stuck to”
- Bonding/covenant Permanence/loyalty
- Total commitment
- Mutual submission with individuality maintained

### ‘WEAVE’

- Growth process
- Realising potential Unity in diversity Equality
- Intimacy (nourish and support each other in love and forgiveness) “Two becoming one” (‘us;’‘we’)

## Dilemma of Christian Marriage in Postmodern Times

The institution of marriage has persisted throughout history in all cultures and countries. It has served as the cornerstone of human culture—for better or for worse. Since Eden, marriage has been the main target of the enemy’s assaults as he tries to disqualify

humanity for eternal salvation. Satan has been successful at destabilizing this critical relationship in and outside of the Church. The marriage relationship in modern and postmodern times has gone awry in many ways at a rate that is alarming even among Christians. There has been a shift from relationship fulfillment to personal fulfillment being the highest priority. The bond of marital love has become fragile and undependable, struggling to hold together under the influence of diminished values, creating a new reality of broken hearts and broken homes.

Balswick and Balswick in the book, *A Model for Marriage* (2006), present a summary of the polar opposites of traditional and modern or postmodern marriage, with the biblical response in the center (see diagram below). It should be noted that while biblical and traditional marriage are often used interchangeably, they are not the same. The summary is divided by four important components of the marital relationship—commitment, adaptability, authority, and communication.

TRADITIONAL	BIBLICAL	MODERN
<b>COMMITMENT</b>		
Commitment (to the institution)	<b>Covenant</b> (between partners)	Contract (self-fulfillment)
Coercive	Cohesive	Disengaged
Dutiful Sex (male pleasure)	Affectionate Sex (mutual pleasure)	Self-Centered Sex (personal pleasure)

<b>ADAPTABILITY</b>		
Law	<b>Grace</b>	Anarchy
Predetermined (segregated roles)	Creative (interchangeable roles)	Undetermined (undifferentiated roles)
Rigid/Stilted	Adaptable/Flexible	Chaotic

<b>AUTHORITY</b>		
Ascribed Power	<b>Empowering</b>	Possessive Power
Authoritarianism (Dependence)	Mutual Submission (Interdependence)	Absence of Authority (Independence)
Male-Centered	Relationship-Centered	Self-Centered

<b>COMMUNICATION</b>		
Inexpressiveness	<b>Intimacy</b>	Pseudo-intimacy
Pronouncement (Legislation)	Discussion (Negotiation)	Demand (Stalemate)
Nonassertive/Aggressive	Assertive	Aggressive



## GROUP EXERCISE

Divide into groups and discuss the summary contrasting traditional, modern, and biblical view of marriage.

Based on this chart, what kind of marriage did you see when you were growing up?

Do you see any elements of traditional or modern in your own marriage?

What changes will you need to make in order to model a biblical marriage?

Ellen White took great care to convey the spirit of mutual obligation in Christ in her descriptions of the husband/wife relationship (cf. *The Adventist Home*, pp. 114-120). Her references to Eph. 5:22, 23 are coupled with Eph. 5:25-28. The experience of being “in Christ” guides the husband/ wife relationship, restoring equality and promoting mutuality.

*“Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other”* (*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 47)

*“The wife, if she has the spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bond-slave, but a*

*companion to her husband. If the husband is a servant of God, he will not lord it over his wife; he will not be arbitrary and exacting. We cannot cherish home affection with too much care; for the home, if the Spirit of the Lord dwells there, is a type of heaven . . .”* (*The Adventist Home*, p. 118).

## Seasons of Marriage

Studies in the human life cycle show progression through stages. Relationships also progress through seasons. According to the research and clinical observation of David Augsburger (*Sustaining Love*, 1988), long marriages pass through a minimum of four stages— dream, disillusionment, discovery and depth. Each can be about ten years in duration. The beginning and ending of each stage is not crisply defined, but there is a transition phase between the marriages.

It is not uncommon for couples to get stuck in the transition stages, first, because there

is resistance to change and secondly, because there is a lack of understanding of predictable relational changes.

## Dream marriage

During this early period, couples have very high expectations for their relationship. They express feelings cautiously or not at all and they tolerate, accommodate or overlook differences—all to avoid conflict. Romantic feelings are perceived as intimacy. The dream is largely an illusion, which must be recognized for what it is in order for love to deepen. Sadly, it appears the dream phase is collapsing, i.e., getting shorter, for most couples today.

*She: "I wish we didn't have to go to work this morning, darling. We just can't seem to get enough time together to do everything we want to do."*

*He: "I won't be able to get back to you fast enough. Getting back together with you is the most exciting part of my day." She: "Want to go shopping tonight?" He: "We just went shopping last night!"*

*She: "Oh, well, if you don't want to go shopping, you choose what we do. I'll do anything you want to do."*

*Dream poem*

*I love you.*

*I must be with you.*

*I'll never leave you.*

*You'll always be first.*

*We are in love.*

## Disillusionment marriage

When disillusionment strikes, the dream vaporizes. Couples, weary of accommodation and avoidance, often turn to manipulation

to get what they want. They try to eliminate differences by attempting to change their partner, and deal with conflict by fighting, bargaining and threatening. Intimacy is intense when things are going well, absent when there is tension. Relationships are often competitive and adversarial. Hope fades, and life together becomes empty and alienated. Many go looking for dream again during this period, and many marriages die. But disillusionment will inevitably follow dream with a new partner, just as it did with the original spouse. Couples need encouragement and practical help to move from disillusionment to discovery. Many couples grow discouraged and break up during this stage.

### Disillusionment poem

I still like you, but

I can't go on without change.

I need space, I need respect.

I need to be me, as well as we.

We are in struggle.

## Discovery marriage

During this phase, couples discover each other. They learn to communicate and to own and express feelings with freedom, candor and caring. They discover that differences both make us unique individuals and offer creative possibilities within the marriage. They learn to fight more fairly and seek mutually satisfactory solutions to conflicts more quickly. There is balance in their relationship between separateness as individuals and connectedness as a couple. They become intentional about stretching toward equality in their relationship. True intimacy is now possible and hope rises.

Characteristics of this stage include:

- More open communication
- Greater awareness of one's own and the other's feelings
- Stretching toward equality and mutuality, i.e., housework is our work.
- Appreciation of differences
- Win/win problem solving
- Giving each other space

### Discovery poem

I find you surprising.

What I liked at the first I came to resent in you.

Now I wouldn't change it at all.

We are learning love.

## Depth marriage

This stage can only dawn in a marriage as deeper levels of maturity dawn in the personal lives of husband and wife. Now couples genuinely share and listen, with a free flow of both feelings and thoughts. Both delight in, even cultivate, the differentness of each other. Conflict is accepted as a healthy

process and the couple utilizes it to work for mutual growth. Intimacy becomes more wholistic – emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual as well as physical. Both partners feel secure, whether near or far. The future is full of promise.

### Depth poem

When I'm with you

I feel at home, complete.

When we're apart I am at peace, secure.

We are loved.

## Balswick Intimacy Spiral

For Christians, there are several elements that are essential to a successful passage through the seasons and transitions of a marriage.

- Building on an initial commitment.
- Finding a way to deal with problems, frustration, brokenness that we bring, times when we disappoint, even betray one another. For the Christian, that is grace.
- Finding ways to unleash one another's potential and enable one another to become all that we can be, both individually and in the relationship.
- Moving toward an experience of "one flesh" intimacy and a return to God's original design for marriage.

## The Special Role of Intimacy

While in some cultures marriage may take place for economic or political reasons or it may be an arranged marriage, most couples marry because they have "grown in love" to the place where they wish to make their relationship permanent. This desire to be in a permanent relationship is driven by our desire for intimacy.

Intimacy is one of the key words that defines the love we seek in primary relationships, especially marriage. Intimacy describes that deep closeness, connection, acceptance and understanding that we long for in marriage. It is the goal of marriage. It is a dynamic, interactive and reciprocal process that evolves over time that allows us to feel safe, to share our joys and our hurts, our fears and our past without the fear of being judged or condemned.



*“The married are those who have taken the terrible risk of intimacy and, having taken it, know life without intimacy to be impossible.” Carolyn Heilbrun.*

*“When marriages fail, it is not increasing conflict that is the cause. It is decreasing affection and emotional responsiveness.” Sue Johnson, Hold Me Tight.*

*“The lack of emotional responsiveness rather than the level of conflict is the best predictor of how solid a marriage will be five years into it. The demise of marriages begins with a growing absence of responsive intimate reactions. The conflict comes later.” Sue Johnson, Hold Me Tight.*

Intimacy becomes a part our marriages when we give attention to our emotions. When we learn to recognize and respond to each other on an emotional level, we move to a deeper level of connection. Emotionally healthy marriages are those marriages where the couple are aware of their emotions and share their feelings with each other; where they respect, honor and understand each other and their relationship; and where they emotionally support and nurture each other.

Intimacy is vital to a relationship, but it is always at risk while ever we take our love for granted. If we assume our love will always be there and fail to express our love for our spouse, we are putting our marriage in danger! The greater number of marriages that end do so not

because the couple are fighting all the time but because of loneliness. Loneliness emerges in relationships when the couple fail to let each other know on a daily and regular basis how much their love for each other means to them. We can't afford to drift apart simply through failure to express our love.

Scripture highlights the importance of regularly expressing our love and appreciation for each other. When Paul wrote to the believers in Ephesus, he reminded the husbands to love their wives ‘as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself up for her’ (Eph 5). Wives were encouraged to ‘respect their husbands,’ and couples were asked to ‘submit to each other out of reverence for Christ.’ Children were encouraged to obey their parents, and parents were encouraged to avoid ‘harassing’ their children (Eph 5). God holds high ideals for marriages and families and invites couples to demonstrate His love for people in the way they love each other, and the way they love their children.

## Building a Successful Marriage

Noted psychologist and marriage researcher, Dr. John Gottman studied hundreds of couples over many years and discovered that couples who were successful in marriage and remained happily married for the long-term shared a number of common traits.

Gottman states: “What can make a marriage work is surprisingly simple. Happily married couples aren’t smarter, richer, or more psychologically astute than others. But in their day-to-day lives, they have hit upon a dynamic that keeps their negative thoughts and feelings about each other (which all couples

have) from overwhelming their positive ones. They have what I call an emotionally intelligent marriage. The more emotionally intelligent a couple – the better able they are to understand, honor, and respect each other and their marriage – the more likely that they will indeed live happily ever after. Emotional intelligence is a skill that can be taught.

We now know that an unhappy marriage can increase your chances of getting sick by roughly 35% and even shorten your life by an average of 4 years. The flip side: people who are happily married live longer, healthier lives than either divorced people or those who are unhappily married”. (John Gottman)

Gottman found these three key traits of successful marriages:

### **1. Get to Know Each Other Incredibly Well**

Emotionally intelligent couples are intimately familiar with each other's world. They have a richly detailed “love map” – that part of the brain where you store all the relevant information about your partner's life. They remember the major events in each other's history, and they keep updating their information as the facts and feelings of their spouse's world change. They know each other's goals in life, each other's worries, and each other's hopes.

From knowledge springs not only love but the fortitude to weather marital storms. Couples who have detailed love maps of each other's world are far better prepared to cope with stressful events and conflict.

### **2. Nurture Your Fondness and Admiration**

Fondness and admiration are two of the most critical elements in a rewarding and long-lasting romance. Although happily married couples may feel driven to distraction at times by their partner's personality flaws, they still feel that the person they

married is worthy of honor and respect. When this sense is completely missing from a marriage, the relationship cannot be revived.

Having a fundamentally positive view of your spouse and your marriage is a powerful buffer when bad times hit. Couples who have this reserve of good feelings will not have cataclysmic thoughts about separation and divorce each time they have an argument. Fondness and admiration can be fragile unless you remain aware of how critical they are to the friendship that is at the core of a good marriage. By simply reminding yourself of your spouse's positive qualities – even as you grapple with each other's flaws – you can prevent a happy marriage from deteriorating. If you maintain a sense of respect for your spouse, you are less likely to act disgusted with him or her when you disagree.

### **3. Turn Towards Each Other Rather Than Away**

Real-life romance is fueled by the intentional approach to staying connected. It is kept alive each time you let your spouse know he or she is valued during the grind of every-day life. Comical as it may sound, romance actually grows when a couple are in the supermarket and the wife says, “Are we out of bleach?” and the husband says, “I don't know; let me get some just in case,” instead of shrugging apathetically.

It grows when you know your spouse is having a bad day at work and you take sixty seconds out of your own work day to leave words of encouragement; it grows when your wife tells you one morning, “I had the worst nightmare last night,” and you say, “I'm in a big hurry but tell me about it and we can talk further tonight,” rather than “I don't have time.” In all of these instances husband and wife are making a choice to turn towards each other rather than away.



## GROUP EXERCISE

How might a husband be 'physically' present in the house but still be 'emotionally absent'?

How might a lack of trust in a partner create difficulties for a married couple?

Discuss ways in which a couple could turn towards each other.

## Steps in Dealing with Differences

The quality of marriage is greatly enhanced when we develop the capacity to deal with differences. When differences are viewed as inherently bad or as something to be eliminated, barriers are created which leads to defensiveness, self-protection and eventually estrangement or separation. However, when differences can be viewed as representing opportunities to grow, they become valuable. Our differences are what allow us to grow as individuals and as a couple. This capacity to sincerely engage in a bilateral process of mutual respect and regard is central to a dynamic rather than static relationship. As we rub off on each other, we are enriched.

Progressive steps on a continuum:

- Acknowledging
- Accepting
- Respecting
- Enjoying
- Treasuring

*"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" (Gospel Workers, p. 473).*

In addition to accepting the fact of differences, we are to respect the feelings of those who are different from us and to find in the differences an opportunity to grow:

*"Marked diversities of disposition and character frequently exist in the same family, for it is in the order of God that persons of varied temperament should associate together. When this is the case, each member of the household should sacredly regard the feelings and respect and the right of the others. By this means mutual consideration and forbearance will be cultivated, prejudices will be softened, and rough points of character smoothed. Harmony*

*may be secured, and the blending of the varied temperaments may be a benefit to each” (Adventist Home, p. 427).*

Phil. 2:4, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

There needs to be much communication along the way, revealing feelings and telling each other what is really going on inside us. That same communication will be part of processing difficulties, concerns, and hurts. Sometimes we will be able to just overlook some difficulties caused by differences. Sometimes we will just be able to express concerns to our partner and things will be taken care of. Sometimes we need to enter the process of forgiveness, for hurts have been deep.

Focus more on how our differences can enable us to complement one another. Focus more on our similarities. Our differences often blind us to the fact that we are more alike than different. In Christ we recognize each other as brothers and sisters in one family. Our common love for Him helps us to bridge the human differences that exist among us. *“The more closely we are united with Jesus Christ, the more tender and affectionate will be our conduct toward one another” Testimonies to Ministers, p. 377.*

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## Marriage and Family Dynamics

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Anderson, Neil T. and Charles Mylander. (1996). *The Christ-Centered Marriage: Discovering and Enjoying Your Freedom in Christ Together*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.

Balswick, J. O., & Balswick, J. K. (2006) *A model for marriage: Covenant, grace, empowerment and intimacy*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Brown, J. & Brown, P. (1999). *The total marriage: A guide to successful marriage*. Pittsburgh, PA: Autumn House Press.

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Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Crown.

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- Mueller, E., & Brasil de Souza, E. (2015). *Marriage: Biblical and theological aspects*. Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.
- Oliver, W. & E. (2015) *Real family talk: Answers to questions about love, marriage, and sex*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishg Association.
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- Stanley, S. M., et al. (2014) *A lasting promise: A christian guide to fighting for your marriage*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
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Theisen, Inc. Hawkins, R. (1991). *Strengthening Marital Intimacy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House.

Thomas, G. (2000). *Sacred marriage: What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House.

Thomas, G. (2005). *Devotions for a sacred marriage: A year of weekly devotions for couples*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Whitfield, K. E. (2001). *Fighting for your African American marriage*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wilson, F. & P. (1996). *The Master's Degree*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

### DVDs

Jeffery, C. (Director). (n. d.). *Keeping the faith [DVD]*. Simi Valley, CA: Adventist Media Center.

North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (2010). *From this day forward [DVD]*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource.

Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN). (2009). *Marriage in God's hands with Willie and Elaine Oliver [DVD]*. West Frankfort, IL: Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN).

Hope Chanel. (2013). *Real Family Talk with Willie & Elaine Oliver [DVD]*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

## Module 5

# Interpersonal Relationships

## Introduction

A man walks into a lumberyard and inquires,  
“Do you have any 4 x 2’s?”

“Do you mean 2 x 4’s?” replies the clerk.

“I don’t know,” the man responds with a puzzled look on his face, “but let me check.” He walks back out to the parking lot and confers with another man in a pickup truck. Returning to the clerk, he replies, “Yes, we want 2 x 4’s.”

“How long do you want them?” asks the clerk.

Again, a look of bewilderment washes over the man’s countenance, “I don’t know,” he states hesitantly, “let me check.” He walks back outside to the pickup truck and speaks briefly with the driver. Once back inside he announces to the clerk, “We want them for a long, long time because we’re gonna build a house.”



## GROUP EXERCISE

**This exercise will help you begin a presentation on communication by showing that few of us really are good listeners or communicators. By the use of a humorous, light-hearted exercise, the participants are quickly shown the difficulties involved in communication. Supply small sheets of paper for the group and ask them to number from 1-10 on it. Inform them that you are going to ask them a series of questions, all of which have short answers. They are to simply jot down their responses on their sheet of paper. Read each question only once.**

1. Is there any federal law against a man’s marrying his widow’s sister?
2. If you went to bed at eight o’clock at night and set the alarm to wake you up at nine o’clock in the morning, how many hours of sleep would you get?
3. Do they have a Fourth of July in England?
4. If you had only one match and entered a cold room that had a kerosene lamp, an oil heater, and a wood stove, which would you light first for maximum heat?



5. How many animals of each species did Moses take aboard the Ark with him during the Great Flood?
6. The Yankees and the Tigers play five baseball games. They each win three games. No ties or disputed games are involved. How come?
7. How many birthdays does the average man have? The average woman?
8. According to the International Law, if an airplane should crash on the exact border between two countries, would unidentified survivors be buried in the country they were traveling to, or the country they were traveling from?
9. An archeologist claims he has dug up a coin that is clearly dated 46 B.C. Why is he a liar?
10. A man builds an ordinary house with four sides, except that each side has a southern exposure. A bear comes to the door and rings the doorbell. What color is the bear?

### Answers

1. There's no law against a man's marrying his widow's sister, but it would be virtually impossible since to have a widow the man would have to be dead.
2. You'd get one hour's sleep if you used an analog clock. Alarm clocks don't know the difference between morning and night.
3. Yes, they have a fourth of July in England. Also a fifth, sixth, seventh etc.
4. First of all you would light the match.
5. Moses took no animals at all, but Noah took two of each.
6. Who said the Yankees and Tigers were playing each other in those games?
7. The average man (or woman) has one birthday. All the rest are anniversaries.
8. You cannot bury survivors under any law—especially if they still have the strength to object.
9. B.C. means before Christ and it would be impossible for someone at that time to know it was B.C.
10. The bear would be white. The only place all four exposures would be south is at the North Pole.

## Communication is difficult

If you wonder why we sometimes find it difficult to communicate, consider the following:

- There are more than 4000 languages and dialects spoken in the world. Eighty are spoken in Los Angeles county alone.
- The English language includes an 800,000 word vocabulary (500,000 words and 300,000 technical terms) which increases at 1000 words per year.
- The English alphabet contains more than 29 thousand quadrillion (27 zeros) possible combinations.
- Few people use more than 60,000 words during their lifetime.
- From the expansive 500,000 word English lexicon, journalists typically utilize less than 20,000 different words and pastors (often considered quite wordy) usually possess a mere 10,000 word vocabulary. Skilled workers utilize approximately 5000 different words while farm laborers get along quite well with a limited 1,600 word lexicon.
- Medical doctors must know the names of over 1300 bacteria, 433 muscles, 193 veins,

707 arteries, 500 pigments, 295 poisons, 109 tumors, 700+ different tests, and over 200 diseases.

In addition to a plethora of words, the English language often fails to follow grammatical rules. In fact, there seem to be more exceptions than rules. Unlike users of Hebrew or Greek who use predictable grammatical patterns, Americans and other English speaking individuals simply invent a new word.

Consider these examples:

- Why do we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway?
- Since pro and con are opposites, does that mean congress is the opposite of progress (sorry, that answer is too obvious)?
- How can a fat chance and a slim chance mean the same thing?
- How is it possible for your nose to run and your feet to smell?
- If the plural of goose is geese, why isn't the plural of mouse then meese?
- If the plural of mouse is mice, why isn't the plural of house then hice?
- The masculine pronouns are he, his and him; so why aren't the feminine pronouns she, shis and shim?
- If the plural of foot is feet, why isn't the plural of boot called beet?
- If the plural of man is men, why isn't the plural of pan then pen?

In a recent edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, the 500 most commonly used words had an average of 23 different meanings for each word. The often used English word, round, has at least 70 distinct meanings. Given the above information, it seems to be a marvelous feat for English speaking

people to communicate at all. How can you know for certain what the other person means by the words they are using?

One lexicographer claims that if Shakespeare came back today, he would only understand five out of every nine words spoken. Something to think about when choosing a Bible to read or study since the King James Version was contemporary with Shakespeare. Because many of the words used in the KJV have a different meaning today, a serious Bible student would find a more modern translation useful. Another option would be to use a good lexicon to research the words in their original language or switch to the New King James Version.

## Definition of communication

Communication is any modus operandi by or through which eventuates the reciprocal transposition of information between or among entities or groups via commonly understood systems of symbols, signs or behavioral patterns of activity.

## Mis-communication

What you say is not easily understood, therefore miscommunication is probably more the norm than the exception. Remember that each of the 500 most commonly used words have an average of 23 different meanings for each word. Verbal miscommunications are frequent.

A woman was having her floors refinished and she cautioned the workmen, "Be especially careful of this dining room table. It goes back to Louis the Fourteenth."

With an understanding nod one of the workmen replied, "Don't feel

too bad, if I don't make a payment by Friday, my whole living room set goes back to Sears on the sixteenth."

In addition to verbal mis-communication, it is easy to misread someone's body language (visual communication). We are often told that crossing the arms gives a body language message of resistance to what is being said. That may be true on some occasions, but there are a myriad of reasons why people cross their arms. Some just find it a more comfortable position than putting their hands at their sides.

Still others (kinesthetics) misunderstand because of their current feelings or past communication. Depression or anger may cause one to take offense at words that otherwise might elicit chuckles and a smile. When in doubt, ask the sender for clarification. If in doubt (as a sender) provide the message again and request and echo before sending more information.

We all know what we mean when we speak or write, but what we actually say can be completely misunderstood. The following sentences were taken from letters to a local social services department.

- I cannot get sick pay. I have six children. Can you tell me why?
- I'm glad to report that my husband who is missing is dead.
- This is my eighth child. What are you going to do about it?
- I am very much annoyed to have my son branded illiterate. This is a dirty lie as I was married a week before he was born.
- I am forwarding my marriage certificate and three children, one of which is a mistake as you can see.

- Unless I get my husband's money pretty soon, I will be forced to live an immortal life.
- In accordance with your instructions I have given birth to twins in the enclosed envelope.

Mis-communication often results when a message has two or more possible meanings. Consider the following story:

Author and critic Alexander Wollcott liked to sit at the window of his New York apartment overlooking the East River and watch the boats go by. A visitor once asked him, "How can you sit here by the hour watching one battered old tugboat after another chugging by at ten knots? It sounds pretty dull to me."

"It's not always tugboats," responded Wollcott, "Every now and then a dead body floats by."

"A dead body," gasped his guest in amazement, "What's a dead body doing in the river?"

"I can't say for sure," responded Wollcott nonchalantly, "but my guess would be about five knots."

## Communication styles

### Auditory

(Processes information through the spoken word). Some people depend on the spoken word for communication. Auditory individuals take literally what they hear. Usually they are not very good at reading body language because they are so deeply involved in listening to verbal language.

*A mother was justifiably concerned about the foul language her oldest son had begun using—especially when around his younger brother. The concerned mother asked her pastor for some advice. Being from the old school philosophy—spare the rod*

*and spoil the child—he advised, “Every time he utters a foul word, slap him on the mouth.”*

*The next morning the two sons came downstairs for breakfast and the oldest son happened to be the first one to sit at the table. “What would you like for breakfast?” inquired Mom.*

*“I’ll have some of those blankety-blank Post Toasties,” responded the oldest son.*

*POW! The mother smacked him across the mouth. It surprised him so much he fell off his chair. Turning to the younger brother Mom inquired, “And what would you like for breakfast?”*

*Cowering in his chair the boy replied, “Well Mom, one thing is for certain, I don’t want any Post Toasties.”*

Auditory people tend to respond with such phrases as:

That sounds good to me!

I hear what you are saying.

How does that sound to you?

## Visual

(Processes information through visual images). Visual people tend to absorb information by visualizing what is being said. As someone speaks to them they tend to create a picture in their mind of what is being said. When trying to recall they often glance upward, as if checking through a filing cabinet in their head. Word pictures are more important to visualizers than precise definitions.

After graphically expounding the story of Jonah and the great fish to her Sabbath School class, the teacher decided to quiz her students. “What is the moral of this story?” she inquired.

Everyone in the class was silent. Finally Timmy (a very visual young man) responded, “People make whales throw up!”

## Visual people tend to use phrases like

I see what you are saying.

That looks good to me.

Does this idea look all right to you?

How does it appear to you?

## Kinesthetic

(Relates life’s experiences through feelings). Most of life is captured through feelings and emotions rather than from hearing or seeing. Tone of voice is more important than actual words. How they feel about what they see or hear is much more important than what is being said. Kinesthetics are usually very good at reading body language. It is difficult to hide the truth from a person who communicates through feelings. Conversely, sometimes they will never accept facts because of their preconceived feelings.

*One day Lucy is talking to Charlie Brown, “You know what I don’t understand? I don’t understand love!”*

*Charlie sighs and replies, “You can’t explain love. I can recommend a book or a poem or a painting, but I can’t explain love.”*

*“Well try, Charlie Brown, try,” persists Lucy.*

*“Well, all right,” responds Charlie, “lets say that I see this beautiful, cute little girl walk by.”*

*“Why does she have to be cute?” interrupts Lucy. “Why can’t a person fall in love with someone who has a big nose and freckles?”*

*“Well, maybe you are right,” admits Charlie. “Let’s say I see this girl walk by with this great big nose and...”*

*“I didn’t say great big nose,” fumes Lucy.*

*“You not only can’t explain love,” acknowledges Charlie, “you can’t even talk about it!”*

### Common phrases used by kinesthetic people include

I don't understand why, but I have a bad feeling about this \_\_\_\_\_."

You never understand what I am trying to say.

I somehow sense that you are upset with me.

I can't put my finger on it, but something isn't right.

## Communication techniques

### Informer

In order to communicate properly during important conversations, it is advisable to complete your thought so the other person does as little interpreting as possible. The echo technique is useful to foster complete thought communication.

1. Statement is made by the first speaker.
2. Statement acknowledged by the recipient and paraphrased.
3. Original speaker acknowledges whether or not paraphrase is correct. If correct, then another thought is communicated. If not, paraphrasing and explaining continues until recipient understands what was being said.

*Two men were talking one day and one of them remarked, "My wife talks to herself a lot these days."*

*Smiling, his friend replied, "Mine does too, but she doesn't know it. She thinks I'm listening."*

### Clarifier

Sometimes we use too many words in an attempt to appear intelligent. Fewer words may offer less of an opportunity for misunderstanding. A story is told about a constituent who wrote a rather verbose letter to President Harry Truman, asking the meaning of the Post Office motto: Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays

these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.

Truman wrote this terse reply, "It means they deliver the mail in the winter time."

*The following is a true story that happened in a small Midwestern town in the United States. Because it was a very small town, the volunteer fire department's telephone was answered by the police officer on duty, who in turn would sound the fire whistle to rally the volunteers to duty. One morning, the Chief of Police had just arrived when the fire department telephone rang. "Fire department," acknowledged the chief.*

*"Send the fire truck!" the voice on the other end shouted frantically, followed by a click as the party hung up the telephone. The chief stood stunned, not knowing what to do. In a few minutes the telephone rang again.*

*Quickly the chief picked up the phone and said, "Fire department."*

*"Send the truck now!" screamed the voice on the other end, followed by a click as the connection was broken. Realizing that someone's house was on fire, the chief rushed outside to see if he could spot any smoke. No smoke. As he pondered what to do a strategy formulated in his brain just in case the individual called a third time.*

*Sure enough, in a few moments the telephone rang again. Picking up the receiver the chief inquired, "Where's the fire?"*

*"In the kitchen!" came the emphatic reply just before the individual once more slammed down the receiver.*

Communication requires effort and thinking by both parties. While they may seem awkward at first, communication techniques teach individuals how to understand each other and prevent miscommunication. The informer, clarifier and echo are all techniques designed to reduce the

amount of “nothing” or “small talk” and promote understanding and resolution of problems. But there are other skills necessary for good communication.

### Body Reader

Learning to read or understand body language may be the most important skill in correct communication. The eyes are often more truthful than the tongue. Even though the words may be sweet, it is difficult for the eyes to hide anger, disappointment, sorrow or even happiness. However, eye contact may also be taken as a threat depending on the situation.

Gestures, both with eyes and head, provide clues in the communication process. The subtle nod of agreement or the reflex of squinted eyes or wrinkled brow in disagreement. One means “I understand” and the other asks “what did you say?” The upward glance may have many meanings. The sender may be searching their memory bank for just the right word; or they may find you boring; or they may be dishonest; or their culture may find eye contact rude. It is important to understand what is considered appropriate by the other party. If you break eye contact too quickly you may appear insincere. If you maintain eye contact too long you may appear aggressive.

Touch is a tremendous communicator. It offers affirmation, encouragement and comfort without verbiage. Even teens appreciate a sincere hug (in private of course) from an adult or a pat on the back. Touch can be neutral and comforting or highly charged and sexual. The opposite of touch is space. Standing too close to a stranger may make them feel uncomfortable. Likewise, standing too far from a friend may communicate in a negative manner.

In a boardroom, no one sits at the head of a table except the chairperson. Even in jury rooms,

the person who takes the head seat is usually chosen as foreman and is often a professional who feels superior. Space is a powerful communicator.

*When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. (Luke 14:8, NIV).*

Body position can also be very important in communication. Leaning forward as you listen indicates you are fully focused on what is being said. Leaning back and perhaps folding your arms often indicates boredom.

Body language can even affect your mood. If you are feeling depressed, force yourself to walk erect and hold your head high. It will lessen your feelings of depression. In conversation, lean forward rather than backward and you will more easily become a part of the discussion. Maintain eye contact and it will give you confidence.

### Encourager

Contrary to what some experts say, it is usually impossible to provide too much approval or affirmation during communication. Paul admonished, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (I Thessalonians 5:11, NIV). Telling a friend how much you appreciate their careful listening and honest input enhances future communication. As Scripture says, “Everyone enjoys giving good advice, and how wonderful it is to be able to say the right thing at the right time!” (Proverbs 15:23, LB).

### Peacemaker

It is possible to win a verbal battle and lose the relationship. Making a hostile enemy is not the goal

of communication. Honesty does not have to be brutal—just honest. Honesty does not require you to express every disagreeable feeling you have toward another person. But the feelings you share should be genuine. The peacemaker clarifies their feelings, corrects misunderstandings and reaches agreement on word definitions. They usually follow this advice, “Don’t talk so much. You keep putting your foot in your mouth. Be sensible and turn off the flow.” (Proverbs 10:19, LB).

According to one writer, the goal of communication is not happiness; it’s giving and receiving honest messages about each other. This process may or may not carry with it feelings of happiness. Communication is hard enough without happiness mucking up the water. Happiness may be a by-product of communication, but it shouldn’t be the goal of communication.

### **All behavior is communication**

Whether on the telephone or face-to-face, all behavior communicates something to the other person. Studies indicate that it only takes 15 seconds to reveal your personality, intelligence, education, upbringing and ethnic background on the telephone. Five variables in your voice reflect who you are

- Volume
- Rate
- Word choice
- Timing
- Enunciation

In our attempts to communicate with our voice it is best to adjust our rate, volume and timing to those of the person with whom we are trying to communicate. If that person speaks slowly, adjust your rate accordingly. This is not to be done in a

condescending or mocking manner, but with respect and a deliberate effort to be clearly understood.

*A gentle tongue [with its healing power]  
is a tree of life, but willful contrariness  
in it breaks down the spirit. (Proverbs  
15:4, Amplified Bible).*

Imagine how much you communicate just standing silently before another individual. Researchers estimate that 50-100 bits of information are exchanged every second between two individuals actively communicating. Unfortunately, what you intend to send is not always the message received.

A pastor was very pleased with his new loose-leaf Bible. It provided him great flexibility in preaching because he could place his note pages right inside the Bible and everyone would think he was preaching without notes. With great anticipation the pastor decided to preach his way through the Bible beginning with Genesis.

During the second week of his series he was expounding on the story about the fall of Adam and Eve. Looking down at his text he read, “And Adam said to Eve...” Pausing briefly he turned the page to continue. A look of bewilderment flooded his face as he frantically turned back and forth between the two pages. Finally realizing what was wrong he continued, “It looks like a leaf is missing.”



## Conclusion

According to some statisticians the average person spends at least one-fifth of his/her life talking. In a single day, each person uses enough words to fill a 54-page book. In one year's time a person will fill 132 four-hundred page books. On a normal day the average person will use between 25,000-30,000 words. Is it any wonder that we sometimes misunderstand and are often misunderstood?

*"Mommy," inquired a little seven-year-old boy, "who do I look like, you or Daddy?"*

*Mother wrinkled her brow and paused before answering, "Why do you want to know?"*

*"It's for school," replied the youngster, "Our teacher wants us to find out and report it to the class."*

*Mother thought for a few moments and responded, "Tell them you have my coloring but your father's fixtures."*

*The next day in school his teacher found it very difficult to keep a straight face as the little boy proudly announced to the entire class, "I have my mother's coloring but my father's fixtures."*

Oops! Another communication problem!





## Interpersonal Relationships

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Chapman, G. D. (2003). *Covenant marriage: Building communication & intimacy*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

Chapman, G. (2007). *Anger: Handling a powerful emotion in a healthy way*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, U.S.

Chapman, G. (2007). *Now you're speaking my language: Honest communication and deeper intimacy for a stronger marriage*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group.

Chapman, G., & Thomas, J. M. (2013). *When sorry Isn't enough: Making things right with those you love*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing.

Garland, D. (2012). *Family Ministry: A comprehensive Guide*. (second edition). Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity Press

Laaser, M., & Laaser, D. (2008). *The Seven desires of every heart*. United States: Zondervan.

#### Video

Hendrix, Harville. *Marriage & Love Relationship Skills with Harville Hendrix*. Success Television.

Taylor, Arlene. (2008). *7 Secrets to Communication*. Realizations, Inc.

#### DVD's

Hope Channel (2014). *Real Family Talk with Willie and Elaine Oliver*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

## Module 6

# Parent Education and Guidance

### Introduction

Parenting is one of the most important and challenging tasks God has given to humanity. And raising children in today's society is even more challenging than ever. Contemporary children are bombarded with confusing messages that are hostile to Godly values – messages received through the social media, the internet, other adults, and their peers. Despite these challenges, parents remain the greatest protective factors against risky behaviors and ubiquitous destructive messages.

It is truly an amazing opportunity for parents to not only raise healthy and self-reliant children here on earth, but to prepare them for eternal life. We can say then that parenting is sacred work; in essence, its primary function is to make disciples. Parents have the task and honor of exuding Christlike love to their children so they will grow up to love, adore, and worship their Heavenly Father (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Parents are also tasked with setting effective boundaries that will protect them and others (Proverbs 22:6). God, being the ultimate parent, has given himself as an example of how to parent His children (Revelation 3:19); He loves us and He corrects us.

To be sure, there are no perfect parents! However, parents who educate themselves and create an environment of grace and humility will reap the positive benefits in their relationship with their children and in how their children relate to and influence others.

### Making Disciples in the Home

#### Family—A Setting for Making Disciples

God intended the family to be a natural setting for carrying out Jesus' directive, "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19).

*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.*  
(Child Guidance, p. 476)

*You may be evangelists in the home, ministers of grace to your children.*  
(Child Guidance, p. 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  
(Child Guidance, p. 549)*

**Families convey truth, values and lifestyle.** Part of being a disciple is to accept certain truths, values and lifestyle (John 8:31). To make a disciple, then involves leading another to accept the teachings of Jesus and to make them the basis for his/her value system and lifestyle.

*Make it your lifework to form the characters  
of your children according to the Divine  
pattern. (Child Guidance, p. 476)*

**Families can lead one another to Jesus and provide a setting where the capacity to be intimate with Jesus and with others is developed.** Being a disciple also involves intimate relationships (John 13:35; John 15:15). To make a disciple in this sense then, is to form a close relationship with that individual, to introduce him to Jesus Christ and others in God's family and to assist him in developing the skills necessary to function in such close relationships. It is in the family that individuals learn how to form and maintain relationships.

*Consider the family institution a  
training school, preparatory for the  
performance of religious duties.  
(Child Guidance, p. 482)*

*The family is key in its significance  
because it is the place where [relational]  
skills are learned well or learned  
poorly. And ...if the family is the social  
organization in which these skills are  
learned first, and thus most essentially,  
then the family becomes central to the  
process of disciple making.*

*It is a place where disciplelike relational  
skills are learned, and it is a primary  
group in which disciple making takes  
place. (Guernsey, 1982, p. 11)*

## Parenting as Discipleship

Parents are disciples making disciples. Beyond caring for children's needs, beyond teaching them what behaviors are proper or improper, "The larger concern is the gradual induction of the child into a lifestyle—a lifestyle of Christian discipleship" (Osborne, 1989, p. 49).

Lee (1991) affirms the discipleship motif as being particularly appropriate for Christian parents: "Parenthood, like discipleship, is a teaching relationship, but the teaching is more than cognitive. Children orient their lives according to deep personal relationships with their parents" (p.270). Because of the natural processes of attachment and interaction that occur between parent and child, no one is better positioned to accomplish the discipling function than a parent.

Different views of the human nature of children underlie different parenting philosophies. Disciple making as a parenting paradigm carries assumptions about the human nature of children, responsibilities of parents, and child discipline which stand in contrast to some other views reflected in Christian parenting literature. The authoritarian-type parenting approach with its insistence on the submission of children to strict parental authority as taught by some individuals is not the kind of modeling/teaching that Jesus used in making disciples of His followers. Though parents have valid authority over their child, their leadership exhibits warmth, love, commitment, and sensitivity to their child's unique needs, all of which encourage the child to become increasingly autonomous.

Christian parental leadership is empathic and child-focused.

When parents think of their responsibility toward their children in terms of discipleship, they are likely to discover new, more constructive options related to discipline. Discipline comes to be viewed for its teaching function, than as punishment. Parents become more attentive to their own strong emotions and unresolved issues and give greater attention to resolving anger and frustration in alternative ways.

Discipleship parenting today takes seriously the implementation in the home of the gospel commission of Christ. The family is viewed as the most significant field of missionary toil and the introduction of children and youth to Jesus as the highest mission.

### Upbringing affects religious experience

*Their whole religious experience is affected by their bringing up in childhood. (Child Guidance, p. 473)*

*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. (Strauss, 1975, pp. 23, 24)*

*Early family experience determines our adult character structure, the inner picture we harbor of ourselves, how we see others and feel about them, our concept of right and wrong, our capacity to establish the close, warm, sustained relationships necessary to have a family of our own, our attitude toward authority and toward the Ultimate Authority in our lives, and the way we attempt to make sense out of our existence. No human interaction has a greater impact on our lives than our family experience. (Nicholi II, 1979, p. 11)*

Family members who experience affirmation, encouragement, gentle touch, focused attention, loving discipline and times of healing and forgiveness in the family will likely see God as loving and have a growing understanding of God's grace. They will likely continue in their discipleship and be successful in discipling their own children and mates. They will likely be able to form those close friendships in the community around them that most naturally lead to fruitful witnessing.

## Encouragement for home disciple-makers

### A partnership with Christ.

Where we as parents are unable to do more, Jesus never rests.

*Jesus Himself, in His infinite mercy, is working on human hearts, effecting spiritual transformations so amazing that angels look on with astonishment and joy. (Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 731)*

### Supernatural beings enlisted.

Heavenly agencies are working on our side.

*We need to recognize the Holy Spirit as our enlightener. That Spirit loves to address the children and discover to them the treasures and beauties of the Word.*  
(Child Guidance, pp. 495, 496)

*Angels will be your strong helpers.*  
(Child Guidance, p. 548)

### Fellow Christians can help.

The New Testament speaks over and over again of the importance of “one anothering” (Eph. 4:2, 25, 32; 5:21; James 5:16; Gal. 6:2; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9.) Surely assisting one another with the tasks of parenting is a ministry to be encouraged.

### Discipling opportunities are on-going.

Discipling is an ongoing work. We have a discipling influence on one another as long as we have a relationship. Thus we might say that only death ends the discipling process.

### Summing Up

The primary objective of parents is to make Christian disciples of their children.

A disciple is one who believes in certain teachings, follows a certain lifestyle and has the capacity for intimate relationships.

The family is the primary place where intimacy skills are learned well or learned poorly.

Certain aspects of the discipling process are continual; warm relationships offer the best hope that a dear one will become and remain a disciple of Jesus Christ.



## GROUP EXERCISE

**Write your definition for spiritual parenting.**

**How do you think Jesus would have parented?**

**List all the ways children are a blessing in your lives and the lives of others.**

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## Model for Parenting

### The Divine Textbook on Parenting

Christian author and psychologist Bruce Narramore suggests that within Scripture there are at least five sources of information and instruction for parents (Narramore, 1979, pp. 15 - 21):

### Narratives of parents, children and families.

Both positive and negative aspects of parent-child relationships can be seen in the lives of Bible characters. (Cf. Romans 15:14.)

### **Bible commands and promises to parents.**

Such verses as Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6, 15; Ephesians 6:4.

### **Teaching about human nature and personality.**

Such passages as Romans 3:9, 19, 23, in which all of humankind is described as being in sin, have a direct bearing upon our understanding of what is needed to help children with the human nature with which they are born.

**Counsel on relationships.** Instruction of Scripture pertaining to interpersonal relationships can be applied to the parent-child relationship as well (Matt. 7:12; John 13:34, Eph. 4:31, 32).

**Family concepts in God's relationship with His people.** God's relationship with His people provides a model for parenting. His people are called a family (Eph. 3:15) or a household (Eph. 2:19). His relationship with them is covenant-based (Gen. 17:7; Isa. 55:3; Jer. 32:40; Heb. 10:16) and is often described using family terms: God is like a father (2 Sam. 7:14; Jer. 31:9; Matt. 6:9; Luke 23:34; Eph. 3:14; Rev. 1:6). Several verses also describe God as like a mother (Deut. 32:11; Isa. 49:15; 66:12ff; Hos. 11:1-4;

Matt. 23:37). Believers are children of God (Matt 5:9; Rom. 8:14-16).

Analogies can be drawn in two directions from the family images used to describe the relationship of God and His people: God is better understood as individuals think of Him in family terms. By pondering how God functions as a husband and parent, we learn about our responsibilities and relationships as marital partners, parents and family members.

*By examining his Word and learning how he functions as a parent, we can learn what kind of parents we should be. Then when we commit ourselves completely to him and let him control our lives, he is free to express through us his wisdom and strength as the Model Parent. He provides both the example and the encouragement, both the direction and the dynamic for us to be successful parents.*  
(Strauss, 1975, p. 23)



## **GROUP EXERCISE**

**The Divine Model for Parents: In Scripture, God presents Himself as a Parent.**

**Activity: In what parental roles does God function as a parent? Divide into three groups.**

**Identify the parenting role as expressed in texts.**

### **Group 1:**

Role of \_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 16:11, 12; 17:1-7; 20:2

John 10:26-28

Deuteronomy 1:31

Hosea 11:1, 4

Matthew 6:25-34

Philippians 4:19

Ephesians 1:3-10 1

Timothy 6:17

### **Group 2:**

Role of \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 5:2; 7:28, 29

John 14:26

Hosea 11:3

Psalms 25:4, 5; 27:11; 32:8

Isaiah 2:3

### **Group 3:**

Role of \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 3:11, 12

Hebrews 12:10

Revelation 3:19

Deuteronomy 8:5

Numbers 14:20-23

2 Samuel 12:1-12

Psalms 39:11

## Our Heavenly Father the Great Provider

Countless references portray God as the Great Provider (i.e., Ex. 16:11-12; 17:1-7; Deut. 1:31; Matt 6:25-34; John 10:26-28; Eph. 1:3-10; Phil 4:19; 1Tim. 6:17).

All this God does because of the commitment He has to His people. The term used in Scripture to express that commitment is “covenant.” (Gen. 6:18; 9:8-17; 17:1-8; Ex. 6:2-7; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10-12)

Provision always precedes request. (Gen. 17:8, 9; Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6; John 15:9-17; Rom. 12:1, 2; Gal. 5:1, 16; Eph. 5:1, 2, 8; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:7-21)

*In His dealings with the wanderers in the desert, in all their marchings to and fro, in their exposure to hunger, thirst and weariness, in their peril from heathen foes, and in the manifestation of His providence for their relief, God was seeking to strengthen their faith by revealing to them the power that was continually working for their good. And having taught them to trust in His love and power, it was His purpose to set before them, in the precepts of His law, the standard of character to which, through His grace, He desired them to attain.* (Education, p. 34)

## The Master Teacher

**God instructed our first parents and His people across history. (Deut. 6:1; Ps. 32:8; Is. 2:3; Hosea 11:3, 4; Matt. 7:28, 29)**

*In His interest for His children, our heavenly Father personally directed*

*their education. Often they were visited by His messengers, the holy angels, and from them received counsel and instruction. Often as they walked in the garden in the cool of the day they heard the voice of God, and face to face held communion with the Eternal.* (Education, p. 21)

## The family school. (Deut. 6:4-9)

*The system of education established in Eden centered in the family...*

*In the divine plan of education as adapted to man's condition after the Fall, Christ stands as the representative of the Father, the connecting link between God and man; He is the great teacher of mankind. And He ordained that men and women should be his representatives. The family was the school and the parents were the teachers.* (Education, p. 33)

## Lessons taught to Israel. (Deut. 6:20-25; Deut. 32:1-4, 7; 33:8, 10; Josh. 4:1-7; Ps 78)

*Precious were the lessons taught to Israel during their sojourn at Sinai. This was a period of special training for the inheritance of Canaan... Man was made to feel his ignorance and weakness in the presence of Him who bath “weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.” Isaiah 40:12. Here, by the manifestation of His glory, God sought to impress Israel with the holiness of His character and*



*requirements, and the exceeding guilt of transgression. (Education, p. 34)*

*True education is not the forcing of instruction on an unready and unreceptive mind. The mental powers must be awakened, the interest aroused. For this, God's method of teaching provided. He who created the mind and ordained its laws, provided for its development in accordance with them. In the home and the sanctuary, through the things of nature and of art, in labor and in festivity, in sacred building and memorial stone, by methods and rites and symbols unnumbered, God gave to Israel lessons illustrating His principles and preserving the memory of His wonderful works. Then, as inquiry was made, the instruction given impressed mind and heart. (Education, p. 41)*

### **The teaching of Jesus. (Matt. 5:2)**

*In the Teacher sent from God, heaven gave to men its best and greatest. He who had stood in the councils of the Most High, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, was the One chosen to reveal in person to humanity the knowledge of God. (Education, p. 73)*

### **Teaching from nature. (Matt 6:25-33; Matt.13)**

*As the dwellers in Eden learned from nature's pages, as Moses discerned God's*

*handwriting on the Arabian plains and mountains, and the child Jesus on the hillsides of Nazareth, so the children of today may learn of Him. The unseen is illustrated by the seen. On everything upon the earth, from the loftiest tree of the forest to the lichen that clings to the rock, from the boundless ocean to the tiniest shell on the shore, they may behold the image and superscription of God. (Education, p. 100)*

### **God Corrects His Children**

Throughout sacred history we have evidence not only of God's gracious provision for His people, His training and instruction, but also His correction. (Ps. 139:10; Prov. 3:11, 12; Rev. 3:19)

**Verbal.** God reasons with His people, sending messengers to them to point out the error of their ways and to redirect their thinking and behavior.

**Experiential.** When the circumstances warrant it, He allows them to experience the consequences of their faulty choices.

**Physical.** At times more severe correction is required and He allows His children to more fully experience the physical discomfort and pain that inevitably comes with sin.

Correction is quite evidently a distinct part of the life and growth of individuals and of the people of God (Deut. 8:5).

An important warning is sounded by Lee (1991) against drawing a simplistic parallel between God's parenting and human parenting, particularly in the realm of discipline: "We may not draw a direct parallel between God's use of discipline and ours"

(p. 269). Since parental discipline is characterized by human limitation and infirmity (Heb. 6:10), parents



must be careful about reading their present context into the biblical context of God's discipline. God's love transcends even the best human intentions. His divine punishment is given within the context of a relationship of covenantal love. Since parental love for children does not equal God's love for humanity, it is inappropriate for parents to use passages describing God's punishment of His children in support of punitive human practices.

### God Experienced Rejection

One additional feature of God's parental love stands out as particularly relevant to many parents of adolescents and young adults—the biblical depiction of God as a parent who understands what it means to invest Himself in the lives of His children and then to be rejected. “When Israel was a child, I loved him, ... But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me” (Hos. 11:1, 2). All the emotions experienced when teenagers and young adults ignore counsel, behave in disappointing ways, or turn their backs on home completely were experienced by God. He can bring comfort and encouragement to troubled parents.

### Summing Up

Scripture forms a textbook for parenting in at least five ways.

An observation of God in the role of Heavenly Parent reveals Him as One who provides for His children, trains them, and corrects them.

## Our Families as Relational Systems

A new way of looking at families that has gained importance in the last few decades is to see each family as a whole unit called a system. This way of viewing families considers the dynamics at work which affect how members grow and change.

### What Is a Family System?

**A way of seeing the whole.** A system is any whole object or organism which is made up of several parts that work together. Homes have electrical systems made up of wiring, lights switches, and outlets. A clothes-washing machine or a car are examples of machines that utilize several smaller mechanical, electrical and electronic systems designed to function together to make one larger unit or system. We call a pond with aquatic plant and animal life an “ecosystem.”

Families are more than groups of detached individuals; they are attached to each other as relational systems. The interaction between family members literally creates a special organism with unique characteristics that do not exist apart from that interaction, just as, for example, the team play of athletes is so much more than the cluster of players' abilities.

We have to wear some new “glasses” when we try to understand family systems. It is like seeing in a different dimension. We look at individuals, yet we see beyond them and discern patterns in relationships.

**Importance of connections.** Systems thinking explains individual behavior by considering the relationship ties and the family situation in which a person lives. Just as tugging on one edge of a spider's web can shake the other side, so each member in a family can influence the others or be influenced by the others. The family system has enormous influence over everyone's life in the household.

### Some Dynamics of Family Systems

#### The linear view of family relationships.

One way family relationships have been viewed is like a chain. The first link in the chain connects to a second, and the second to a third, and so on. A locomotive with

a train of cars illustrates this linear way of thinking about families. Often society gives the father the place of the engine, standing at the head or top of the line. Mother follows, perhaps the eldest child is next, and other children follow in the train. Culture or family favoritism may rearrange the order, but the end result is a straight line model of family functioning.

According to the linear view, effective functioning is when family members support the structure and fulfill their roles and tasks as they have been defined—by the society or culture. Initiating change is the prerogative of the family leader. Linear-style family relationships are not very tolerant of initiatives for change from members down-the-line. Consequently, frustration, blaming, faultfinding, and fear may be directed from those lower in the order toward those at the upper levels. Lower members have little means of influencing change and often resort to manipulation and nagging to get attention and make their influence felt.

#### **The systems view of family relationships.**

Systems thinking understands family relationships in a different way. Instead of influences going in only one direction, i.e., A causing an effect on B, systems thinking sees A and B as having reciprocal effects on each other. Loops between A and B indicate that A and B both influence and are influenced. If C and D and others are present they are equally connected in loops with A and B.

**Communication is crucial.** Systems inform themselves of their internal and external situation by means of feedback. In human relationship systems, we call this communication. One person sends a message with words, tone of voice and body language. A second person hears and reacts. The first person receives the reaction which is likewise expressed in words, tone of voice and body language.

Families need communication with each other to learn what is going well and what is not going so well. Affirmation is much easier for families, but the report that change is necessary can be difficult for members to give and to receive. A family needs communication and listening skills, as well as the time to talk and listen to each other, so that it is informed in both ways.

**Search for stability.** Families typically behave so as to maintain a stable environment—homeostasis. Whenever someone's behavior or events in the family deviate from the accepted range, one or more individuals will speak up or do something to restore the imbalance. The system works as a whole to keep things normal.

The tendency to maintain equilibrium is a good thing in that it helps families to weather stressful situations and crises. What is not so good is that families tend to resist learning or trying new ways of relating that would clearly work better for them. Homeostasis is so important to families that they sometimes sustain problematic relational patterns, in which one or more members may bear intense emotional pain, rather than change.

#### **Miniature systems within the system.**

Within the family system are miniature systems—subsystems, made up of one person, a pair of individuals, or a group.

*Marital subsystem—husband and wife.*

*Parental subsystem—parents and children.*

*Sibling subsystem—brothers and sisters.*

Each family member's experience is related to the kind of organization the family has.

*Systems thinking sees the family as a whole unit.*

*Systems thinking emphasizes the relationship connections.*

*Systems thinking has several important concepts: co-causality, feedback, homeostasis, sub-systems.*

## Parenting Style

### Parenting Instruction in Ephesians

The letter of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians contains instruction for parents. In his discussion of life in households, Paul focuses first on the marriage relationship (Eph. 5:22-33) and then on parenting (Eph. 6:1-4).

#### **The importance of marriage to children.**

Putting the marriage relationship first is the biblical way of pointing out the married couples' primacy as leaders of the family.

*He [Paul] has spoken first of its heads and leaders, because the whole tone of the circle, children and household, must so vitally depend upon what they are, each in his and her personal life, and both together in their life mutual and one. Nothing but a miracle of abnormal grace can make the home company happy and holy when the parents are not towards one another living the full Christian life. So not till that has been depicted does he say one word about children.... (Moule, 1900, p. 303)*

When children see demonstrations of love and commitment between their parents, they feel an expression of their parents' commitment to them as well.

### Instruction to Parents

Specific instruction for parents is found in Eph. 6:4. Paul uses "parents" (vs. 1), implying that the child's relationship is to both of them and that they share the parenting task.

The counsel of vs. 4 surely applies to both

parents, but Paul uses the word "fathers," perhaps because the government of the house at that time typically rested with fathers, or because the apostle is thinking of those fathers who often abuse the power of their position.

"Do not exasperate your children ..." The word means "to rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger." Stated negatively, the instruction bids parents to concern themselves that they not present attitudes and behaviors that are harmful to children. Parents must be sensitive to their children's emotional needs and put a priority on relationship- building.

"Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." The first word, "training," has the sense of training through "discipline" and "correction." It means giving direction to something, harnessing the energy of something, directing the growth of a young plant by pruning, or steering a ship with its rudder. The second phrase, "instruction of the Lord," conveys the idea of placing something in the mind. This upbringing is Christian in nature, not pagan, and this means that the most significant task of parenting is rearing of children so that they have a relationship with God and an appreciation of eternal things. The teaching of Jesus that "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave" (Matt. 20:27) shapes Christian parenting. There will be no lording over one's children as the Gentiles do, but serving them as Christians do.

### Support and Control in Parenting

Parenting research has identified two factors that contribute significantly to the atmosphere of the home and the dynamics of the parent-child relationship: support and control. These factors affect the likelihood of children accepting parental values, developing morally in keeping with their ages,

and becoming socially responsible, caring persons.

**Support** refers to the level of warmth, affection and sense of belonging that parents show their children. High support means high sensitivity and responsiveness to a child's need for love. High support parents convey their love for their child in ways that make the child feel loved. In high support parenting there are many physical and verbal expressions which send the message of the parent's overall delight in the child, such as time for play, undivided attention when the child wants to talk, good eye-contact, healthy touch, and lots of verbal affirmation and expressions of love.

In low support families, children's needs are neglected or disregarded at best; at worst, the child is treated with hostility. Low support does not necessarily mean that parents do not love their children; many simply do not know how to convey love. Some parents have no models for warm, loving relationships and have difficulty expressing love at all. Others struggle to show their love in ways that children can experience. In the worst cases of low parental support, children are belittled, treated with disrespect, abandoned and abused.

**Control**, as it used in research on parenting styles, is a technical term which has to do with the degree to which parents provide structure,

management or regulation in their children's lives. High control parents always know where their children are and expect compliance with family rules and regulations. If children disobey or break the rules, there are consequences which they can expect. High control parents are intent on well-disciplined children and engendering respect for authority. High control can be positive or negative. The degree of control, the way control is maintained, and the appropriateness of the level of control for the age of the child are all significant factors in determining whether such control

is positive or negative in the life of the child. While appropriate limits are necessary, excessive restriction and control is a strong negative factor in families.

Low control parents lack structure. If rules exist at all, they are often inconsistent. Rarely are there any consequences for breaking rules. Children pretty much do as they please, often because, though parents threaten them, the children know their parents will not likely follow through on their threats. In other cases, parents have abdicated their adult responsibility and left the children to take care of themselves.

### Four Parenting Styles

If we place support and control at right angles to each other on a graph (see Figure 1) we create four quadrants which represent four styles of parenting, each characterized by

the kind of support and control they exhibit in parent-child relationships:

- Neglectful parenting (little or no support, little or no structure)
- Permissive parenting (support, but with little or no control)
- Authoritarian parenting (little or no support, dictatorial control)
- Authoritative parenting (good support, appropriate limits)

Of the four parenting styles, the authoritative style is optimal. Each of the other parenting styles creates serious weaknesses in children which will become more and more apparent as they grow.

**Neglectful parenting** gives neither emotional support to children nor sets limits. Children are basically left to care for themselves as the parents have for one reason or another abdicated their responsibilities.

- Characteristics:

- Inconsistent rules
- Lack of structure and dependable daily routine
- Lack of guidance
- Lack of attention and involvement with the child
- Lack of concern for the child's needs
- Children assuming parental responsibilities

**Permissive parenting** provides high support but low control. Parents show a great deal of affection and tend to be very involved with their children, but no limits are set. Children are allowed to do as they please, either because the parents find limits hard to set and maintain, or because they mistakenly believe that, if you “love” a child enough, the child will behave appropriately and grow into responsible adulthood.

Characteristics:

- Inconsistent limits
- Inconsistent discipline
- Much affection and attention
- 

Little adult guidance with regard to values. Unsteadiness in family government is productive of great harm, in fact is nearly as bad as no government at all. The question is often asked,

*Why are the children of religious parents so often headstrong, defiant, and rebellious? The reason is to be found in the home training. Too often the parents are not united in their family government... A fitful government—at one time holding the lines firmly, and at another allowing that which has been condemned—is ruination to a child. (The Adventist Home, p.310)*

**Authoritarian parents** are very strict and demand obedience, but they fail to provide emotional support, love and warmth to their

child. Children are often forced to comply with parental demands. Harsh discipline, rigidity and a lack of understanding regarding the needs of children characterize such homes. Children often behave out of fear, or to avoid punishment. Some rebel in their teen years, others move into adulthood desperately trying to please but feeling they are never good enough. Others have great difficulty making wise choices and taking up adult responsibility.

Characteristics:

- Unrealistic demands
- Excessive force and punishment
- Lack of concern for the child's needs
- Harsh and dictatorial parental attitudes
- Lack of sympathy
- Little parent-child communication/ negotiation
- Uncontrolled parental anger

*The discipline of a human being who has reached the years of intelligence should differ from the training of a dumb animal. The beast is taught only submission to its master. For the beast, the master is mind, judgment, and*

*will... It is not God's purpose that any mind should be thus dominated... While under authority the children may appear like well- drilled soldiers; but when the control ceases, the character will be found to lack strength and steadfastness. Having never learned to govern himself, the youth recognizes no restraint except the requirement of parents or teacher. (Education, p. 288)*

**Authoritative parenting.** These parents offer their children both high support and appropriate limits. Love and affection are in abundance.

Affirmation flows freely. Expectations are realistic and appropriate to the age of the child. Rules are few and the consequences for not following are clearly explained. Parents follow-through on consequences. Responsibilities are released to children as they are able to assume them, and communication is open. The authoritative style greatly increases the likelihood that children from these families will accept their parents' values as their own, develop morally in keeping with their ages, and be socially responsible and caring in their relationships with others.

Characteristics:

- A high investment of time and resources
- Reciprocity of rights and responsibilities in the

parent-child relationship

- A well-ordered regimen
- Warm, loving relationships
- Empowerment of the child for self- government
- Consistent limits
- Openness and clarity of communication
- Flexibility when appropriate
- Understanding of the needs of children
- Co-operation
- Self-controlled parents

## Parents as Providers

As parents we have a commitment to our children



### GROUP EXERCISE

**Parenting Styles: Reflect on the parenting styles in these families:**

**Jacob (Genesis 37:3, 4)**

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**Manoah and his wife (Judges 14:1-3)**

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**Eli (1 Samuel 2:22-25)**

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**Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 27)**

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How could parenting with a healthy balance of both firmness and kindness have made a difference?

What practical changes would be necessary to incorporate both firmness (control) and kindness (support)?

like the commitment God has made to us.

If we are to take as our clue to parenting the relationship of God as a parent to His children, the first point to be made is that we are to endeavor to care for the needs of our children as God cares for our needs (1 Tim. 5:8).

We must enlarge the importance of ministry to the child's needs rather than merely seeking to control and shape his or her behavior. The needs children have dramatically affect their behavior and cause them to act the way they do.

### A Wide Range of Needs

"He who seeks to transform humanity must himself understand humanity." (Education, p. 78) Understanding the needs of children goes a long way toward helping us to parent them effectively.

**Spiritual needs.** Children have the need for spiritual rebirth, for forgiveness, for peace with God, freedom from guilt, and encouragement in their faith. They need a right understanding of God, a conviction of their sinfulness, trust in Christ for their righteousness and strength to live for Him. They need their parents and teachers to be sensitive to their level of moral development so that these truths can be

conveyed to them in simple ways they can understand and appreciate and to which they can respond.

**Physical needs.** Many emotional and behavioral difficulties are traceable to poor physical health and habits.

*The diet affects both physical and moral health. How carefully, then, should mothers study to supply the table with the most simple, healthful food, in order that the digestive organs may not be weakened, the nerves unbalanced, or the instruction which they give their children counteracted. (Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 143)*

*Those to whom the care of the little child is committed are too often ignorant of its physical needs; they know little of the laws of health... Before taking upon themselves the possibilities of fatherhood and motherhood, men and women should become acquainted with the laws*



*of physical development. (Education, pp. 275, 276)*

**Emotional needs.** Children display the full range of emotions and their need is for parents to understand, accept and appreciate their feelings.

*Some parents do not understand their children and are not really acquainted with them. There is often a great distance between parents and children. If the parents would enter more fully into the feelings of their children and draw out what is on their hearts, it would have a beneficial influence upon them. (The Adventist Home, p. 190; Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 396)*

We should consider their need to be free from fear and anxiety, free from care and harmful stress, free to be children without being hurried in their development and forced to miss the joys of childhood. They need encouragement in the development of a healthy self-concept. Their greatest need is for love.

*Parents should not forget their childhood years, how much they yearned for sympathy and love, and how unhappy they felt when censured and fretfully chided. They should be young again in their feelings, and bring their minds down to understand the wants of their children. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 387, 388)*

**Intellectual needs.** Their minds, which are developing rapidly, need information about their world. They need someone to patiently respond to their questions and queries. Their minds need to be challenged with ideas and questions. The child has a

need for guidance to feed the mind a diet that will strengthen him spiritually, yet maintain a wholesome sense of balance.

*The mind must be kept free from everything that would lead it in a wrong direction.*

*It should not be encumbered with trashy stories, which do not add strength to the mental powers. The thoughts will be of the same character as the food we provide for the mind. (Child Guidance, p. 188)*

**Social needs.** Children need to be taught the basic skills of communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, and such social graces as courtesy, respect, etiquette, and how to relate to groups.

In adolescence the importance of social ties, friendships and acceptance in the group mushrooms in importance, so much so that it may almost overshadow other aspects of life. Teenagers may seemingly abandon values previously held in order to meet this need.

## Balancing the Needs of Parents and Children

For wholesome relationships to develop, it is important that everyone's needs in the family be met to the greatest extent possible. Parents have needs too. Parents whose needs go perpetually unmet will not be good parents.

**Distinguishing needs from desires.** Love in the family causes us to sacrifice personal wants and wishes for the sake of the other's needs.

*Committed love is a power to surrender*



*our right to get what we desire so that the person we love can get what he or she needs.... Love ... reaches out beyond our own wants into the other person's needs. Keeps reaching. Keeps trying to understand what the other's real needs are, keeps looking for them, asking about them, patiently prying behind the pride that hides them, listening for the coded messages, waiting for the right time for plain words, staying there... (Smedes, 1988, p. 29)*

**A question of balance.** Just as parents often patiently put their personal needs on hold for the sake of their children, so children must learn patience in the meeting of theirs. Children are not to be unfairly neglected, but neither are parents called to sacrifice their personal needs.

*God wants the children of all believers to be trained from their earliest years to share the burdens that their parents must bear in caring for them. To them is given a portion of the home for their rooms and the right and privilege of having a place at the family board. God requires parents to feed and clothe their children. But the obligations of parents and children are mutual. On their part children are required to respect and honor their parents. (The Adventist Home, p. 283)*

**Other Factors Shaping the Lives of Children**  
**Developmental stages.** Children pass through predictable developmental stages. In each “season” of development the needs as outlined above remain; providing, training and correcting are

necessary, but the form they take will be suited to the changing capacity of the child.

**Sex differences.** Children also have needs that arise from gender differences between boys and girls. From adults, especially their parents, children need same-sex modeling and opposite-sex approval.

**Differing temperaments.** Children differ in the ways they think, reason, perceive, understand, and comprehend. These fundamental differences stem from differences in temperament.

Though the matter of whether temperament is innate or developed early in life is unsettled, the inclination is to believe that it is inherited. Temperament impacts on moral and spiritual development, academic performance, vocational aptitude and success, ability to concentrate, as well as one's overall relationship style and ability to get along with others.

Through an understanding of differing temperaments we can view our children as different from each other, perhaps different from ourselves as parents, and be able to appreciate them. Differences we perceive are not necessarily flaws and afflictions. Each temperament is a unique blend of strengths and struggles. Knowing this, we can affirm the strengths and assist our children in their struggles.

*Marked diversities of disposition and character frequently exist in the same family, for it is in the order of God that persons of varied temperament should associate together. When this is the case, each*

*member of the household should sacredly regard the feelings and respect the right of the others. By this means mutual consideration and forbearance will be cultivated, prejudices will be softened, and rough points of character smoothed. Harmony may be secured, and the blending of the varied temperaments may be a benefit to each.*  
(Child Guidance, p. 205)

**Birth order.** For some time behavioral scientists have been studying the influence of a person's position in the family on who a person is and what he does.

*Birth order isn't a simplistic 1-2-3 system that says all first borns are equally one way, all second children are another, and last-born kids are always just like this or that. There are tendencies and general characteristics that often apply, but the real point is that there are dynamic relationships existing between members of a family ...*

*Variables ... include number of years between children, the sex of each child, physical difference or disabilities, the birth order position of the parents, any blending of two or more families due to death or divorce, and finally the relationship between the parents.*  
Leman, 1985, p. 22)

## Additional Thoughts About Providing For Our Children

**1. An awareness of the needs of children provides a guide for us in making the decision about family size.**

*There are parents who, without consideration as to whether or not they can do justice to a larger family, fill their houses with these helpless little beings, who are wholly dependent upon their parents for care and instruction ... This is a grievous wrong, not only to the mother, but to her children and to society. Parents should always bear in mind the future good of their children.*  
(The Adventist Home, p. 162)

**2. Providing for the needs of children should take place before and during pregnancy.**

*The physical and mental condition of the parents is perpetuated in their offspring.*  
(The Adventist Home, p. 172)

*The effect of prenatal influences is by many parents looked upon as a matter of little moment; but heaven does not so regard it ... The well-being of the child will be affected by the habits of the mother.* (The Adventist Home, p. 255;  
The Ministry of Healing, p. 372)

**3. Providing well makes home attractive to young people.**

*By giving their children love, sympathy and encouragement at home, parents*

*may provide for them a safe and welcome retreat from many of the world's temptations. (The Adventist Home, p. 185; Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 65)*

**4. Providing for the child's needs strengthens a parent's relationship with him so that the child is more willing to heed instruction, be obedient, and accept parental values.**

*Parents, let your children see that you love them and will do all in your power to make them happy. If you do so, your necessary restrictions will have far greater weight in their young minds. (The Adventist Home, p. 193)*

Sometimes understanding our children will occur intuitively, at other times we will have to find ways of learning what our children need. Listening to our children, endeavoring to feel what they are feeling, talking with a spouse, consulting with a relative with more experience, or reaching out to others personally or in books for guidance in areas where we lack knowledge and information are all ways of better fitting ourselves for this most important task.

There is no substitute for providing well for our children. To do so is to enable them to feel loved and secure, to motivate them toward their potential and prepare them to respond better to discipline.

**Summing Up**

God's parenting of His children teaches us how to live with our children.

As God provides for our needs, so we as parents are responsible to provide for the needs of our children.

Children have spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs. Other needs arise from such variables as their developmental stages, gender, temperament, and birth order differences.

An awareness of our children's needs and a commitment to provide for them should guide us in the decision about family size and impress us with the importance of prenatal care. Providing makes home an attractive place and strengthens the parent- child/ parent-teen relationship.

## Self-Concept in Children: A Fundamental Human Need

By their behavior, children give us clues to their deeper needs—inner needs which they have but are unable to express verbally. One such need that is common to all is the need to feel valuable, to feel a sense of personal worth.

### How Our Self-Concept Affects Us

The innermost thoughts and convictions determine the life (Prov. 23:7). People who have a healthy sense of personal worth are happier, better able to cope with life's problems and better able to relate to others. They tend to be more independent, popular, assertive and creative than those who do not. This applies to children as well.

*There is one need so fundamental and so essential that if it is met, everything else will almost certainly harmonize in a general sense of well-being. When this need is properly nourished, the whole human organism will be healthy*

*and the person will be happy. This need is a true and deep love of self; a genuine and joyful self-acceptance, an authentic self-esteem, which result in an interior sense of celebration: It's good to be me... I am very happy to be me! (Powell, 1974, p. 13)*

Depending upon their temperaments and the parental and family atmosphere, children who don't feel good about themselves exhibit this in their behavior. Another way to say this is that there are coping mechanisms which we use to deal with low self-worth which we can learn to identify.

**Clowning.** Acting like a fool, acting silly, joking, covering an inner emptiness with a façade that distracts others.

**Withdrawal.** The longing to be a part is intense, but rejection is too painful. Alone you cannot hurt me.

**Escape.** For some the scorn, empty hours, conviction that nobody cares becomes unbearable. They must escape. Drugs and alcohol offer readily available oblivion.

**Conformity.** Fear of ridicule, or of making a mistake in a society that demands perfection, drives multitudes of youth to conformity. Few can summon inner reserves of self-worth sufficient to allow them to be different—a frightening thought for Christians in a degenerating world.

**Fighting.** Others come out fighting, balancing a chip precariously, daring those who might, and those who never would have the courage, to cross them. And even if no one accepts the challenge, a fight ensues. Convinced inside that no one finds him worth anything, his whole being lashes out to prove he is okay, as much to convince himself as anyone else.

**Compensation.** Probably compensation is the healthiest coping mechanism. It's the attitude that if I'm a poor ball player, I'll become an expert at some other sport, or develop some other talent—music, art, writing, etc. I'll find my strength, some area where I can excel, and I'll do anything to increase my skills. However, carried to the extreme, this can be unhealthy as well.

Self-worth is not optional with humans. Either we find it or we spend our entire lives searching for it and coping without it.

## The World's Approach to Human Worth

The world has four basic criteria for determining worth:

- Beauty
- Intelligence
- Wealth
- Accomplishment/performance

To some degree all of us are caught up in the world's value system. Even unconsciously, we may have chosen the attractive, smart, wealthy, famous types for our ideal families. Some of us meet some of these criteria; most of us don't.

## World's scheme for building worth.

The world has provided its own answers for this dilemma. Myriads of books and articles appear continually to speak to the issue of feeling better about yourself. For example, one popular journal carried an article "Feel Better about Yourself":

*First you have to believe that there are at least some good things about you ... Start by writing a list of things you do well or are good at... No one is going to*

*see this list except you, so now is your chance to admit that you've always thought you have expressive eyes, or a sonorous speaking voice, or a nicely shaped forehead. Or maybe you disco splendidly but never have the chance. Write them down and try not to stop until you reach twenty-five items. Large or small, obvious or subtle, it doesn't matter. I don't even care if you record the fact that you wear down your shoes evenly. If you really put your mind to it, you can do it...*

*I promise you that if you do this, before the three weeks are up you will begin to notice an increase in the strength of your good feelings about yourself... The best way to attain happiness is to decide what you want. Plan how to get it. Work like h---. And then savor your reward to the fullest... Once you set your mind to believing in yourself, the results may amaze you. (Berk, 1980)*

We may use these lists and gimmicks, these mental gymnastics, to reorient ourselves and manipulate our emotions, but they are hollow, and we are left vulnerable to the whims of fashion, our pocketbooks, and our own ingenuity. At best, these techniques are short-lived, for they do not really address our true need. At worst, they can cultivate within us a self-centered narcissism, pride in one's self which distracts us from submitting our need to Christ and allowing Him to supply our soul's need for a healthy sense of worth and value.

Where do Christians go to find answers? Some Christians around us have simply become aware of the world's standard and then tried to work, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to perform within it. But God's value system, His criteria for determining worth, and His methods for building self-worth differ radically from those of the world.

### **A Spiritual Problem Needing a Spiritual Solution**

Low self-worth is a spiritual problem. Humankind's sinful state is the basic cause of feelings of low self-worth. Satan capitalizes on our condition and reinforces these feelings. "Satan's work is to discourage the soul. Christ's work is to inspire the heart with faith and hope" (Mind, Character and Personality, I, p. 32). In our quest for worth and acceptance, the only lasting answers are found in Jesus Christ. There are two great truths, both intimately tied to Him, which answer this fundamental human need.

**Human beings are valuable because of creation.** A sense of our specialness is first of all rooted in a knowledge that human beings are the creation of God. We are not the products of a chance evolution, but the handiwork of a loving and gracious Creator (Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 43:1, 7). Because He created us, He looks upon us, even in our deplorable sinful condition as precious, loved, and special.

*The coin, though lying among dust and rubbish, is a piece of silver still. Its owner seeks it because it is of value. So every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God's sight accounted precious. As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore*

*the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness. (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 194)*

Sinful, yes. But of great value still. Why? Because worth is not intrinsic. It is nothing I have of myself. Worth is determined by who the Creator is (Genesis 1:31; Matthew 12:12).

**Human beings are valuable because of redemption.** Human beings are special twice-over because we have been redeemed. God's act in redemption conveys the worth He attaches to every soul.

*The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them. (The Desire of Ages, p. 668)*

In sin we lost so much. All the privileges of dominion which God gave to the human race at creation are gone. Dominion passed into the hands of the enemy. Our life-sustaining relationship with God had been severed, leaving only the awful consequences of sin in its place.

But God valued the lost coin. He yearned for its total redemption, to retrace upon it His own image

in righteousness and holiness. Calvary was the only way it could be accomplished. And Calvary was in the heart of God long before He bent over the first human being and breathed into His creature the breath of life. Now, in Christ—the second Adam—the dominion is restored. The human race is elevated to a position of worth far greater than Adam's. For Jesus, our Creator, has forever linked Himself with us as our Brother as well.

*And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6... The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. (The Desire of Ages, p. 113)*

He does not ask if we are worthy of His love, but He pours upon us the riches of His love, to make us worthy. (Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 22)

### God's Plan for People-building

God understands the spiritual problem of low self-worth. He longs for us to know how valuable He considers us to be.

*The Lord would have us ever to urge the worth of the human soul upon those who do not understand its value. (Evangelism, p. 461)*

God knows how unrelenting Satan's attacks are, how he is always at work to discourage, to point the finger, to put down human beings. He knows how Satan capitalizes on our feelings of low self-worth when they arise, even after we have come to understand

God's criteria for our worth and our preciousness to Him. So He left us:

The truth of creation and redemption.

The Holy Spirit to minister to us.

Each other—in the family and in the church—to help one another experience on the human level the love and acceptance we can know with God.

**Tangible effects of God's plan.** Something happens inside you once you understand about God's estimate of your personal worth and come to understand that your worth is not dependent upon the world's standards.

You no longer have to struggle to be valuable.

You drop out of competition with others to be as good as or better than they are.

You leave the fashion parade and the incessant quest for personal physical beauty. A balanced approach to health and appearance results.

You stop the endless quest for things, position, and power.

You develop a new appreciation for yourself, even come to love yourself in a healthy sense that differs radically from pride. This kind of self-appreciation opens the way for you to:

- Eat healthy foods
- Exercise regularly
- Have regular physical checkups
- Get enough rest
- Purposely pursue new interests and activities
- Laugh at your mistakes
- Be yourself
- Have confidence in your abilities
- Identify your talents and use them to the fullest
- Stop worrying
- Be polite and thoughtful of others
- Graciously accept a complement
- Have peace of mind

God's plan for our self-worth opens our eyes, as in the second touch of Christ upon the blind man who at first saw people as trees walking around. A healthy self-value brings others into real focus—they are individuals of the same inestimable worth as oneself by virtue of the work of the same Creator and Redeemer.

**God helps us reach out to others.** Because we know what Jesus has done for us, we are now ready to reach out to others. But how can we become people-builders? How can we help others to experience the worth we have found in Jesus? Again the answer rests in Him. The same Jesus who has provided the basis for our own worth also provides the model for how we are to uplift others.

**Jesus' method of people-building.** Jesus was always found healing, mending, upholding, comforting the hurting people around Him. "Bruised reeds" (Matt. 12:20) were strengthened to once again stand tall in His presence. Even when the fire of life was all but snuffed out, Jesus bent low and blew gently, nurturing any spark that was left, until the flame once again burned brightly in the life.

A study of some encounters Jesus has with hurting people and the way He treated them and talked to them can help us to isolate some very practical ways in which we can uplift others.

- Morning for a madman (Mark 5:1-20)
- A paralytic's opening (Luke 5:17-26)
- Real wealth for a rich man (Mark 10:17-31)
- Insight at noon (John 4:5-30, 39)
- Standing tall (Luke 19:1-9)
- Levi's lift (Luke 5:27-32)
- Another chance (John 8:1-11)
- A most precious gift (Mark 14:3-9)



From a study of the practical things Jesus said and did in His relationship with individuals who did not feel good about themselves, we can conclude the following:

Among other things, building up people involves:

- Giving practical help
- Showing confidence and trust
- Offering forgiveness and another chance
- Being a friend
- Accepting unconditionally
- Focusing on strengths
- Expressing love
- Receiving graciously another's gestures of kindness
- Separating the deed from the doer
- Eye contact
- Sparing embarrassment

Brought into the circle of the family, lived out by parents in relationship to their children, this mind and manner of Jesus will do much to soften the harsh tones and sweeten the relationship we share together.

## Children are a Gift from God

A positive attitude toward oneself underlies healthy emotional adjustment and interpersonal relationships.

Children show low self-worth by behaviors such as clowning, withdrawing, escaping, conforming, fighting, and unhealthy extremes in compensation.

In secular society personal worth is largely based on self-centered attributes of physical attractiveness, intelligence, material possessions, and personal accomplishment. Self-improvement plans abound.

Low self-worth is a spiritual problem requiring a spiritual solution. For the Christian personal worth is affirmed by God in our creation and redemption and appropriated by faith.

An appreciation of our worth before God as parents enables us to affirm the worth of our children.

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## Parent Education and Guidance

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Blevins, W. L. (2005). *Your family, your self: How to analyze your family system to understand yourself, & achieve more satisfying relationships with your loved ones*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.

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- Thomas, G. L. (2007). *Sacred influence: How god uses wives to shape the souls of their husbands*. United States: Zondervan.
- VanVonderen, J. (2010). *Families where grace is in place*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House/A Division of Baker Publishing Group.
- Walsh, D. A. (2007). *No: Why kids- of all ages—need to hear it and ways parents can say it*. New York, NY: Free Press/A Division of Simon & Schuster.
- White, E. G. (1982). *Child guidance*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association

### Web sites

- GenoPro – software to create genograms: [Genopro.com](http://Genopro.com)
- Bowen Center for the Study of the Family: [Thebowencenter.org](http://Thebowencenter.org)
- Family Kinship and Social Organization of a variety of Canadian cultures: [multicultureacanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z](http://multicultureacanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z)
- PBS American Family Series – *Is There Such a Thing as a Latino Identity?* [pbs.org/americanfamily/latino2.html](http://pbs.org/americanfamily/latino2.html)
- National Healthy Marriage Resource Center – Marriage and Culture: [www.Healthymarriageinfo.org](http://www.Healthymarriageinfo.org)

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

## Module 7

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# Human Growth and Development

### Introduction

The challenge of sharing information about people throughout the life cycle is one that gives anyone who works with families pause! It is important to realize that people are not static— as long as they live, they will change. The capacity for change is a part of the Image of God that resides in each of His creations. However, that same capacity for change is the quality that is the most challenging in family relationships.

Often, when human growth and development is discussed, Family Ministries educators focus on the early, formative years and say very little about the years after adolescence. Human beings are constantly developing throughout their lifetime. Certainly, the differences in development become far more subtle after adolescence, but they are definitely present. A ministry for churches that meets family needs must be aware of development throughout the life cycle. This provides for practical application of spiritual, psychological, and cultural principles that will empower families to be their best.

During the time of individual human growth and development, families go through their own

developmental stages. Depending on the members of the family there is often not enough energy to expend on the overall development of the family unit. When this part of the developmental process is overlooked, families find themselves in crisis. Family ministries that meet families where they are will acknowledge that healthy family units produce healthy individuals.

It is important to be aware of how people learn and that adult learning skills differ from those of young children. When discussing the areas of human growth and development the facilitator should learn that participants would like to have practical, incremental information, offered in a manner that does not judge or condescends.

A particular challenge for families with children is to provide a strong spiritual base throughout their early childhood until the time when they are launched. If parents are aware of the appropriate developmental passages, they can help their children with their personal faith development as they grow and mature.

Parents can become confident and proficient when they learn the Original Parenting Manual, Bible, gives them permission to share their own story of Christian growth with their children.

*“Listen Israel! The Lord our God is the only true God! So love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. Memorize his laws and tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time, whether you’re at home or walking along the road or going to bed at night, or getting up in the morning...Write these laws on the door frames of your homes and on your town gates.” (Deuteronomy 6: 4-7, 9, Contemporary English Version).*

Further instruction from the Spirit of Prophecy is important to understand and apply to families as they provide the foundation of the church, community, and the larger society.

### The Family Circle a School

In His wisdom the Lord has decreed that the family shall be the greatest of all educational agencies. It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is her first school. Here, with her parents as instructors, she is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life—lessons of respect, obedience, reverence, self-control. The educational influences of the home are a decided power for good or for evil. They are in many respects silent and gradual, but if exerted on the right side, they become a far-reaching power for truth and righteousness. If the child is not instructed correctly, Satan will educate him through agencies of his choosing. How important, then is the school in the home!

Look at the family circle as a training school where you are preparing your children for the performance of their duties at home, in society, and in the church.

### All Else to be Secondary

*Every child brought into the world is the property of Jesus Christ, and should be educated by precept and example to love and obey God; but by far the largest number of parents have neglected their God-given work, by failing to educate and train their children, from the first dawning or reason, to know and love Christ. By painstaking effort parents are to watch the opening, receptive mind and make everything in the home life secondary to the positive duty enjoined upon them by God—to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Adventist Home, p. 182, 183).*

It is important that a family ministries leader has a thorough knowledge of the stages, processes, and milestones of normal physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of humans from conception to death as well as family developmental stages. We often feel that information is sufficient when it is shared, but life stages determine how it is applied. When we speak of family life education, knowledge and practice must intersect.

It is important to also realize that while individuals go through developmental stages on a physical, cognitive, social, and emotional level, they still have developmental tasks to accomplish in the family life cycle. Sometimes, the conflict or crisis comes about as these personal and familial tasks coincide. The challenge for family life ministries on this earth is to help families live here in harmony as they prepare for life above.

## Knowledge of Individual Development

### What is Development?

There are as many theories of development as there are schools of developmental thought. Different disciplines approach the study of development from different perspectives.

### Development proceeds from the head downward

This is called the **cephalocaudle principle**. This principle describes the direction of growth and development. According to this principle, the child gains control of the head first, then the arms, and then the legs. Infants develop control of the head and face movements within the first two months after birth. In the next few months, they are able to lift themselves up by using their arms. By six to 12 months of age, infants start to gain leg control and may be able to crawl, stand, or walk. Coordination of arms always precedes coordination of legs.

### Development proceeds from the center of the body outward.

This is the principle of **proximodistal development** that also describes the direction of development. This means that the spinal cord develops before outer parts of the body. The child's arms develop before the hands and the hands and feet develop before the fingers and toes. Finger and toe muscles (used in fine motor dexterity) are the last to develop in physical development.

### Development depends on maturation and learning

**Maturation** refers to the sequential characteristic of biological growth and development. The biological changes occur in sequential order and give children new abilities. Changes in the brain and nervous system

account largely for maturation. These changes in the brain and nervous system help children to improve in thinking (cognitive) and motor (physical) skills. Also, children must mature to a certain point before they can progress to new skills (Readiness). For example, a four-month-old cannot use language because the infant's brain has not matured enough to allow the child to talk. By two years old, the brain has developed further and with help from others, the child will have the capacity to say and understand words. Also, a child can't write or draw until he has developed the motor control to hold a pencil or crayon. Maturational patterns are innate, that is, genetically programmed. The child's environment and the learning that occurs as a result of the child's experiences largely determine whether the child will reach optimal development. A stimulating environment and varied experiences allow a child to develop to his or her potential.

### Development proceeds from the simple (concrete) to the more complex.

Children use their cognitive and language skills to reason and solve problems. For example, learning relationships between things (how things are similar) or classification is an important ability in cognitive development. The cognitive process of learning how an apple and orange are alike begins with the most simple or concrete thought of describing the two. Seeing no relationship a preschool child will describe the objects according to some property of the object, such as color. Such a response would be, "An apple is red (or green) and an orange is orange." The first level of thinking about how objects are alike is to give a description or functional relationship (both concrete thoughts) between the two objects. "An apple and orange are round" and "An apple and orange are alike because you eat them" are typical responses of three, four and five year olds. As children develop further in cognitive skills,

they are able to understand a higher and more complex relationship between objects and things; that is, that an apple and orange exist in a class called fruit. The child cognitively is then capable of classification.

**Growth and development is a continuous process.**

As a child develops, he or she adds to the skills already acquired and the new skills become the basis for further achievement and mastery of skills. Most children follow a similar pattern. Also, one stage of development lays the foundation for the next stage of development. For example, in motor development, there is a predictable sequence of developments that occur before walking. The infant lifts and turns the head before he or she can turn over. Infants can move their limbs (arms and legs) before grasping an object. Mastery of climbing stairs involves increasing skills from holding on to walking alone. By the age of four, most children can walk up and down stairs with alternating feet. As in maturation, in order for children to write or draw, they must have developed the manual (hand) control to hold a pencil and crayon.

**Growth and development proceed from the general to specific.**

In motor development, the infant will be able to grasp an object with the whole hand before using only the thumb and forefinger. The infant's first motor movements are very generalized, undirected, and reflexive, waving arms or kicking before being able to reach or creep toward an object. Growth occurs from large muscle movements to more refined (smaller) muscle movements.

**There are individual rates of growth and development.**

Each child is different and the rates at which individual children grow is different. Although the

patterns and sequences for growth and development are usually the same for all children, the rates at which individual children reach developmental stages will be different. Understanding this fact of individual differences in rates of development should cause us to be careful about using and relying on age and stage characteristics to describe or label children. There is a range of ages for any developmental task to take place. This dismisses the notion of the "average child". Some children will walk at ten months while others walk a few months older at eighteen months of age. Some children are more active while others are more passive. This does not mean that the passive child will be less intelligent as an adult. There is no validity to comparing one child's progress with or against another child. Rates of development also are not uniform within an individual child. For example, a child's intellectual development may progress faster than his emotional or social development.

**Development is an Ongoing Process**

Development begins with conception and does not end until death. A broader view of development is that it begins before conception, since the genetic basis for any individual's development is present in the reproductive cells of that individual's parents. This view of development is called phylogenetic, and it represents the continuous development of life across generations.

The development of any one individual is referred to as the ontogenetic development. Ontogenetic development begins with the formation and fertilization of the reproductive cells that begin with a new life.

**Development is a Dynamic Process**

Development involves continuous change. Without change, we do not have development. Sometimes the change is referred to as "growth."

### Development Does Not Wait for Us to Be Ready

Development comes whether one wants it to or not. In fact, as soon as one becomes comfortable there **will** be a change in development!

### Development is Directional

Most developmental processes occur in predictable, defined directions.

Development typically proceeds from simple to complex. This is repeated in all developmental domains. Biologically, any individual begins as a single cell and develops into a complex organism with millions of cells that are highly differentiated by both structure and function. These cells are organized into more and more complex, interacting structures as development proceeds.

We see the same basic pattern repeated, for example, in motor development. The rudimentary and uncoordinated motor movements of a newborn infant become increasingly complicated and efficient as the child grows. Complicated patterns of gross motor, fine motor, and eye-hand coordination and skill are precursors to such simple actions as maneuvering through space without injury, as well as to more complex activities such as playing basketball.

### Development May Involve Stages

At certain predictable times in the developmental process, particular tasks or activities emerge. These developmental points or plateaus are often referred to as stages.

Stages may represent a qualitative change in development. An example is the emergence of stranger anxiety in an infant who previously was happy being held by anyone.

When the new skill or behavior appears, there is usually a period of leveling off when the new skills or abilities are practiced, mastered, and integrated into the

child's behavior. For example, after an infant has learned to walk, she may spend several months perfecting balance, coordination and stability.

Stages may build upon each other. Early tasks and abilities may form the foundation for later development. For example, the ability to engage in reciprocal interpersonal relationships is based on **trust**, a developmental milestone of the first year of life.

### Development is Cumulative

Early developmental tasks form the foundation for the development of later, more complicated tasks. This is a critical concept in understanding the importance of early recognition and intervention when children are developmentally delayed.

### What Is Normal?

Normal is a statistical concept. Normal represents what is typical for the majority of members of a group. We can determine what is normal in child development by observing a representative group of children, by identifying the traits and processes displayed by most children, and by determining the time frames for the emergence of each trait or process.

The rate of a child's development may vary between traits. For example, a child may develop physical skills earlier and language skills later than average, but still be within normal limits. Earlier development may, at times, be genetically determined, or it may be promoted in traits or skill areas that are favored and reinforced by the child's culture and environment. Therefore, the term normal most appropriately refers to the trait, not the child, and the rate and progress of a child's development must be evaluated individually for each developmental domain.

It is also important to realize that when it comes to family development, normal is still a statistical concept. There are no normal or natural patterns of family development. Since families are made of individuals,



their development will be reflective of the development of the people within them.

### Understanding Developmental Domains

Developmental tasks are typically divided into four primary categories, referred to as domains. The four primary domains are physical, cognitive, social and emotional.

**Physical** development consists of the development of the body structure; including muscles, bones, and organ systems. Physical development usually describes the relationship between the person's ability to perceive the environment and to respond to those perceptions by interacting within the environment. Physical development generally comprises motor development.

Motor activity depends upon muscle strength and coordination. Gross Motor activities such as standing, sitting, walking, and running, involve the large muscle of the body. Fine Motor activities; including speech, vision, and the use of hands and fingers, involve the small muscles of the body. Both large and small muscle activities are controlled and coordinated by the central nervous system.

**Sensory** development includes the development of vision, hearing, taste, touch, and smell, and the coordination and integration of perceptual input from these systems by the central nervous system.

For the first year of life children's development is most pronounced in the sensory and motor domains.

**Cognitive** development is sometimes referred to as intellectual or mental development. Cognitive activities include thinking, perception, memory, reasoning, concept development, problem-solving ability, and abstract thinking. Language, with its requirements of symbolization and memor, is one of the most important and complicated cognitive activities.

It is important to differentiate language and speech. Understanding and formulating language is a complex

cognitive activity. Speaking, however, is a motor activity. Language and speech are controlled by different parts of the brain.

**Social and Emotional.** From birth through infancy, the foundation for social and emotional development is laid. A child learns that when the caretaker responds to his cries they are loved and important. It is impossible to spoil a child by responding when they cry. The only language that a baby has is its cry, and it is important for a child to know that they can depend upon the caretakers to meet their needs.

As children develop emotionally they learn how to act in social situations. Early in their lives all children should be the center of attention in their families. Through smiles, voices and touches adults can lay a foundation for a child to learn how to interact with others. The challenge comes when there are multiple births— note the McCaughey family with their seven!

As children develop, they learn how to “share”— a powerful lesson of socialization; but it is Important to remember that it is based on their emotional security. If a child feels that everything may be taken away in a moment, it is very difficult for them to share things with others. Children who do not learn how to share find themselves isolated and their social development becomes stunted.

If children are always left to their own devices, with television as a constant companion, and are given the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings with other important persons in their lives they are not prepared to excel in educational settings. Certainly they do not know how to interact with others. A child that represents healthy growth and development will have families that have cherished them as individuals and have encouraged their creative skills.

Because the emotional and social development of children are often taken for granted sometimes parents do not spend enough time interacting with their

children. Infants need to have parents talk and share with them, even if they are unable to speak in return. However, babies do respond by smiling and noticing a familiar voice. Children need to be spoken to in complete sentences and correct words so that when they begin to speak they have the vocabulary to be understood within the family, as well as by those outside the family. An investment of time with each child according to their age and stage will provide positive results in relationships for many years to come for both parent and child.

One of the most difficult challenges for parents is helping their young adults launch from their home and start life on their own. Most parents are torn when they see these developmental steps. However, this is a natural progression and indicates that parents have done their work well. Here are some steps to consider with the launch:

### As Your Child Becomes An Adult

- Becoming an adult does not happen overnight; it occurs over time and in steps.
- Letting go is a difficult but also rewarding part of life.
- Help your teen learn the responsibilities that come with being an adult.
- Relating to your child as an adult is new for both you and your child.

### Discipline vs. Punishment

Note the following definitions: Discipline—Training intended to produce a specified character or pattern of behavior. Punishment—An act of providing a penalty for a crime or a fault.

Christians are noted for quoting Scripture that encourages punishment. The most common quoted Scripture is Proverbs 13:24 (NKJV): He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly. However, a careful study of the Scriptures notes that the rod spoken of belongs to the shepherd.

The rod was used by the shepherd to: set limits, and bring a wayward sheep close to the shepherd. Not sparing the rod means to set limits appropriate to the child's age and development. Notice that the word discipline and disciple have the same base.

Parents need to realize that they are challenged to train up children in the way that they should go. This means that children are to have limits set in love—not to make parents look good, limit their anger, or to meet parents' needs. A study of ages and stages means that parents will know each child as an individual and use the method of discipline that most fits that particular child.

Setting loving limits is probably one of the most difficult things a parent has to do. This requires parents to be committed and consistent. Our busy lives make consistency a difficult task to acquire but parents who are too busy to provide consistency in the lives of their children are not loving and are much too busy!

Parents are to look forward to teaching **self-discipline**. Children are to learn how to be responsible with words, feelings, and actions, while parents maintain their values and sense of self. Children must learn how to govern themselves without having parents around to constantly monitor behavior and offer correction. Parents should be eager to foster self-discipline. They are to teach safety and behavior so that the child may gradually learn, just a little at a time, to understand and assume responsibility.

In this teaching parents can use the Golden Rule as a guide. Would they feel they were treated with respect if they were the child? This can be done even while restricting the child.

To Foster the Development of Self-Discipline: Be very clear in instructions. Consider priorities and limit rules to a reasonable number. Some children can only learn one, two or three rules at a time. Acknowledge behavior that is desirable. Make it easy to comply. Give

choices only when either choice is acceptable. Actively listen and respond to feelings as feelings. Avoid repeating. Get the child's attention, speak and then be ready to move. Consider and make allowances for the age and stage of the child. Keep punishment a last recourse and minimal. Punishment does not teach self-control. Explain the "why" of rules, but simply. Consider the personality of the child. Agree with spouse on important rules. Use "do" and "let's" instead of "don't." Assume the best of your child. Admit mistakes. Try to be consistent.

## Knowledge of Family Development

- **Newly Married Couple**
  - Work through new rules
  - Establish interdependence with both families of origin
  - Establish separation from families of origin
- **Family with Young Children**
  - Balance pressures of parenting with coupleness
  - Nurturing young children
  - Adjust role expectations
- **Family with Adolescents**
  - Preparing children for adulthood
  - Providing responsibility balanced with support and authority
- **Launching Family**
  - Help young adult establish independent lives
  - Parents redefine personal goals
- **Empty-Nest and Retirement**
  - Reestablish importance to each other
  - Develop goals that are no longer child focused
  - Preparation for loss of spouse

If you notice, the challenge for families comes when they seek to maneuver through the developmental tasks and help the individual members of the family accomplish their tasks as well. If an individual member

of the family has a challenge at some developmental level, and the family is experiencing a challenge at their developmental level then we find the family in crisis.

A good example of one of these challenges might be when the adolescent daughter becomes pregnant without being married and the mother of the family finds herself now responsible for her aging father, who is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. This family has been challenged with two transitions that bring difficulties that challenge their sense of stability. All of their energy, goals and activity must be directed in two opposing directions. How will the family handle this? What will determine whether this family will remain intact?

How does the church minister to this family in crisis? What is the answer to the questions raised about developmental stages? Whose needs should be met? Whose needs are priority? These are just some of the questions that need to be addressed.

Family Ministries Leaders who are prepared and knowledgeable can be aware of challenges that face families and the members of the families. It helps when circumstances seem overwhelming to be able to look at "the big picture" and realize that although one member of the family may be experiencing a personal crisis, the impact is felt throughout the family system. The dynamics of development impact everyone in the family. Since development involves change, this is an opportunity for growth. However, the demand for change is usually matched against the demand for stability.

We have to always be aware of the fact that we can never have all the answers for families or individuals in their growth and development. We can only give them information about possibilities. The Holy Spirit works with every one to polish and refine us to reflect God's image. Then He works in our families to show how God dwells with us to share His love through people in their development—the process. This is the miracle of grace.

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# HANDOUT #1

## Overview of Stages of Human Psychological Development

Developed From Erikson: Identity And The Life Cycle

EIGHT DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES	RADIUS OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS	DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS	IF TASK IS POSITIVELY RESOLVED THE PERSON GAINS...	IF TASK IS INADEQUATELY RESOLVED THE PERSON RISKS...
1. First year (infancy)	Mother or mother figure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get, accept, receive (e.G., Attention, love, nurturance).</li> <li>• To give in return (e.G., Love).</li> </ul>	<b>Trust</b> of others, the sense of goodness of individual existence.	A basic <b>mistrust</b> of others.
2. Second year (early childhood)	Parents or parent figure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To hold onto what's given or gotten (e.G., Keep what's needed to survive).</li> <li>• To let go (e.G., Learn to give outside oneself).</li> </ul>	Sense of <b>autonomy</b> and separateness from parents. Declination of self.	<b>Shame</b> , the selfconscious desire to go unnoticed. <b>Doubt</b> , the lack of trust
3. Years 3 to 5 (play age)	Immediate family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make, create, reach out, and "go after" (e.G., Become mobile and affect one's world, to master it).</li> <li>• To make like or to play (e.G., Identification with others).</li> </ul>	<b>Initiative</b> , the exploration of a new world	<b>Guilt</b> , over fantasies and identifications with parents.
4. Years 6 to puberty (school age)	Neighborhood and school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make, create, to know, and to do things (e.G., The pride of doing at least one thing well).</li> <li>• To make things together (e.G., Division of labor and equality of opportunity).</li> </ul>	<b>Industry</b> , an identification with work and being productive, creative, and knowledgeable.	<b>Inferiority</b> , utter dependence on outside structure or inadequacy and the sense that one will never be any good

## Overview of Stages of Human Psychological Development

(continued)

EIGHT DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES	RADIUS OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS	DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS	IF TASK IS POSITIVELY RESOLVED THE PERSON GAINS...	IF TASK IS INADEQUATELY RESOLVED THE PERSON RISKS...
5. Adolescence	Peer groups, models of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be oneself, to have one's self "fit" comfortably both inside and with others as oneself. (I.E., There is no feeling of being alive without a sense of self and identity).</li> <li>• To share being oneself, confessing one's feelings plans, wishes, expectations and having observations denied or confirmed (e.G., Beginnings of intimate relationships).</li> </ul>	<p>An <b>identity</b>—a synthesis of gains, a balance of drives and restraints, inner sadness and continuity matched by one's meaning for others.</p> <p>A repudiation of those things that jeopardize an integrated identity</p>	<b>Identity diffusion</b> , or confusion, a failure to form an occupational identity, overidentification with groups, the choice of a negative or dangerous identity, gender confusion, poor body image, indecision.
6. Young adult	Partners in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship</li> <li>• Sex</li> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To lose and find oneself in another (e.G., To find self-love in the love of another).</li> </ul>	<b>Intimacy</b> , interpersonal closeness that transcends the self.	<b>Isolation</b> , social deprivation or at least highly stereotyped and formal interpersonal relations, repeated attempts and failure at being close.
7. Middle adult	Divided labor and shared household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make okay (e.G., To generate new meaning).</li> <li>• To take care of (e.G., To nurture).</li> </ul>	<b>Generativity</b> , a sense of adding something constructive to the world, making it a better place.	<b>Self absorption</b> , the absence of concern for others
8. Mature adult	Mankind "my kind"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be, through having been (e.G., Satisfaction)</li> <li>• To face not being (i.E., To be ready for death)</li> </ul>	<b>Integrity</b> , a sense of inner peace and satisfaction with one's life..	<b>Despair</b> , a sense of defeat, of meaningless, dissipation, fear.



## Human Growth and Development

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Bornstein, M. H. (2003) *Well-being: Positive Development Across the Life Course*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, Associates.

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For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)



## Module 8

# Human Sexuality

### Introduction

#### Key points:

1. Sex is a gift of God. It is good and wholesome. It is not bad, evil or wrong. God never gives us gifts that destroy.
2. Parents are to be the sex educators of their own children, but few know how to do that task. They should be comfortable with their own sexuality in order to be the sex educators of their children. Otherwise their discomfort will be shared and the children will not have confidence in any information they give, and only ignorance and disinformation will be gathered from everywhere.
3. If you think that sexuality education is emotionally and socially difficult— consider sexual ignorance and its costs.



### GROUP EXERCISE

**What do you really know about sexuality? Take a few moments and complete the following statements:**

- The word sex means...
- In marriage sex is...
- The greatest problem with sex today is...
- The first positive statement my parents made to me about sex was...
- The first negative statement my parents made to me about sex was...
- If I had any questions at all to ask about sex it would be...
- Scripture teaches that sex is...

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In the beginning God created humans as sexual beings; the Bible states “male and female created He them.” So, God’s plan from the beginning was that there be males and females. We have been created to be sexual beings. That is a part of who we are. Our society may say it will, but God’s plan still stands. It takes both male and female to reflect the image of God, since both male and female were created in the image of God.

We must realize that God’s plan for sex was a precious gift—both as it applies to gender: male and female; and as it applies to the act of intercourse given to marriage between the male and female. Christians have the opportunity to restore sex to its rightful place. It is important for Christian parents to be comfortable with that thought when they speak with their children in their homes.

Again, when we speak of **sensuality**, we must acknowledge that we are sensual beings as well. We were created to have the use of our five senses: sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch. This is how learn about the world about us. It is only through the perversion of the evil one that sensual has been used to be attached that which is wrong and evil. When used as God intended, sensuality is a part of what we use to appreciate with completeness our world. We must be careful to guard all the avenues of the soul so that as we train our children and share the wondrous gifts that God has given us, we can teach them to discern that which is right and good. It is a part of our children’s development to be able to know how to handle the wonderful gifts that the Lord has given them. Sex and sensuality are a part of those gifts.

**Most adults are very uncomfortable** with the correct names for body parts. It is amazing how people who have a wide vocabulary resort to “pet” names or some type of coinage when it comes to describing parts of the anatomy that deal with the

sexual areas. It is important that when we deal with sexuality that we use the correct terms and that we know where these parts are located on the body.

This information is not only important for teaching our children, but for our own personal health. When we are responsible for checking our bodies for breast cancer or prostate cancer, we have to be comfortable with touching our own bodies and speaking with our health care professional about any concerns that we may have. This is a very serious matter.

### Sexuality Education

Group discussion. Have the participants break into small groups and discuss their own comfort/discomfort levels with the role of their own sexuality education. Are they comfortable? What do they need to gain more confidence to do this parental task?

From whom did they get their information? Parents? Peers? Reading? School? Church? What, if anything, do they wish would have been different in their own sexuality education? (List the major points on a flip chart or black board as the items come up). The aim here is to open up the participants and to show common concerns and questions. There will probably be some very humorous comments, so be prepared to be relaxed too!

### What do parents need to know before they begin to be sex educators at home?

#### Basic “plumbing” and sexual physiology

This includes the correct names for body parts and functions (not the slang terms, or the “cutsie” nick-names). Although it is helpful to know some of the names that are floating around in locker

rooms, etc. See the charts as attached as a teaching aid. These can be reproduced for participants.

### Sexual developmental stages of children:

#### Birth to 18 months is marked by the following:

- Basic curiosity about all body parts
- Gender discovery and patterning
- Desire to be touched for comfort and bonding/closeness
- (The skin is the largest sexual organ of the body)

#### 18 months to three years:

- Body exploration and specific attention to genitalia
- Self pleasuring
- Need to be cuddled, held, kissed
- Shows attachment and love by hugging and kissing people, toys, pets
- Conflicts over toilet training
- Growing awareness of sexual differences and self esteem
- “Mommy, I’m a girl too...why don’t I have breasts like you?”

#### Threes and fours:

- Begin to ask explicit sexual questions like:
- Where did I come from?
- Why are boys/girls different?
- What is that called?
- How are babies made?
- Begin to understand boundaries between me and you
- Begin to develop personal behavioral boundaries
- Sex play and mutual curiosity (it is normal, not evil)

#### Fives and Sixes:

- Continue to develop interest in sexual issues by copying model adults

- Great time of gender socialization and gender identityInitial usage of sexual slang and “dirty words” (even though they have no idea what they mean) - only if they hear them somewhere

#### Seven through Nine:

- Strong beginnings of peer pressures
- Self consciousness may cause withdrawal
- Cross sex friendships begin to develop.
- Boys begin to notice girls and visa versa.
- Up to this point it has mainly been same sex friends
- “Sex education/myth-information” starts with peers

#### Ten through Twelve:

- Puberty begins.
- Bodies begin to change and re-shape
- Secondary sexual development (hair growth)
- Periods for girls and wet dreams for boys begin
- More intense and specific sexual questions

*“What kids need—and as it turns out, what they want—is for their parents to explain what all this sex stuff means. They need help making sense of it in terms of their own lives and experiences, and to help them to understand what is ahead for them as boys and girls, men and women... Parents clearly are the normal, natural source of information about sexuality—yet kids don’t get it from them. They’d love to have their parents talk to them about love... what love feels like, what it means.” (Morris, 1984, pp. 62, 63).*

## What is normal for each of the stages?

### The key concept of communication

There is no need to make artificial situations to deal with sexual situations. First, parents should develop the atmosphere of openness in their homes that children are comfortable speaking with their parents about anything that concerns them. Just as they comfortable telling you about losing their first tooth, they should be able to come to you about their questions concerning sexuality.

It's important for parents to know their children well. Each child will need information consistent with their stage of development. They can only handle the amount of information that they can process. Even if you have more than one child, you cannot sit them all down at once and have the "talk." Each child develops at a different pace and they will need the information at different times. Don't rush your child with information; listen to them. They will let you know when they are ready and what information they need.

Remember if you are not comfortable with sex and discussing sexuality that message will be quickly passed. If you feel that sex is dirty and not God-given, that too will be communicated. We Christians must put sex in its rightful place, and show our children what a wondrous gift God has given to families and where it is rightfully places within the sanctity of marriage.

### Sample Situations

This is a great place to role play with the parents. Set up situations where mom and dad run into several different situations having to do with sexual things kids encounter or ask about. One couple plays the parents, the other the kids, the third are observers who give feedback. Then

change the scenario and change the roles while parents practice handling different emerging situations using the concepts of mediation. **After each role play spend time discussing what was or was not helpful in the responses in terms of the parents being effective sexuality educators. Remember, the goal is learning, not perfection. Accept mistakes and learn from them with your group.**

Example situations:

The "adult" channel on the TV did not get scrambled. The kids are watching in awe. Parents walk in and see what is going on. React.

The evening news has a special report on prostitution in your area. The kids ask, "Mom/Dad, what is a prostitute?"

The kids are reading their Bible and come across the term "concubine."

They come and ask you about it.

You open the closet to get your coat and here are two four-year-olds "playing doctor."

While bathing your infant, you notice that they have discovered their penis/vagina and are busily exploring the new found (pleasurable) part of their anatomy.

The evening news has a report on female genital mutilation in a

developing country. Your daughter asks, “Mom/Dad, what does that meangenital mutilation? Will that ever happen to me? Why do people do that?”

Ask the group to come up with some situations. They will have them!

### Dealing with sexuality education myths

Here are a few myths to deal with. Have the group discuss them together. If things are not clear assign them to do some research and find the answers for themselves (they will learn much more than just what they are looking for).

**Myth:** Sex education and sexual knowledge increases sexual activity.

**Fact:** Just the opposite is true. The more they understand, the less likely they are to become involved in or pulled/pressured into sexual activity.

**Myth:** Sex is nasty, dirty and to be avoided.

**Fact:** Nope. It was God’s idea in the first place, therefore it is good. It can be turned around, but it is good.

**Myth:** If you tell kids too much they just get confused and upset.

**Fact:** No, they just ignore what they can’t understand or use.

**Myth:** The best thing to do is just wait till they ask about sex. Then tell them.

**Fact:** Wrong again. They may wait too long to ask, or may pick up lots of wrong data before they ask.

Or, worse yet, they may assume they know, but don’t know that they don’t know.

**Myth:** Kids don’t want to talk to parents about sex.

**Fact:** Actually, they do. They just don’t know how to ask, or if the questions will be welcomed.

**Myth:** Someone else will tell them.

**Fact:** Ah! This one is TRUE! But...do you trust just anyone to tell YOUR KIDS about such an important matter?

**Myth:** As a parent I must know all the answers to all the questions or I can not be an effective sexuality educator.

**Fact:** Balderdash. Share what you can, then learn together what you are not sure about. Only God is perfect, and you need not compete with Him.

### Key concepts for being an effective parent sexuality educator

**Don’t panic. Start early and work on it continuously. Be at ease with your own sexuality. Respect privacy (your own and your children’s).**

**Use correct words for anatomy.** Avoid things like, “the seed grows in mommie’s stomach, then the baby comes out.” Woah! Hold on there! This sounds like a strange combination of agricultural and digestive activities. I’m gonna have twins if I swallow watermelon seeds?”

**Use communication as a primary education tool. Avoid THE BIG LECTURE.**

**Keep your answers and education age appropriate.** No need to be super complex with your three year old. Be clear, but simple too. Embed spiritual values into all your discussions of sexuality. Portray sex as a good and God given gift to be appreciated and used according to His wisdom

and directions. After all, the whole thing was/ is His idea!

**Be askable. Don't be fearful or flip.**

### What to cover with your children

**KEY CONCEPT:** Help your child see and clearly understand that sexual discussions and questions are a healthy and normal part of life. They need to know that in your home, discussions and questions on sex are welcomed and that they do not need to fear asking anything or discussing anything. If you do not know the answer to their questions, tell them that you can learn together. **KEEP THE DOOR OPEN.**

Note carefully that there is an emphasis on "IN OUR HOME." Kids need to know that this is not a public topic, and that in some homes and settings it is not a welcome topic, and that some people may be upset if sexual issues are discussed openly and freely. Help them know that in your home sex is clearly seen as part of normal life and not some taboo topic. When this is clear, you will be pleasantly surprised (and maybe amazed) to see how your children will open up to you. If you show shock, disgust or embarrassment at their questions you will be sending a negative message of "don't talk to me about that." And thereafter, they will not. But, rest uneasy, because they will ask someone. Probably their peers.

**Sex is a good gift from God. He made us as sexual beings.**

**Basic physiology and anatomy.**

**The emotional side of attraction, sexual feelings, guilt and embarrassment.**

**Nocturnal emissions by boys and menstruation by girls.** Give your child some type of time frame for when these things might happen.

It might be helpful to explain that some children experience these things when they are younger than others. It also helps parents to realize that today's child may have these occurrences earlier than they did as children because children are maturing earlier these days. There are also some differences being noted among children in visibly ethnic families.

**Aspects of privacy and sexual molestation/avoidance.** NO ONE has the right to touch you sexually - even young children can understand that NO ONE should touch them in areas that are covered by a bathing suit! You can and should tell a responsible adult if anyone touches you sexually (again describe to a young child who is a responsible adult) sometimes, unfortunately the responsible adult is the abuser (No need to panic the kids, but do inform and warn them). There are to be no sexual "secrets" between the child and an adult or teen (Here's a good place to show the difference between privacy and secrecy).

### Values and sexuality

- What are your family values about sexuality and sexual activity?
- Give examples that are specific to your family.
- How to say NO!
- Why to say NO!
- Spirituality and sexuality
- Boundaries of acceptable behavior and why they are what/where they are
- If violated, TELL, TELL, TELL, until someone listens!

### Sexually transmitted diseases

- AIDS
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- Herpes

### Consequences of sex outside marriage

- Emotional consequences
- Guilt
- Shame
- Losses (self respect, virginity, inner peace, childhood, freedom)
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases and pregnancy
- Death

**Masturbation and guilt.** This topic is one that is likely to prompt lots of discussion on the harm or lack of harm masturbation creates. Ellen White wrote some on this in the second volume of the Testimonies, pages 346-353 and in other places. She presents the concept that masturbation is debilitating and evil. Other authors see masturbation as merely a phase of exploration and learning about the body and pleasures some kinds of touching bring - in other words: harmless. The reality is that most humans have, at one time or another, experienced it. Many feel that too much judgmental emphasis on this can create deep guilt which is more destructive than the actual act. This is a topic which parents will have to make their own decisions on after reading and discussion.

**The reproductive process including intercourse through delivery.** Parents should talk about the reproductive process with their children and God's plan for children in a family. God planned that children should be born in a family that has both a mother and a father to care for the child. A mother and a father are required to parent. They should be old enough to provide a home, food, and all the needs of the child **before** they even plan to have a child.

The birth of a child is one of the most wonderful things that can happen for a man and

woman. They have the privilege to participate with God in the act of creation of a new life, and God blesses the home and family that honors Him by preparing for children in the manner that He has planned. It is important to share with children how this plan comes about.

There are some wonderful books and videos available to share with children about the miracle of birth.

### Aspects of pseudo-sex (fake sex)

#### Pornography

The chief problems here include disrespect of personhood and "use" of others for my own pleasure with no regard for their individuality or personhood. Another issue is the false expectations pornography promotes. Reality is not usually up to the airbrushed, built-up and unreal photos. Pornography-like masturbation-is sex without relationship and is therefore only "virtual sex" and a poor substitute for that which is rooted in reality and relationship.

- Sex as power and conquest.
- Forced sexual activity (from petting and fondling to rape).
- Mechanical, non-loving sexual activity to make some kind of point/statement.
- Sex used (actually, abused) as power.
- Aspects of self-control. (There are no documented deaths from a lack of sexual activity).
- Birth control methods and consequences.
- Sexual orientations (Gay and Lesbian issues).

Some of these topics will not be real easy for many parents to discuss freely with their own children. But they are basic topics which the kids need to know about, and they will get information

from some source. It is infinitely better to get the data from loving and informed parents than from misinformed peers.

The last two on the list will be controversial. Good. They should be, because they are controversial. Research has shown over and over again that information on birth control DOES NOT increase sexual activity. In fact, birth control knowledge, and the other discussions that go with it, are much more likely to help delay sexual activity. Gay and lesbian issues are, and will continue to be in the news. Therefore, they can not be avoided with children who need to be taught about those issues and how those activities (not people!) are variations from God's original plan.

Children need to know that sex is both beautiful and broken. Because we live in a world that is both beautiful and broken, sexuality has not escaped, but we can make intelligent and informed choices that will help us, as Christians, stay in the realm of the beautiful and blessed.

## Special Notes to Facilitators

Because there are so many women who have been sexually abused (the lowest statistics say a minimum of 7% and the highest say between 10-20% for incest; and up to 38% for all types of sexual abuse) be aware that sexual issues may be very difficult for some women to handle. Sexual abuse statistics are much less for males, but there are enough to be significant. These parents may need some professional intervention to deal with their own past sexual histories before they are able to be adequate sexuality educators to their own children. This makes it imperative for the discussion leader to be clear and comfortable

with both sexuality and the concept of making and supporting referrals to specifically prepared professionals.

When (not if) you encounter issues beyond your skill level, don't panic. Be real, and acknowledge that this is not something you are prepared to deal with, but that you will be glad to assist finding a professional who is both prepared and trustworthy.

**By all means, do not attempt to do what you are not professionally prepared to do. In other words, don't play at being a therapist. Make a referral, unless you have training to do counseling. Even if you have training to be a counselor remember this is an education session, not a therapy session. Keep them separate. In fact, you should not use this as an opportunity to produce business. Be an educator and a facilitator. Know your own limitations.**

Keep in mind that this program is designed to help parents be comfortable with being sexuality educators of their own children in the family. If other issues come up, keep on track with the original intent you started out with. Resist the temptation to take side trips and or to allow the group to get on a hobby-horse issue. Keep the group, and yourself focused on the specific task.

Another issue can be how to deal with other family members who have not had this training, and who may go into orbit when the sweet little six year old not only knows where babies come from, but exactly how it all happens, and with the correct words for the right parts too! Help prepare parents for these reactions too. In fact, this might make a very good series of role-plays if you have time to do so in your training.

Prepare a list of local professionals to whom you can make referrals when and if necessary. If



in doubt, call your local conference family life coordinator for assistance and suggestions.

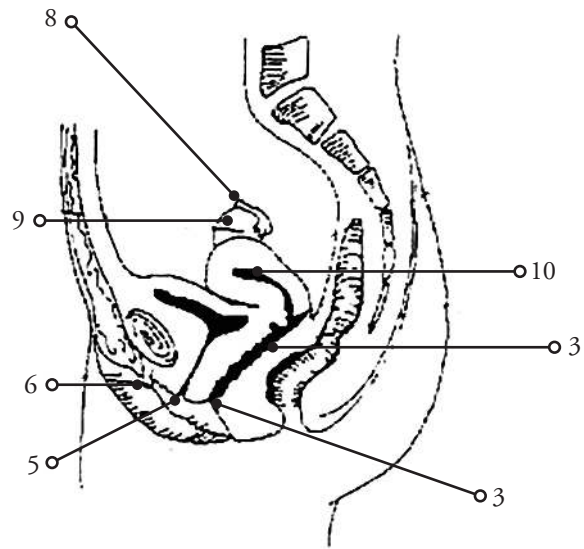
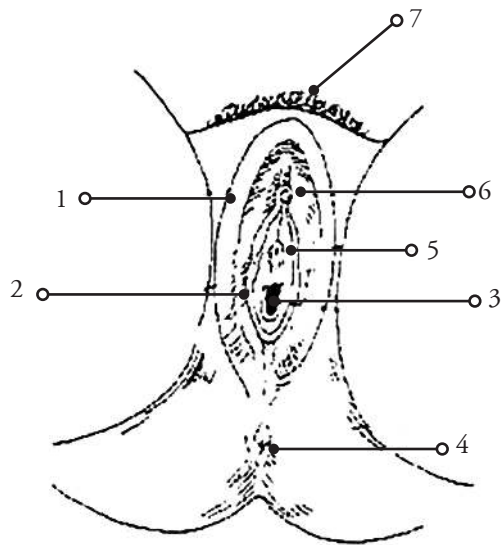
The attached references will help provide some materials for your own preparation as well as for the parents and leaders for whom you will act as a trainer/facilitator.

## References

- Bruno, J. & Bruno, M. (n. d.). *Los Jovenes Preguntan Sobre El Sexo / Youth Ask Questions About Sex*. Miami, FL: Inter-American Division Publishing Association (Pacific Press Publishing Association).
- Buth, L. (2008). *How to talk confidently with your children about sex*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.
- Dobson, J. (2006). *Preparing for adolescence*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light.
- Flowers, K. M. and Flowers, R. M. (2004). *Human sexuality: Sharing the wonder of God's good gift with your children*. Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Resource Center.
- Gane, R. E., Miller, N. P., & Swanson, P. H. (2013). *Homosexuality, marriage, and the church: Biblical, counseling, and religious liberty issues*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- LaHaye, B., & LaHaye, T. F. (1998). *The act of marriage: The beauty of sexual love*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Laaser, D. (2008). *Shattered vows: Hope and healing for women who have been sexually betrayed*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Laaser, M. R. (2009). *Healing the wounds of sexual addiction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Laaser, M. (2009). *Talking to your kids about sex*. Colorado Springs, CO: The Doubleday Religious Publishing Group.
- Scheuring, A. (2008). *Sex: More than a plumbing lesson: Teaching your kids sexual values*. Camp Hill, PA: Wingspread Publishers.

# HANDOUT #1

## Sexual Anatomy Knowledge



## Sexual Anatomy Knowledge

Instructions: Write in the correct names of the listed body parts below.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....
11. ....
12. ....
13. ....
14. ....
15. ....
16. ....
17. ....

18. ....
19. ....
20. ....
21. Sex involves something  
☐ We do      ☐ We are
22. Sexual education will likely encourage or increase sexual activity.  
☐ True      ☐ False
23. Children would prefer to get their sex education from .....
24. Children will ask about sexual issues when they are ready to learn. It is best to wait for them to ask.  
☐ True      ☐ False
25. Parents have to know a great deal about sexuality to be sex educators of their children.  
☐ True      ☐ False
26. Sex education does not really make a difference in sexual behavior.  
☐ True      ☐ False
27. Children's primary message about sexuality is gained from .....
28. Sexuality education is best done via  
☐ The BIG lecture      ☐ Repeated discussion

## Sexual Anatomy Knowledge

### KEY and ANSWERS

1. Outer lips or labia majora
2. Inner lips or labia minora
3. Vaginal opening
4. Anus
5. Urethral opening
6. Clitoris
7. Mons
8. Fallopian tube
9. Ovary
10. Womb / uterus
11. Penis
12. Foreskin
13. Scrotum
14. Testicle
15. Prostate gland
16. Vas deferens
17. Epididymis
18. Glans / head
19. Urethra
20. Seminal vesicle
21. Sex is in every fiber of our being, so it is who we are more than what we do.
22. Sex education actually decreases childhood and teen sexual activity.
23. Their parents. Yes, that is true. Because there is a trusting relationship existing already.
24. False. They may not ask, but they are curious. Be open and look for opportunities to discuss.
25. False. Parents can use what they know and learn what they need to know in addition.
26. False. Sexuality education reduces sexual problems. Ignorance promotes problems.
27. The way they see their parents relate to each other routinely. Parents are sex educators whether they want to be or not. The issue is how well will parents do this task?
28. Repeated discussions and captured opportunities

# HANDOUT #2

## Difference Between Love And Sex

LOVE...	SEX...
is a process; you must go through it to understand what it is.	is static; you have some idea of what it is like prior to going through it.
is a learned operation; you must learn what to do through first having been loved and cared for by someone.	is to know naturally; you know instinctively what to do.
requires constant attention.	takes no effort.
experiences slow growth—takes time to develop and evolve.	is very fast—needs no time to develop.
is deepened by creative thinking.	is controlled mostly by feeling that is responding to stimuli.
is small behavioral changes that bring about good feelings.	is one big feeling brought about by one big behavior.
is an act of will with or without good feelings—sometimes “Don’t feel like it.”	is an act of will—you feel like it.
is lots of warm laughter.	is little or no laughter.
develops in depth to sustain the relationship, involves much effort, where eventually real happiness is found.	promises permanent relationship but never happens, can’t sustain relationship, forever feature is an illusion.
requires knowing how to thoughtfully interact, to talk, to develop interesting conversations.	requires little or no talking.
involves the respect of the person to develop.	does not require the respect of the person.



# Human Sexuality

## Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

## Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

### Books

Bruno, J. & Bruno, M. (n. d.). *Los Jovenes Preguntan Sobre El Sexo / Youth Ask Questions About Sex*. Miami, FL: Inter-American Division Publishing Association (Pacific Press Publishing Association).

Buth, L. (2008). *How to talk confidently with your children about sex*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

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Scheuring, A. (2008). *Sex: More than a plumbing lesson: Teaching your kids sexual values*. Camp Hill, PA: Wingspread Publishers.

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

## Module 9

# Family Resource Management

*“Family Resource management is an understanding of the decisions individuals and families make about developing and allocating resources including time, money, material assets, energy, friends, neighbors, and space, to meet their goals.” —National Council on Family Relations (2011)*

## Introduction

The family, as the first institution established by God at Creation, remains throughout history the world’s oldest form of relationship. While families have been organized as the basic unit of society, families have experienced various transitions throughout the ages. Today’s families have been profoundly influenced and impacted by emerging changes in communication and technology, which require families to adapt their resources according to these new realities (Moore & Asay, 2008).

Family structures continue to change in ways that parallel the changing social, economic, and political climates in contemporary society. The traditional

family structures carry privileges (Coontz, 2000), however, as Doherty (1997) postulates that “as a result of environmental changes, our current society may be the first in history that cannot clearly define the family. These complexities necessitate the need for ongoing education and evaluation about the ways families function.”

This reality as expressed by Doherty has actually been the reality of families since Bible times. Many of the stories in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament are placed within the context of families or human relationships: Adam and Eve, Jacob and Esau, David and Jonathan, to name a few. However, a closer look at the family trees or genealogy of these biblical families reveals family dysfunction that indeed parallels the challenges that many families face today (Garland & Garland, 2007).

As we look at the families of the Bible and make connections with the families of today, we can glean a deeper understanding of God and how He provides resources for His children. The challenge for every family is how they will manage these resources. The underlying concept of family resource management is about three words: family, resource, and management.

## Discovering Our Resources

It is expected that in every family members of the family strive to meet the needs of the family, individually and as a unit. Every family is tasked with identifying and securing necessary resources to meet those needs. Resources are assets available to a family with which it carries out its tasks and can be found in both internal and external environments. Resources

are available for a spectrum of needs: physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual. Philippians 4:19 states, “and my God shall meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Financial and material resources are the easiest to identify, however, the resources that are less tangible are equally as important for the survival and maintenance of the family. See table below:

INTERNAL RESOURCES	
More tangible Internal Assets	Less Tangible Internal Assets
Financial resources Material possessions	Health Time Influence Abilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural talents</li> <li>• spiritual gifts</li> <li>• developed skills in the family</li> <li>• mix of temperament type and personality</li> </ul>

EXTERNAL RESOURCES	
More tangible Internal Assets	Less Tangible Internal Assets
Extended family network Friendship networks Church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pastoral services</li> <li>• Sabbath school</li> <li>• worship services</li> </ul> Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public library</li> <li>• internet</li> <li>• free community services               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• medical services—i.e., health screenings</li> <li>• tool loan</li> <li>• free concerts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• welfare services</li> <li>• police services</li> <li>• parks and recreation services</li> </ul>	Natural resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• air</li> <li>• water</li> <li>• forests</li> <li>• wild life</li> </ul>





## GROUP EXERCISE

**Briefly discuss with another participant other resources you are able to identify that will meet physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs?**

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What other resources are you able to identify that will meet physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs?

Family resource management is about decision-making and values, some of the decisions will be habitual and others will be more stressful. For instance, weekly grocery shopping does not usually require a very high level of decision making; but what to do with a sick child on a workday demands more deliberation and information seeking. Families must examine their attitudes towards resources—how to conserve, expend, and manage their resources. Previous or current circumstances, philosophy of life, and culture are all factors that guide and shape attitudes about family resources. In addition, availability and accessibility of resources will impact how a family identifies resources to meet its needs.

## Toward a Theology of Resources

**The Owner-Manager Principle God is owner of all.**

- Through creation (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 24:1; Is. 43:1; 50:10, 11; Haggai 2:8).
- Through redemption (Isaiah 43:1-7; 1 Cor. 6:20).

### Managers of God's goods.

- Humans assigned as stewards or managers (Gen. 1:28-30).
- A sacred trust (1 Chron. 19:24; Luke 19:12-24).

### Benefits of Stewardship

**Preserves the appropriate alignment of God and humanity.**

- Sin distorts the divine-human relationship, elevating the creature above the Creator (Is. 14:13, 14).
- Stewardship guards against the temptation to distort the relationship between the Creator and that which He created (cf. Is. 64:8).

### Builds trust in God to supply our need.

- We are not alone; we need not worry about caring for ourselves (Phil. 4:19).
- We need not hoard resources as though they were in short supply (1 Kings 17:13-16).

### Puts the focus on God as owner.

- Managers ask the question, "What would the Owner have me do with the goods that are His?"

**Stimulates in us the generosity of the Greatest Giver.**

- We give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7).
- We sacrifice to help others as God has sacrificed Himself for us (Luke 10:30-37; cf. 2 Cor. 9:15)



## GROUP EXERCISE

Read the following passages of scripture:

Matthew 6:33 Mark 12:30

Matthew 6:24 1 Timothy 6:10

Why is resource management important to the Christian?

What difficulties do individuals and families encounter in managing their resources?

### The Tithe is the Lord's

#### A Tenth of the Increase

##### A specially designated portion.

- "Tithe" is the English term for the Hebrew *ma'aser* ("tenth part"), a special designation for a portion of one's "increase,"—what one has acquired, produced, or earned (Deut. 14:18; 26:12; 2 Chron. 31:5).
- "Tenth" (Heb. *ʿasiyriy*) further defines the "tithe" portion (Lev. 27:32).

**A principle for every currency.** Tithe is calculated in whatever currency is used to measure one's increase in acquisitions or income.

- In the Hebrew agrarian economy, the currency included grain, fruit, and flocks or herds of animals (Lev. 27:30-32). Also mentioned are oil and wine (Deut. 12:17), and honey (2 Chron. 31:5).
- The Pharisees paid tithe of their herbs (Matt. 23:23).
- Abraham paid "tithes of all" the spoils of war (Gen. 14:20).

### God's Uses What is His Own

**Holy money.** "All the tithe ... is the Lord's" (Lev. 27:30a).

- The tithe is "holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 27:30b), i.e. "set apart" (Heb. *quodesh*) for the Lord.
- This specially designated portion of our increase is a token that everything we have belongs to God (Ps. 24:1; 50:10, 11; Haggai 2:8). By returning the tithe, we acknowledge God to be the Owner of all we possess. He owns our land; He gives its fruits; He gives us power to get wealth (Deut. 8:18). God literally gives "the increase" (Compare 1 Cor. 3:6).

**Distinction between tithes and offerings.** The tithe is not the same as a freewill offering. Strictly speaking, the tithe is not "given;" it is "returned."

- It is listed separately from freewill offerings (Deut. 12:6).
- Occasionally referred to as a "heave offering" (Ex. 29:27, 28), it is in this case a unique "offering," brought to the Lord for a special purpose that He has designated—to support those who are His ministers. Tithe is not an offering we give to support ministers. Tithe is God's money used by God to provide for His ministers.
- The tithe is not subject to the same criteria as offerings.
- Offerings were to be specifically "without blemish" (Ex. 12:15; Lev. 1:10; 3:1, 6; Num. 19:2).

- The tithe was arbitrarily one of every ten. Out of the general count, as the lambs passed “under the rod,” every tenth one was to be set aside as “the Lord’s” (Lev. 27:32).
- Motivation for tithing is different from that of giving offerings.
  - Tithing responds particularly to the fact of God’s ownership. To tithe is to return to God the portion He claims out of everything over which He has given us stewardship.
  - Offerings grow out of our exercise of stewardship over the nine-tenths God has given us to manage. “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

**Support of the ministry.** The practice of supporting ministry from tithe runs throughout Scripture.

- Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God (Gen. 14:20).
- The Israelites returned their tithe to the Lord for the purpose of supporting the Levites in their service of ministry (Ex. 29:27, 28; Num. 18:24, 31).
- Jesus supported God’s tithe plan. Though the return of tithe is not a substitute for showing justice, mercy and faith, Jesus acknowledged the payment of tithe (Matt. 23:23).
- Paul endorsed God’s tithe plan (1 Cor. 9:13, 14). “It was to this plan for the support of the ministry [the tithe] that Paul referred when he said, ‘Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.’” (Acts of the Apostles, p. 336)

### Practical Issues Related to Tithe

**How is tithe dispensed?** God asks His people to “bring the whole tithe into the storehouse” (Mal. 3:10).

- Anciently, the Israelites brought their tithes to the tabernacle where Aaron, the high priest, received the tithes to provide for his livelihood and those of the Levites (Num. 18:28).
- With construction of the temple, the tithes were collected in special treasury rooms (Neh. 10:37, 38; 12:44; 13:5, 12).
- In the Seventh-day Adventist church, tithes are collected at local churches and forwarded by the church treasurer to the conference/ mission treasurer who dispenses the tithe as salaries for those who work in gospel ministry.

**How is “increase” calculated?** Some may interpret “increase” as their gross income; others, whose businesses incur expenses to generate income, understand “increase” to mean net income. Taxes are not understood as business expenses.

### Selected Quotations on Tithe

“Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord’s work. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion,—the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this.” (Acts of the Apostles, p. 74)

“Not only does the Lord claim the tithe as His own, but He tells us how it should be reserved for Him. He says, “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.” This does not teach that we are to spend our means on ourselves and bring to the Lord the remnant, even though it should be otherwise an honest tithe. Let God’s portion be first set apart.” (Adventist Home, p. 389)

“God expects no less from us than He expected from His people anciently. The great work for the salvation of souls must be carried forward. In the tithe, with gifts and offerings, He has made provision for this work. Thus He intends that the ministry of the gospel

shall be sustained. He claims the tithe as His own, and it should ever be regarded as a sacred reserve, to be placed in His treasury for the benefit of His cause.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 300)

### Faithful Giving: Offerings

- Offerings express our gratitude for God’s blessings.
- Offerings come from the remaining 90% after tithe is returned.

### God’s purpose for offerings

- To partner with humanity
- To be a testimony of praise
- To support His mission on earth
- To strengthen the unity of the church
- To provide for His church and to help the needy

### Motivation in giving

Tithe is about our loyalty to God. Offerings are about our attitude towards God.

*“The freewill offerings of the humble, contrite heart He will receive, and will reward the giver with the richest blessings. He receives them as the sacrifice of grateful obedience.” (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2, p. 652-653)*

*“The Lord does not need our offerings... [but] This is the only way in which it is possible for us to manifest our gratitude and love to God. He has provided no other.” (Review and Herald, December 6, 1887).*



## GROUP EXERCISE

### Faithful Giving

Read the following Bible passages regarding tithing.

- |                     |                  |                     |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| • Deuteronomy 16:17 | • Hebrews 7:1-10 | • Leviticus 27:30   |
| • Genesis 14:20     | • Malachi 3:10   | • Deuteronomy 12:11 |

Read the following Bible passages regarding offerings.

- |               |                    |                        |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| • Exodus 25:2 | • Deuteronomy 8:18 | • 1 Chronicles 29:3-14 |
| • Ezra 3:5    | • Mark 14:3-8      | • 2 Corinthians 9:7    |

What lasting principles can be drawn from the Bible passages on tithes and offerings to inform and inspire our giving today?

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## Financial Planning

A planning principle: “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:2)

Financial planning is for all arenas of life, as seen in Proverbs 31. In planning, goals are essential. Financial planning is designed not to prevent your enjoyment of life but to help you obtain the things you want and need.

### Budgeting and Solomon’s counsel

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths... Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”

### Reasons to budget

- Live within your income
- Spend your money wisely
- Reach your financial goals
- Prepare for financial emergencies
- Develop wise financial management habits

When budgeting, consider **income; expenses**, fixed and variable, such as tithe and offerings, taxes, housing either rent or mortgage, household expenses, loans, car payments, medical; and **savings**.

## Conclusion

Jesus helps us put our tasks into proper perspective.

- Before you go about your tasks, remember that I am the Creator. I will provide. (Exodus 15:19; 16:11; 17:6)
- Do not forget that I’ve shown Myself over and over again to be trustworthy. (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 1:31)
- Before you get into a flurry of activity, be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10; Psalm 23)
- When you are at your extremity, I am not. (Isaiah 43:2; Matthew 8:27)
- I will give you rest. (Matthew 11: 28-30)

“Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are the “issues of life”; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The wellbeing of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.” (The Adventist Home, p. 15)

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# HANDOUT #1

## Developing a Budget

Income

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**Primary reasons for a budget:**

- Live within your income.
- Spend your money wisely.
- Reach your financial goals.

Expenses – Fixed and Variable

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Savings

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Faithful Families

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*Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are “the issues of life”; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences. White, 1952, p. 15*



## Family Resource Management

### Independent Learning:

Independent learning should take up the remaining 2 hours in each module. Each module includes a list of recommended reading and/or videos. Reading of recommended books and recommended video viewing can fulfill this requirement, under the following guidelines:

- Read one medium-size book (100-200 pages) or read for 2 hours any of the recommended reading.
- Recommended video-viewing (1 hour maximum) may apply to the required 2 hours of independent learning.
- Specific reading or assignments as assigned by course teacher.

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Finley, M. (2010). *Revive us again*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association.

Hanson, D., Maxson, B., Botting, E. R. G. & Reid, G. E. (2009). *Faith and finance: Financial planning with a faith factor*. Silver Spring, MD: Stewardship Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Radin, R. S. (2010). *The steward leader: Transforming people, organizations, communities*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

Ramsey, D. (2002). *Financial peace revisited*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Reid, G. E. (2000). *In search of the storehouse*. Burleson, TX: Southwestern Union Conference.

White, E. G. (1952). *Adventist Home*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

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#### Wev

For more articles, books, DVDs, and recommended websites: General Conference Stewardship Ministries: [www.adventiststewardship.com](http://www.adventiststewardship.com)

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

## Module 10

# Family Ministries Implementation and Professional Ethics

### Introduction

Before beginning this lecture, it would be appropriate and nice for the trainer to introduce his/her own family, and show pictures if possible, if you haven't done so previously. Share something interesting about each family member. If it is feasible, and the audience is not too large, perhaps members of the group can introduce themselves and share something about their individual families with the whole group. Fostering rapport and warmth in the group increases the effectiveness of the training event.

### What is a Family?

When we hear the word “family,” many of us still think about the stereotypical family with father, mother, 2-3 children, and pets. Indeed, this description is family, but family today is much more than this idealistic notion, since only a small percentage of families today fit into this category. The Bible and social science offer a much broader perspective on family. A single parent with children, a retired couple, a “blended” family, single adults sharing an apartment, a childless couple—all these and many more represent

families in our world today. All these families need the support and intentional ministry of the church on our behalf. Therefore, a ministry to family needs to be broad and comprehensive in order to do an adequate job in this area.

### Challenges Facing Families Today

To engage in successful family ministry we must be mindful of the many pressures impacting families in contemporary society. Note the following:

The marked downturn experienced by the American economy in the later part of 2008 precipitated by the failures of key financial institutions, and subsequent bail-outs at tax-payers expense have led the government to finally admit we have been in an economic recession since December 2007. This phenomenon has been accompanied by unprecedented home foreclosures, job losses, and added stress to most American families.

#### Balancing work and family

Mothers have been forced to go out into the work place—forcing couples to juggle careers and family. With the average family moving every five years, support systems are increasingly temporary. In this



environment people are less likely to make a lasting commitment to anything.

### Changing sex roles

The uncertainty of what it means to be a man or woman today has brought on additional pressures to families.

### Interracial marriages rising

The number of interracial marriages has steadily grown since the 1980s and has increased rapidly in the early twenty-first century. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 1990 there were 1,348,000 interracial marriages, compared to 651,000 in 1980. In U.S. Census Bureau (2000) data, the number of interracial marriages rose to slightly more than 3,000,000 and comprised approximately 5.5 percent of all marriages. The 44th President of the United States, the world's best golfer, and the captain of the New York Yankees; besides outstanding celebrity Barack Obama, Tiger Woods and Derek Jeter are each the child of an interracial marriage. To be sure, interracial marriages are filled with additional complexities which will need support to navigate safely.

### The high divorce rate

High rates have caused an increase in single parent families and less social control for children.

### Chemical dependency

Many families are affected by this in one form or another.

### Changing values

A basic attitude of relativism and secularization is blurring basic moral questions.

## Essential Features of Family Ministries

- Family Ministries sees people in the context of relationships. It is a ministry to the “and”: mother and father; husband and wife; parent and child; church-member and church-member; neighbor and neighbor, etc.
- Family Ministries looks at the needs of the family at different stages of development. It takes into account transitions and recognizes the changing needs that different life stages create.
- Family Ministries strengthens existing relationships and helps people build new ones.
- Family Ministries promotes understanding. It helps church members learn acceptance and love for people in a variety of different life stages and family configurations.
- Family Ministries recognizes that strong families build strong members for the kingdom of God.
- Family Ministries promotes the reconciliation and healing promised in the Elijah message—the message of God for His people in the last days. It offers hope that broken relationships and rifts between generations can be repaired.
- Family Ministries offers healing to those who have been abused and scarred in dysfunctional families and hurt by lost relationships. It offers restoration and wholeness to those whose identities have been shattered and distorted by abuse.
- Family Ministries teaches competence in a variety of interpersonal skills and areas of decision-making, from dealing with sexuality to managing money.
- Family Ministries includes three phases: education, enrichment, and counseling. “These phases can include (but are not limited to) teaching people new interpersonal skills; offering opportunities for the enrichment of existing relationships; and

offering the opportunity for personal and relational growth under the guidance of a skilled counselor.” (Seven Steps to Successful Family Ministry, p. 5).

## The Family Ministries Committee

### What is it?

An effective family ministries program requires a leadership team that is committed to this effort for a sustained period of time (for several years if necessary). The most important aspect of this team is the coordinator. This individual needs to be a good communicator, with keen interest in human relationships, as well as having an ability to organize.

### Who is on it?

The family ministries committee should include the following persons:

- The Coordinator
- Sabbath School Superintendent
- Home and School Leader
- Personal Ministries Leader
- Community Services Leader
- Men's Ministries Leader
- Singles' Ministries Leader
- Women's Ministries Leader
- At least one married couple
- At least one divorced person
- A good cross section of ages

This committee has the responsibility to organize a process for ministry for the year.

## Defining Needs in Your Congregation and Community

What kinds of families comprise your church? You may have a general impression based on what you superficially notice in church on Sabbath

morning. Such a general impression, however, needs to be sharpened by more accurate research. A family life profile distributed to the members of your congregation can be a good place to start. It should be distributed in church and filled out on the spot and returned. This should give a fairly accurate picture of the composition of the families in your active membership. A sample family life profile and survey is included at the end of this module.

In addition to developing a family ministries profile of your congregation, you can also use direct feedback from experts, church families, and your family ministries committee to pinpoint needs.

Keep in mind that family ministries is not only for members of your church. It can also be evangelistic, ministering to the needs of your neighbors and friends who are not church members. Later on you may wish to survey your community to determine their interests and needs regarding family. A community family life survey for measuring family life needs and interests of the community around the church is found at the end of this module.

## Planning Family Ministries in Your Local Church

The planning process can begin after you have identified some definite potential target audiences. Pick four or five such audiences with high needs and which you may have some potential to reach. You can accomplish your Family Ministries plans by the following:

- Developing objectives based on
  - Target audience
  - Nature of the program
  - Time frame for the program
  - Specific skills, experiences and information to

be communicated.

- Finding leaders and helpers.
- Locating or generating material resources (audio-visuals, packaged programs, handouts, etc.).
- Deciding on the time, place, fees and other details of events.

## Advertising Your Family Ministries Events

No matter how well your program meets the needs of your target audience, it will do no good if nobody comes! They won't come if they don't hear about it. Here are some ideas for advertising your Family Ministries events:

- Person-to-person invitations—friends inviting friends
- Direct mail
- Signs, posters, fliers, and brochures
- News releases to print and broadcast media (free publicity)
- Paid advertising
- Answer five basic questions on your event:
  - What are you offering?
  - Who is invited?
  - When will the event be held?
  - Where will the event be held?

Why will people benefit from taking part in the event?

## Evaluating and Following-up Your Event

### Evaluation Questionnaires

Every Family Ministries seminar should offer people a chance to fill out an exit questionnaire. This provides a chance to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and can also give people a chance to indicate their interest in future seminars. A sample evaluation sheet is at the end of this module.

### Follow-up

Look at the relational quality of your programs. Are they “canned,” or is there a real personal touch to them? Develop an organized follow-up mailing list. Be sure to let people know of future events and services. Develop some follow-up programs that are centered on the worship service. People who respond to Family Ministries events may respond very well to a small group focused on Bible study and fellowship. A Family Ministries event can give you an opportunity to invite people to an upcoming evangelistic series.

## Giving a Family Strengthening Emphasis to Existing Church Programs

Most churches already have a crowded church calendar. A family strengthening emphasis can be given to existing church services, activities and programs: such as Sabbath School, worship service, prayer meeting, youth meetings, evangelistic meetings, communion services, baptismal services, church socials and outings, child dedication services, weddings, funerals, Vacation Bible School, newsletters, personal ministries, pastoral visitation, etc.

## Family Ministries Resources and Materials

Abundant resources are available for assisting you in your ministry to families. A sample is listed below:

- Adventist Association of Family Life Professionals (AAFLP) [www.adventistfamilyministries.com](http://www.adventistfamilyministries.com)
- AdventSource [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)
- Center for Family Wholeness [www.familywholeness.org](http://www.familywholeness.org)
- Family Celebration Sabbath (FCS) at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Religious Education Program [www.andrews.edu](http://www.andrews.edu)

- Family Life [www.familylife.com](http://www.familylife.com)
- From This Day Forward Marriage Conferences [www.adventistfamilyministries.com](http://www.adventistfamilyministries.com)
- The John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry at La Sierra University [www.lasierra.edu](http://www.lasierra.edu)
- Journey Toward Intimacy Marriage Retreats [www.adventistfamilyministries.com](http://www.adventistfamilyministries.com)
- Message Magazine From This Day Forward column [www.messagemagazine.org](http://www.messagemagazine.org)

Speaking of resources, you will want to collect family ministries resources, such as audio and video cassettes, books, etc. that are practical for your church members. Put these in your local church library.

## Specific Guidelines and Helps for Presenting a Family Ministries Seminar

One of the requirements for this module on “Effective Family Ministries in the Local Church” is to do a practicum of 1- 1 1/2 hours. This means that you will need to actually present a Family Ministries seminar to a group. Below are some helpful guidelines and hints to make your presentation effective and powerful.

### Professional Ethics

It matters not how much information that you have, or how much training that you have received. The important component is your ability to share what you have learned with your audience in a manner that captures their attention, challenges their way of looking at the situation, and motivates them to use what they have learned for change. The challenge of presentation is one that intimidates most people, but can be learned so that people have the advantage of the exposure to all the things that you have to share.

It is important to remember that the audience must be our primary concern. If no one is interested

in what we have to present, then we have missed the entire point. Sometimes we come with our own determination of what people should learn and how they should learn it. Effective trainer/presenters are those who are affected by the population they are serving. A good trainer remembers that their responsibility is to meet people where they ARE, and take them to where THEY (the audience) wish to go. If we look at the example of Jesus as the Master Trainer, we find that He met people where He found them, and gave them the opportunity to make choices to change their lives and circumstances. He never forced anyone to change.

One learns most when teaching others.

### Principles of adult learning

Working with adults is a challenge—life has given adults exposure and education, both formal and informal. When a trainer wants to share information with other adults, it is important to remember that this is an opportunity for sharing among equals. The trainer must speak across, rather than down to the audience. When dealing with issues that pertain to families, it is imperative to NOT be the expert! Wise family trainers share experiences, explore options, and help family audience members to develop a plan of action that fits their circumstances.

Consider these adult principles of learning:

### Recency

Things that are learned last are those best remembered by the participant. It applies to things shared at the end of the session, and things that are freshest in the participants mind.

Keep each session relatively short.

Recap often.

Highlight the key points/messages at the end of the session.

Keep participants aware of the direction and progress of their learning.

### Appropriateness

All training, information, training aids, and other materials must be appropriate to the participants' needs. Remember whose agenda you are following.

Clearly identify a need for participants, and make sure that everything presented is appropriate to that need.

Use examples, descriptions, illustrations that the audience is familiar with.

### Motivation

Participants must want to learn! They must be willing and ready to learn, and there must be some reason to learn.

Material must be meaningful and worthwhile to the participant, not only to the trainer.

The trainer should be motivated—otherwise the learning will not take place. Trainers can help with motivation when they share with participants that this session can fill their need for learning.

Move from the known to the unknown. Start the session at a point that participants are familiar with. Gradually build up and link points together so that everyone knows where they are expected to go in the learning process.

### Primacy

Things that participants learn first, they usually learn best, so the first impressions are really important.

Keep sessions to a relatively short period of time.

The beginning of the session will be important since most participants will be listening—so make it interesting and puts lots of important information into it.

Keep participants fully aware of direction and progress.

Ensure that participants get things right the first time you require them to do something.

### Feedback

Both trainer and participant need information from each other. The trainer needs to know that the participants are following and keeping pace, and the participants need feedback on their performance.

Participants should be tested frequently for trainer feedback.

Testing is the trainer asking frequent questions of the group.

All feedback does not have to be positive. Positive feedback is only half of it, and is almost useless without negative feedback.

When a participant does or says something right, acknowledge it, then and there.

Prepare presentations so that positive reinforcement is built in from the beginning.

Look for someone doing it right as well as always looking for someone doing it wrong.

### Active Learning

Participants learn more when they are actively involved. Use practical exercises during the instruction. Use plenty of questions during the instruction. A quick quiz may be used to keep the participants active. If at all possible, get the participants to do what they are being instructed in.

### Multiple-Sense Learning

Learning is far more effective if the participants use more than one of their five senses.

If you tell about something, try to show it as well.

Use as many of participants' senses to help them learn, but don't get carried away!

When using Multi-Sense Learning make sure that the sense selected can be used. Ensure that it's not difficult for the group to hear, see and touch whatever it is you want them to.

*I hear and I forget,  
I see and I remember,  
I do and I understand.  
-Confucius, 450 BC*

### Exercise

Things that are repeated are best remembered. Exercise includes intensity.

The more participants repeat something, the more likely they are to retain the information.

Asking frequent questions encourages exercise.

Participants must perform the exercise themselves; taking notes does not count.

Summarize frequently—always summarize at the end of a session.

Get participants to recall frequently what has been covered.

Give participants exercises to carry out.

Without some form of exercise, participants will forget one quarter of what they have learned within six hours, one-third within twenty-four hours and around ninety percent within six weeks.

### Conclusion

Principles of learning relate to training and education. Effective instruction should use as many of these principles as possible, if not all of them.

### Guidelines for Ethical Practice

Family life educators must understand that their work is not counseling or therapy. The work of family life educators is to educate families and individuals in effective family and relationship functioning. Family life educators must practice within their scope of

competence and have a clear understanding of when it is necessary to refer people to trained professionals. Family educators must treat people with respect and not exploit them for their own personal gain. Family life educators must protect confidentiality and do no harm.

### Session plans

Session plans are useful for trainers. They make certain that the trainer is heading toward the lesson's objectives. They allow the trainer to check that sequencing is correct, content relevant, and methods are on target. The session plan also holds the resources for the lessons at hand.

A session plan is a set of notes in logical order for the trainer to follow to make certain that the objectives set for the lesson are met. A session plan may include other relevant information such as training aids required, references used and identified problem areas. A separate lesson plan must be used for all sessions because each session has its own objective and requires separate planning.

Session Plans should include:

- A session title
- Session objections clearly stated
- Total session times
- Participant details
- Potential faults to be aware of (yours)
- Review notes of any previous sessions
- A need for the participant to know
- Method of presentation
- Content of the lesson
- Lists of new terms
- Key questions to be asked
- Resources required for session
- Timing for session
- Student activities
- A link forward to next session—if appropriate

Sample Session Plan				
Timing	Content (what to be taught)	Training Technique	Trainee Activity	Aids Required

**Timing** - running time of session. **Content** - all things that need to be covered during session. **Training Technique** - lecture, show and tell, or participant discovery. **Trainee Activity** - types of things the participant will do during the session. **Aids Required** - training aids required

## Effective Family Ministries in the Local Church

### Group methods

Some of the roles of an effective leader are described below with words and phrases rarely seen in talking about group leaders. However, they create pictures that may help a group leader make a powerful impact in people's desire to change. Communication is enhanced when our imaginations are involved as well as our heads and our hearts. Better words and phrases are especially needed in the descriptions we use for our work.

Consider the following descriptions of a group leader/facilitator:

- **A Traffic Cop**—One of the key tasks of the group leader is to keep the traffic flowing. Some participants get stuck in the traffic. They are called dominators. Dominators block traffic, keeping other group members out of the intersection. A skilled traffic cop (group leader) will gently or firmly remind the dominator to move on so that other traffic can flow. Quiet members, on the other hand, may need the assistance of the traffic cop to get up courage to move into the group process. The skilled group leader stops the other traffic for a moment to make room and time for the quiet one.
- **A Weaver**—A blanket, scarf, or wall hanging created and woven by a skilled weaver can be a thing of beauty. The ability to take individual threads and blend them to create something useful and lovely is a real talent. So it is with the effective group leader who takes the individual threads offered by group members and blends them into a flowing discussion.
- **A Fisherman**—It is most unusual, almost unheard of, for a fisherman to get a bite every

time he throws out his line. Rather, it takes many throws to catch a fish. This is also a metaphor for group leadership. The skilled group facilitator has many lines (tools, resources, questions) which can be used to connect with individuals or the group as a whole. Too much reliance on one line—for example, “Now, does anyone have a comment?”—is not a sign of effective leadership.

- **Dance Caller**—The dance caller, like the traffic cop, tries to keep people moving, getting them involved in the dance. There is, however, a difference. For the beginning dancer, the dance caller introduces the steps, teaches people how to use them, provides an opportunity to practice—all before the “real” dance begins. Similarly in groups, it is essential to “break the ice” and engage people through introductions and establishment of norms so that comfort is created for the group process which follows.
- **Provocateur**—It is often necessary for the group leader to assist the group in addressing important topics, topics which group members may have trouble initiating themselves. For example, participants may have difficulty in raising questions about overreacting to a child, or conflicts with you, the group leader. Performing the role of the provocateur, the effective group leader can give people permission to address such issues. “Am I the only one who has been embarrassed at my own behaviors as a parent? Just the other day at the grocery store, I yelled and immediately knew I had overreacted. Has anyone done that?” This is an example of provoking discussion by using your own story.
- **Baker's Yeast**—When using yeast in the baking process, it is essential to provide the right heat and enough time for the yeast to do its work and cause the dough to rise. Similar patience is



required by a group leader when he or she allows some thought, suggestion or piece of information to be said and heard, but, then gives it time to sink in before further comment or “work” on the subject. “We will probably need to come back to that,” or “Hmm...that’s a fascinating thought, let’s give that some time before we discuss it further,” are two examples of letting thoughts yeast a bit before we give them more attention. Our reasons for allowing the yeasting process can include the introduction by a group member of an important topic in the midst of discussion of another significant issue; after the introduction of one of those difficult topics, yeasting allows you and the group more time for preparation; or for purposes of “planting seeds” and waiting to see if any one comes back to the topic you have introduced.

- **An Elephant**—Both elephants and group leaders are required to have good memories. Keeping track of people’s names, remembering unfinished subjects, getting back to someone cut off earlier, and connections from one session to another are but four examples where memory is crucial for group success. To be sure, aids can be used to supplement our memories. Lists, name tags, summarization of topics, and checking back with the group are a few examples of tools we can use to augment memory. Whatever is necessary, use it. One of the quickest ways group members lose confidence in group leaders and the group itself is when there is little evidence of memory.
- **Story-Teller/Keeper**—One of the perks of group leadership is that we hear lots of stories, and, as a result, we become the keepers of those stories. This role is a delicate but powerful one in group process. Without giving away confidentiality, we can give group members the gifts of stories we

have heard from other people, thereby sharing the wisdom from group to group. When done well, there is an impact that all the best information and well designed curricula can never match.

## Group Ground Rules

Before beginning a group discussion it is helpful to share with the group certain ground rules to help it function more effectively. Ground rules such as the ones listed below make the group a “safe” and comfortable environment to share and grow:

- Be respectful of others.
- Listen without interrupting.
- Be confidential.
- Allow yourself to feel.
- All questions are “OK;” ask them when you have them; make statements when you can.
- Be open-minded.
- Feel free to pass.
- Participate with honesty
- Please do not “put-down” other participants.
- Focus on the positive.

**Additional Tips for Presenters are found at the end of this module and may be used as handouts.**

## Conclusion

Learning all the skills and techniques in the world are not what makes for a successful presenter/trainer. There are individuals who are full of information, but people who attend their workshops leave confused, baffled and bored! It is important that you be certain of the information that you present, however, it is more important that the information that you present share your passion and belief in what you are sharing. If you are not

convinced that what you have to share is important and true, people will have a difficult time believing that it can make a difference in their lives.

We often share family information as something people should do. Yet, we fail to realize that everyone comes from a family—and often the reason they have chosen to come to us is because they are in pain in the family system that they represent. We do not share the good news, the Gospel of Jesus Christ when we continue to add to their pain and brokenness. The Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy remind us that when Jesus went through a village, He left a trail of healing from the pain, hurt, death and other marks of sin. We have been promised the same power—through the Holy Spirit—to heal broken families. However, if we have NOT experienced that healing power in our own homes, we will just become a deliverer of

facts and figures. To experience healing in our own families does not mean that we have it all together and we are perfect. It means that we know where the healing comes from and we know that our families CAN be healed. This experience adds joy and excitement to any presentation that you offer.

Think about what God's healing power has done in your life and in the lives of family members, and then when you stand to share what has happened in your lives, (remembering that you don't have to tell it all), you can offer presentations that help people heal, grow and develop the type of family witnesses that God requires in this world.

Above all HAVE FUN and remember that when you work for the Lord, in partnership with Him, He promises you success!

*"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13).*

# HANDOUT #1

## Presentation, Handouts & Introduction

### A Good Presentation Will Do Four Things

1. Inform - People should learn something they did not know prior to attending your presentation.
2. Entertain - People deserve not to be bored!!!
3. Touch the Emotions - Information that only informs the head never makes a change in attitude or behavior
4. Move to Action - If participants leave your presentation without a desire to DO something different—you have wasted your time and theirs!

### Handouts

- Distribute only when they are relevant to the presentation.
- Sometimes it's best not to distribute handouts until the end of the meeting. The audience shouldn't be rustling papers while you are talking.
- Your audience should not read ahead and tune you out.
- Don't just copy someone else's presentation for your handouts.

### Introduction

- Find out who will introduce you.
- Write your own introduction.
- Contact the person at least two days before and give them the introduction.
- Pronounce any unusual words—check accuracy of all information.
- Don't make assertions that are not true.

# HANDOUT #2

## The Ten Commandments of Presentations

1. **Know Thyself-** Body language and tone of voice make up 93% of your credibility. Would you be interested in you?
2. **Be Prepared-** Know your presentation, your equipment and be ready for mishaps. Projectors always blow bulbs in the midst of important presentations so keep a spare, and know how to change it.
3. **Examine Your Speech-** Use direct expressions, and don't seek to impress—you're there to communicate.
4. **Arrive Early-** Your guests might be waiting. Be there at least a half hour before the presentation to make certain that everything is set up the way you want it to be.
5. **Tell Them What to Expect -** Tell the meeting attendees specifically what they will learn in the course of the meeting and how they will be able to apply their new knowledge. Clear goals keep attendees focused on their own responsibilities as active participants.
6. **Less Is More -** Your audience can only take so much, so limit your main points. Seven main points is roughly the maximum your audience can take in and fully contain.
7. **Keep Eye Contact-** Use note cards instead of a completely scripted speech, so you can look up and keep eye contact with your audience. Avoid the urge to READ a presentation. Your audience response will be thanks enough for sticking your neck out.
8. **Be Dramatic-** Use bold words and unusual statistics. Your presentation should be filled with simple, hard-hitting statements to keep your audience intrigued. Laughter never hurts either!
9. **Motivate-** End your presentation with a call to action. Tell your audience exactly what they can do in response to your presentation.
10. **Take A Deep Breath, and Relax!-** Don't huddle over the lectern. If you are standing behind one, stand up tall. Move around. Use gestures for emphasis. Remember how you say something is as important as what you have to say.

# HANDOUT #3

## Family Life Profile Survey

Name ..... Date of Birth .....

Age group: ☐ 18-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61-70 ☐ 71+

Gender: ☐ M ☐ F

Address .....

Telephone (Home) ..... (Work) .....

Baptized SDA ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, local church membership .....

If No, what is your religious background/present affiliation? .....

Marital status:

☐ Single, never married

☐ Single, divorced

☐ Single, widowed

☐ Married—Spouse's name ..... Date of Birth .....

☐ Spouse is SDA—Local church membership

☐ Spouse is not SDA—Present religious affiliation

Children whose primary residence is with you:

Name ..... Birthdate .....

Grade in school ..... School attending .....

Baptized SDA? ..... Local church membership .....

Name ..... Birthdate .....

Grade in school ..... School attending .....

Baptized SDA? ..... Local church membership .....

Children whose primary residence is elsewhere:

Name ..... Birthdate .....

Baptized SDA? ..... Local church membership .....

Name ..... Birthdate .....

Baptized SDA? ..... Local church membership .....

Other family members living with you:

Name ..... Birthdate .....

Baptized SDA? ..... Local church membership .....

Family Relationship .....

Name ..... Birthdate .....

Baptized SDA? ..... Local church membership .....

Family Relationship .....

What is the most significant thing the Family Ministries Committee could do this year to address the interests/  
needs of your family?

.....

.....

.....

I am interested in Family Ministries and am willing to help by

- ☐ Telephoning as needed
- ☐ Participating in planning sessions
- ☐ Providing transportation
- ☐ Preparation for events
- ☐ Help with meals/refreshments
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Other

Presenting lectures/classes/seminars/workshops or other presentations Your interest area(s)

.....

.....

.....

# HANDOUT #4

## Family Life Profile

Church ..... Date .....

### Family Category

#### Active Members

- ☐ With Children Under 18
- ☐ No Children Under 18

#### Married—Spouse is a Member

- ☐ Ages 18-30
- ☐ Ages 31-50
- ☐ Ages 51-60
- ☐ Ages 61-70
- ☐ Ages 71 +

#### Single—Never Married

- ☐ Ages 18-30
- ☐ Ages 31-50
- ☐ Ages 51-60
- ☐ Ages 61-70
- ☐ Ages 71 +

#### Inactive Members

- ☐ With Children Under 18
- ☐ No Children Under 18

#### Married—Spouse is a Non-member

- ☐ Ages 18-30
- ☐ Ages 31-50
- ☐ Ages 51-60
- ☐ Ages 61-70
- ☐ Ages 71 +

#### Single—Divorced

- ☐ Ages 18-30
- ☐ Ages 31-50
- ☐ Ages 51-60
- ☐ Ages 61-70
- ☐ Ages 71 +

# HANDOUT #5

## Family Ministries Interest Survey

Your age group: ☐ 18-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61-70 ☐ 71+

Gender: ☐ M ☐ F

From the topics below, please select the five that are of most interest to you.

Place a check in front of each one you select:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for marriage   | <input type="radio"/> Worship and devotional life  |
| <input type="radio"/> Family finance             | <input type="radio"/> Communication                |
| <input type="radio"/> Discipline in the home     | <input type="radio"/> Single adult living          |
| <input type="radio"/> Parenting teenagers        | <input type="radio"/> Improving self-worth         |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for childbirth | <input type="radio"/> Resolving anger and conflict |
| <input type="radio"/> Divorce recovery           | <input type="radio"/> Television and media         |
| <input type="radio"/> Single parenting           | <input type="radio"/> Preparation for retirement   |
| <input type="radio"/> Sexuality                  | <input type="radio"/> Chemical dependency issues   |
| <input type="radio"/> Enriching your marriage    | <input type="radio"/> Blended families             |
| <input type="radio"/> Grief recovery             | <input type="radio"/> Death and dying              |
| <input type="radio"/> Understanding temperaments | <input type="radio"/> Coping with widowhood        |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (Please list): ..... |  |

Suggested guest speakers/presenters:

Name .....

Address ..... Telephone .....

Area(s) of specialty .....

What time of the day and what day of the week is best for you to attend a 1-1/2 - 2 hour program on one of the above topics? (Check the appropriate periods.)

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
Morning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Afternoon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



# HANDOUT #6

## Community Family Life Education Survey

1. What do you believe is the number one problem facing families in this community right now?

.....

2. Would you consider attending any of these Family Life Seminars if they were offered in this area?

(Select as many as you wish.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> How to Handle Conflict           | <input type="radio"/> Divorce Recovery                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Communication in Marriage        | <input type="radio"/> Stress Management                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Marriage Enrichment or Encounter | <input type="radio"/> Overcoming Loneliness Weekend       |
| <input type="radio"/> Understanding Children           | <input type="radio"/> Family Finances                     |
| <input type="radio"/> Self-Esteem                      | <input type="radio"/> Grief Recovery                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Parenting Skills                 | <input type="radio"/> Time Management and Life Priorities |
| <input type="radio"/> Dealing with Teenagers           | <input type="radio"/> Planning Retirement                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Childbirth Preparation Class     |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (Please specify)           |   |

3. What time of the day and what day of the week is best for you to attend a 1-1/2 - 2 hour program on one of the above topics? (Check the appropriate periods.)

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
Morning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Afternoon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. It will help strengthen this survey if we could obtain the following information about you:

Sex: ☐ M ☐ F

Age: (Please circle the appropriate group.)

☐ 17 or under ☐ 19-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61-70 ☐ 71+

Do you have children under 18 years of age in your home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Never married | <input type="radio"/> Married                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Separated     | <input type="radio"/> Divorced                |
| <input type="radio"/> Widowed       | <input type="radio"/> Remarried after divorce |

# HANDOUT #7

## Communicating with Grace

### Sample Evaluation Sheet

1. What inspired you most about this workshop?

.....

2. What did you learn that you didn't know before?

.....

3. Were the concepts in this workshop presented in a clear manner?

.....

4. Which activity/section was of least value to you?

.....

5. How could this workshop be improved?

.....

6. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being generally dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied, how would you rate this workshop? Circle one.

☐

1

Generally  
Dissatisfied

☐

2

Somewhat  
Dissatisfied

☐

3

Somewhat  
Satisfied

☐

4

Generally  
Satisfied

☐

5

Very  
Satisfied

7. Who made this evaluation?

Gender:      Female      ☐ Male

Age:    ☐ 18-30    ☐ 31-40    ☐ 41-50    ☐ 51-60    ☐ 61-70    ☐ 71+

Marital Status:

☐ Never married

☐ Married

☐ Separated

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

How long have you been married, divorced, separated or widowed?

..... years      ..... months

Thank you for your honest comments, they will help us in planning future workshops!



## Family Ministries Implementation and Professional Ethics

### Suggested Textbooks for Independent Learning

#### Books

Barna, G. (1999). *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*. Gospel Light.

Flowers, K. and R. *101 Ideas for Family Ministry: Give a Family Strengthening Emphasis to Existing Church Activities*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Department of Family Ministries. Lincoln, NE.

Freudenburg, B. F., & Lawrence, R. (1998). *The family-friendly church*. Loveland, CO: Vital Ministry.

Garland, D.R. (1999). *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*. InterVarsity Press.

Munson, L. (1992). *How to Conduct Training Seminars, second edition*. New York: McGraw, Hill, Inc.

Pacific Union Conference (1989). *Caring for Today's Families Planbook: a Guide to Planning Family Ministry in the Local Church*. Westlake Village, CA: Pacific Union Conference Church Ministries Department.

Sell, C. M. (1995). *Family Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House

Shenson, H. (1990). *How to Develop and Promote Successful Seminars and Workshops*. New York: John Wiley and Sons

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2011) *Revival and reformation: Families reaching up*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2012) *Revival and reformation: Families reaching out*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2013) *Revival and reformation: Families reaching across*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2014) *Revival and reformation: Building family memories*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Oliver, O. & Oliver, E. Eds. (2015) *Reach the world: Healthy Families for eternity*. Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

For additional resources visit [family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

**Module 1**  
Biblical and Theological  
Foundations for Family Ministries

**Module 2**  
Family: Center for Evangelism

**Module 3**  
Families in Society

**Module 4**  
Marriage and Family Dynamics

**Module 5**  
Interpersonal Relationships

**Module 6**  
Parent Education and Guidance

**Module 7**  
Human Growth and Development

**Module 8**  
Human Sexuality

**Module 9**  
Family Resource Management

**Module 10**  
Family Ministries Implementation  
and Professional Ethics



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