



# HOMES EMPOWERED

*2018 Children's Sabbath*



# SHEMA

Jesus used the Shema (in Mark 12:28-30) to begin His answer of the question; What is the greatest commandment? Shema is the Hebrew word for 'Hear' or 'Listen' it is one of the most important prayers in Judaism and repeated daily in Jewish homes. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 reads, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

In this passage we see so clearly Gods' mandate to the children of Israel and to us his modern day followers. Home must be the space where children and family learn to love and serve God and their community. It is through the spiritual strengthening of our homes that our children will feel enabled to reach out to others. May our always faithful God, bless and equip you in the ways this may be done by your family through your empowered home.

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# HOMES EMPOWERED

This worship looks at creating home environments that are positive for faith development. **Parents are the primary spiritual mentors of their children**, it is important that the **church works in partnership with its parents to mentor and support them** in their roles. Did you know that mums and dads are the top two influencers in the faith development of children?

Ellen White wrote about the impact of Godly parents in her book *Adventist Home* "Fathers and mothers who make God first in their households, who teach their children that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, glorify God before angels and before men by presenting to the world a well-ordered, well-disciplined family, a family that love and obey God instead of rebelling against Him. Christ is not a stranger in their home's His name is a household name, revered and glorified. Angels delight in a home where God reigns supreme, and the children are taught to reverence religion, the Bible, and their Creator. Such families can claim the promise: "Them that honor Me I will honor." (p. 322)

Mark Holman in his book *Faith at Home* said this, **"If we want our children to have a faith that influences the way they live their lives- and the critical life decisions they make – then in our homes we need to be modelling faith through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."**

The Valuegenesis study by Dr Barry Gane found that the faith of the family you grew up in, is one of the highest factors (82%) that influences faith development.

Psalm 78: 4 states it simply, "We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done."

# WAYS TO INCLUDE THE KIDS



## **Songs and Items:**

Throughout the programs you will find spaces for songs (congregational) and special items. If you have a childrens' singing group and musicians, great – if not, perhaps add children to the adult music team. Feel free to move aspects of the program around to work in your context.



## **Offering and Prayer:**

Specific ideas are included in this booklet. Try and include as many children as possible. They will really appreciate and grow from their opportunity to serve.



## **Prelude and Postlude Music:**

Most congregations will have children who are learning an instrument. This is a great opportunity to put together an item or a small band to play music before and after the service. This will need to be organised so that children have plenty of time to practice and become confident.

While the prelude music is happening you might like to show data projector pictures of the children in the church family (if these are not being used during the offering) – be sure to have the right permission in place. If a data projector can't be used then pictures the children have created could be displayed around the church.

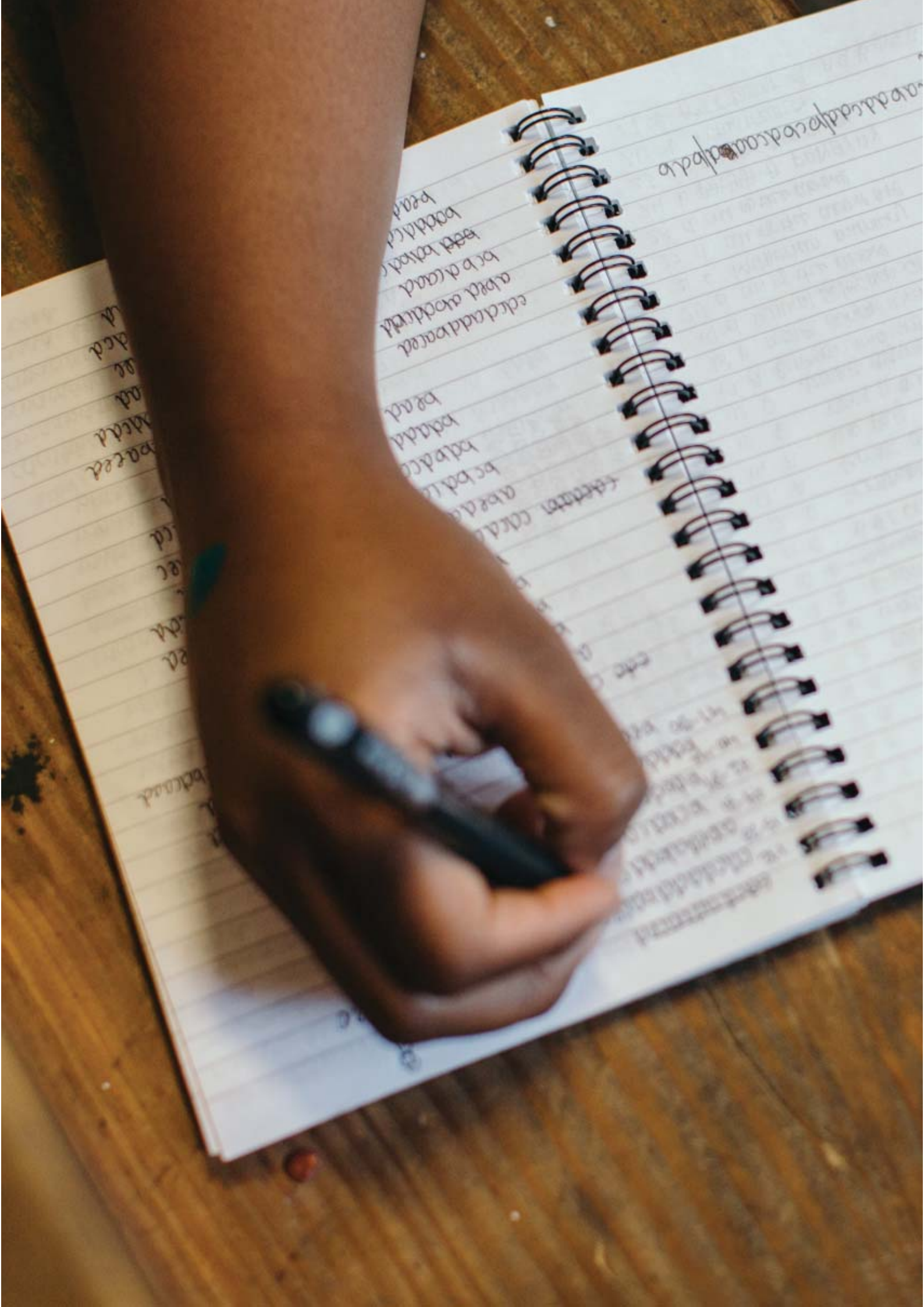


### **Bulletin or Poster:**

Our church bulletins are often factual and not very child friendly.

For this sabbath consider:

- Having a special children's sabbath cover designed for the day.
- Do you have older children in your congregation who are good at design? Is there a way that they could be mentored and given responsibility in the bulletin design process on a continual basis?
- Think about content. Is there a way to make it interactive for children?
- Could you include one of the "Just for Kids..." understanding our church inserts?  
*Available from [children.adventistchurch.com](http://children.adventistchurch.com)*
- Is children's church something you can consider doing more than one sabbath a year?



# ORDER OF SERVICE

This worship service explores Empowered Homes and the significant role that parents have in shaping the faith of their child.

## Suggested Running Sheet/Program Guide

*Please note, these are approximate times and assume an 11:00am start.  
Feel free to use some or all of the Sermonettes/ Sharing Time.*

10:50	Prelude music
10:55	Welcome & Announcements
11:00	Sharing time - What home means
11:05	Prayer
11:08	Offering
11:12	Sermonette 1 - Faithshaping
11:22	Sharing time - Our family traditions
11:28	Object Lesson
11:32	Reader's Theatre
11:35	Sermonette 2 - Joining the Dots
11:45	Sharing time - Home habits
11:48	Sermonette 3 - Homes Empowered
11:58	Sermonette 4 - Healthy Marriage, Healthy home
12:08	Song/item / Take home (optional)
12:10	Closing Prayer

# WELCOME + ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following is a script that you might like to use for the welcome. You will need to script announcements according to your local needs. Adapt the welcome to fit the culture of your church community.

## Welcome script:

Choose a family, preferable with three generations if possible. Divide the sentences below amongst the family members. Add in any announcements you require for the day.

We'd like to welcome you along to the worship service today.

[Announcements]

Today we are celebrating homes

Homes can have a mix of many people

Together we make a church family

It includes everyone

If you are living by yourself – guess what – you are still part of a family. Your biological family, your church family and any place you care about people deeply.



Family can be a newly married couple.

A mum and dad with small children

Or solo, just a mum or dad with kids

It can be people with grown up kids

People raising their grand kids

Or a family who have their grandparents living with them

It could also be some grown up kids without their parents

They are all families and all special

God created the family and he loves them. He made the family and conducting ourselves as a family teaches us about how he loves us

This is our family (introduce each member)

Sometimes we are happy, sad, angry, stressed and bored

Sometimes we hurt each other and have to say sorry...but always we are family and we stick together

Today we are looking at how we can all play a part in empowering homes to be places where we grow in faith. Every home can take a positive step toward being a healthy environment for growing faith.

# SHARING TIME

## What home means

Have people of various ages share what home means to them. Have them include how their homes help/helped them grow in faith. The people you use for this section can then lead the prayer time.











# PRAYER





If possible include a family or people of various age groups in the prayer time.

## Prayer points to include:

-  Thank you for families. Our families are imperfect because we are imperfect but we love each other and the love that we share comes from you.
-  Please empower our homes and families. Please lead the parents as they disciple their children. Please guide the aunties and uncles and grandparents as they support the parents as they work towards raising godly sons and daughters.
-  Please help the members of this church community as they join with the parents and affirm their words. Please give us wisdom, patience and strength as we raise the young people you have entrusted to us.
-  Thank you for giving us so much. It is a privilege to be able to give a portion of it back to help with your work.

# OFFERING

Below are some ideas you might like to utilise for when the offering is being collected.

-  Organise children to collect the offering together.
-  Use children for music during offering.
-  Play recorded clips from church members saying what they love most about being at home and together with their family.
-  Show pictures of people serving around the church and in the community up on the screen.

On last slide: *"Each one of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of Gods' grace."* 1 Peter 4:10

-  Alternatively, show data projector pictures of the different kids/families in your church community.









# SERMONETTE 1

## FAITHSHAPING

This sermon best suits an upper primary school age.

Did you know that a child's worldview is already shaped by the time they are twelve? That means by the time we finish junior (PowerPoints) Sabbath School we have already formed the framework for what we believe and how we think about the world.

When it comes to growing faith, there is no such thing as just babysitting.

From Beginners right through our growing years, what we think about God is being moulded. What happens in our home, school, Sabbath School, around this church is very important in helping to shape our relationship with God.

Did you know that by the time we have finished juniors, many of us have already decided whether we will stay in this church or not.

How you pass on your faith to the next generation is vital. This church is only ever one generation from extinction.

Whether you are a parent with extra special responsibility, a Sabbath School leader or someone who takes the time to care about us, each adult in this church has a very important part to play in passing on faith to us.

You have probably seen the 'Faith Shaper' posters on our notice board or the pamphlet in our bulletin.

After lots of research people have worked out the seven most important experiences for shaping faith.

They used the first letters of the word **SHAPING** to help us remember.

- Today we are especially focusing on homes however in our homes it is also useful to think how we can be involved in the other six experiences.
- The **H** stands for 'Homes Empowered'

### **Interruption:**

**Child 2:** (Looking a bit scruffy with perhaps a Spiderman type shirt, backward cap, low hanging jeans and a skate board.) What are you doing here all dressed up \_\_\_\_ (insert name)?

**Child 1:** I'm talking to these people about the things that influence our faith development.

**Child 2:** Whooh that sounds a bit heavy – don't blow your brain on this stuff – we're just kids, don't get too serious. Out of sight out of mind my dad thinks. My mum reckons we should be seen but not heard. In fact I think most of the time it's not even seen.

**Child 1:** Well it's not that complicated. The letters SHAPING, reminds people how all of us can be influenced in a healthy way.

**Child 2:** That's nice, my life is more like T-O-A-D – that spells toad, and it stands for Television, while my parents are Out All Day. (Emphasis on words with the letters TOAD).

**Child 1:** That's a bit unfortunate – don't you get bored?

**Child 2:** Well we've got lots of DVD's and some really cool Play-station games.

**Child 1:** And you do that all day? Don't you run out of things to watch?

**Child 2:** My brother just goes to the video store and gets some more DVDs and games. Some of them say you have to be over sixteen on the cover, I can still make them work though – they're just like all the other ones – you just put them in the machine and off they go. I don't see why they think you have to be older to make them work – maybe some kids are a bit dumb.

**Child 1:** I think that means they're not good for you, not that you can't get them working.

**Child 2:** No way, they're all the good ones. Anyway I bet I can guess what your letters stand for. I bet I can get at least three out of seven.

**Child 1:** Alright then.

**Child 2:** These are things that influence our lives, right?

**Child 1:** Yes ...

**Child 2:** I don't need clues, I can work this out. S – ummm. S stands for super heroes, of course – all those comic book action heroes.

**Child 1:** I'll give you the first one, it's Service.

**Child 2:** Didn't see that one coming - but yes it is important that my dad gets the car serviced – otherwise if it goes wrong we could all end up dead – that's not very good for my development.

**Child 1:** Not quite that kind of service.

**Child 2:** (Not really listening) Well H has to be Heroes - I'm sure I can get A. It could be uummmm AFL (or some other sporting code that starts with A) that's a pretty big influence in my house on Friday night, Saturday afternoon and Sunday. My dad gets nothing done once the footy is on.

**Child 1:** No it's not AFL.

**Child 2:** Let me think. I've got it. It's Action Heroes – again. Superheroes, Heroes, Action Heroes – it's all the same - yes they are a big influence. Superman, Spiderman, Batman – all here to save the world.

**Child 1:** A will be for Authentic Relationships.

**Child 2:** P will be for PlayStation.

**Child 1:** Well you're getting closer maybe – it's about Participation.

**Child 2:** See I'm good at this let me try I. The Incredibles? – no, wait, that has to be the internet. Me and my brothers spend ages on the internet.

**Child 1:** (Shocked) Your mum lets him?

**Child 2:** She says as long as we're quiet and not fighting. (Goes on without waiting for an answer) Of course N stands for Nintendo. They make all sorts of games and things. Mum thinks they're great as they stop fights and keep the family happy. Mum thinks it's very important that we have a happy family.

**Child 1:** Well not exactly what I had in mind.

**Child 2:** And G stands for. Let me see – of course G is Games? You go into a Game store and you will find everything that influences us kids. Some of them are a bit violent – but you know – if it keeps you happy and out of Mum's hair – or maybe the G is just having a Good time.

**Child 1:** Well I was thinking more about God Encounters.

**Child 2:** What's that all about?

**Child 1:** Do you perhaps want to... well...maybe spend some ummm my church is having a Kids Holiday Program and I think you would like it.

**Child 2:** Is there food?

**Child 1:** Yes there is.

**Child 2:** Count me in – in fact I'll bring my buddies – count five of us in. G must be for Great Food! See yah.

Child 2 exits stage and Speaker continues with rest of talk.

## Getting back to SHAPING...

**S** = Service and Mission – empowered homes serve each other and get involved in sharing in their neighbourhoods.

**H** = Homes Empowered – that's what we are talking about today – making home a great place to grow in faith.

**A** = Authentic Relationship – we all need people who care about us.

**P** = Participation – being involved is super important.

**I** = Intergeneration Connections – we need to know all age groups and get the benefit of wisdom – you older people need the benefit of our energy.

**N** = Noteworthy Memory Events – we all need to have special events that help us remember and make decisions.

**G** = God Encounters – we need to see how we can grow in connecting with God in our own special way.



Romans 12 says that we live in a culture that wants to drag us down to its level of immaturity and this starts really early.

To go against the culture we need to be part of home and church families where we really belong, where we are loved and supported. Where we can explore our relationship with God and talk about it with people who care about us. **Every human needs relationships - that's how God created us.** Babies die if they are not given significant human contact. The relationships we get early in life are really important to how we see God and the world.

For us children to really know 'God is love' we must experience human love. To really understand God's forgiveness we must experience forgiveness from humans.

**The responsibility for making this church a place where kids belong and where faith is modeled belongs to all of us.** We all need to show that we really care about each other and that we put other people before ourselves.

Thank you adults for taking the time to care about us and letting us know that this church family is a place where we belong.







# SHARING TIME

## Our family traditions

Have parents and grandparents share what they do together as a family. These could be pre-recorded, done interview style or each group could simply share their story.

The questions/things to cover should include:

1. What do you enjoy most about being a parent?
2. What is your favourite time together?
3. What is something your parents did with you that you have carried into your own family?
4. Do you have any rituals you do together as a family?
5. Has being part of a church been helpful to you in your parenting? If yes, how?
6. Did your children attend an Adventist school? If yes, how did the school assist you in parenting?
7. What tips would you give to new parents beginning this journey?
8. If you had your time over, is there anything you would do differently?



# OBJECT LESSON

## WATERING CAN AND PLANT

### You will need:

- Drop sheet as this will get quite messy
- 3 large signs labeled 'home' 'school' and 'church'
- Yellow container (containing water)
- Large yellow watering can
- Potted plant in red container
- Bag containing approximately 140 pieces of confetti
- Bag containing approximately 1200 pieces of confetti
- Bag containing over approximately 3000 pieces of confetti
- Fertiliser i.e. Ozmocote (something that doesn't smell) in a blue container
- Another larger plant of the same variety in a green container (this one is kept hidden until the end)

Say:

I have this plant and I want it to grow. I'm not real good with plants. What does it need? *Someone yells out water.*

Water you say? I've got some water in here. *Pull plant out of container so most of the soil is left behind and dunk it in the yellow bucket a few times so water is left running off the roots.*

Hmmm, it's not growing yet. I know what I need? I need more water. *Put the plant back in the yellow bucket and pour on lots of water then lift it out. It should now be dripping wet.*

No, still not looking like it is going to grow. My parent's plants never look like this. Hmmm, I know, they use fertiliser. Maybe it needs some of that! *Tip some fertiliser onto the plant. It will obviously land on the floor.*

Ok, so if I sit my plant down here put it on the floor it should grow now, right? *Someone yells out no.*

Why? *(Someone yells out it needs to go back in the soil).*

Ohhh, it needs soil? Really? Isn't the water and fertiliser going to be enough?

**No, it needs something to grow in.**

This plant is a lot like our children. We think in order to grow our children we need to take them along to church.

*Pick up the watering can and stick the label 'church' on it.*

Some parents think if they take their children along to Sabbath School, the church service, social events and every other program the church has to offer then their children will grow up fine. They outsource the discipleship of their children to the church. While church is vital, just as water is vital for plants, Children need the soil of a healthy home. The job of the church is to support parents as we raise our kids. To be the voice and people alongside us as we disciple and grow our children in faith.

*Pick up the fertiliser and stick school on it.*

Some parents think. Well, our town has an Adventist school. Between church and the school they should be able to raise my child to be a good Christian and fine citizen. I will send them to church and school then I can just go back to work and not worry any more. Again the answer is no. Let's look at it this way. If you take your kids along to Sabbath School, stay for the service then bring them along to every other programs the church offers you are looking at about 140hrs per year

*Pour 140 pieces of confetti in front of the watering can.*

The school, well, it has a bit more time. It has about 1200hrs per year. But remember. This time is not one to one with your child. Their job is to educate as well as support in the instilling of values into their students. They are like the fertiliser. They are there to help.

*Pour 1200 pieces of confetti in front of the fertiliser.*

Now the home, *Stick the 'home' sign onto the red pot.*

After you deduct say 10 hrs a day for sleep and a few other hours a day for after school activities. The home still has over 3000hrs each year to raise, influence and grow children.

*Pour 3000 pieces of confetti in front of the empty red pot.*

Can you see the difference? God has given us a huge responsibility. He has blessed us with His precious children. Our job is to create home environments that grow faith in healthy soil. The church and the school are vital for providing water and nutrition. *Pull all the piles together.*

Together, and with a lot of prayer, we can do something great. *Pull out the fully grown plant in the blue pot with church, home and 'school' all labeled on it.*

**OR use a clip in place of the object lesson:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuKfBzydJYU> (1.52)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z02Bne4U\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z02Bne4U_4) (1.08)





# READER'S THEATRE

Get the children to read what is not bold from the front and the congregation to read pink sections together. **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NCV)**

- All:** Listen, people of Israel!
- Speaker 2:** The LORD our God is the only LORD.
- Speaker 1:** Love the LORD your God with all your heart,
- Speaker 2:** All your soul,
- Speaker 3:** And all your strength.
- Speaker 1:** Always remember these commands I give you today.





- All:** Teach them to your children,
- Speaker 2:** Talk about them when you sit at home
- Speaker 1:** Walk along the road,
- Speaker 2:** When you lie down
- Speaker 3:** And when you get up.
- All:** Write them down
- Speaker 1:** And tie them to your hands as a sign.
- Speaker 2:** Tie them on your forehead to remind you,
- Speaker 3:** And write them on your doors and gates.

# SERMONETTE 2

## JOINING THE DOTS

### Church and School is the Watering Can...Home is the Soil

This sermon is best suited for an adult to present.

- Reality is, when it comes to growing faith, home is where the action is.
- In our Scripture reading from Deuteronomy 6 we see that the place to grow faith is in the everyday things of life. Waking up, walking along the road, in our culture maybe this is the conversations in the car, eating and lying down to sleep.
- Unfortunately many families have forgotten the importance of eating a meal together. When they do sit down together all eyes are on the television. It is not only Christian writers who are worried about this. Many developmental psychologists point out that the family table is an important place to learn values.
- Research has demonstrated how eating together as a family, five or more times a week is strongly linked to lower incidence of bad outcomes such as teenage drug and alcohol use, and to good qualities like emotional stability, low levels of family stress, and good parent-child/teen relationships (Roberto, 27).
- The church can be a watering can that promotes growth but home is the soil that spiritual roots grow down into. Better and bigger watering cans make minimal difference if the roots are not in the soil. Strother writes:

"In our well-intentioned efforts to reach students for Jesus Christ we have developed ministry models failing to call parents to embrace their role as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives...The home has the greatest impact on young lives; with few exceptions, if we fail to impact the home, we will never make a lasting impact on students."

- Christian researcher George Barna writes; "The ministries having the greatest success at seeing young people emerge into mature Christians are those that facilitated a parent-church partnership focused on instilling specific spiritual beliefs and practices in a child's life from a very early age. "
- Ellen White writes: "In the formation of character no other influences count so much as the influence of the home. The teacher's work should supplement that of the parents, but is not to take its place. In all that concerns the well-being of the child, it should be the effort of parents and teachers to cooperate" (Ellen White Child Guidance, p319).
- Our ultimate goal is to bring the home and the church together in a biblical partnership to raise up a generation that loves God and loves others.
- A mother and father are not the only adult influences our children need for healthy faith development. Our children spend more than 1300 hours at school. Obviously this is a big factor in terms of spiritual formation. Our Adventist schools provide healthy role models and environments that promote spiritual discovery and growth.
- A child's faith development is significantly enhanced if another adult, who has a relationship with the child, gives the same faith message as a parent. Our schools are an ideal place for this to happen. Our schools also promote a worldview that integrates faith into all aspects of life.

- At the same time, school cannot take the place of home. It is a fertilizer for the plant, not the soil. Even though we see lots of amazing stories where the Holy Spirit changes lives in the school environment, in spite of difficult home situations, the ideal is to have school complementing what happens at home.
- In our consumeristic society, it seems the things that matter most including worship, serving, connecting, growing and sharing are mortgaged at the altar of 'success'. We can be left with homes that are beautiful buildings but do not contain spiritually fertile soil.
- While in an imperfect world we will have situations that are not ideal, and every family has some degree of dysfunction, together we need to do what we can to return the primary place for spiritual growth back to the home.
- At the same time, we need to remember that even in an ideal home, faith is still a choice and sometimes our children will choose directions we would rather they didn't.
- What we need to do together is shape environments that lift the chances of healthy decisions being made.
- The home has the greatest impact on our lives; with few exceptions, if we fail to impact the home, we will never make a lasting impact on children.



# SHARING TIME

## Home Habits

Have a parent/s share some ideas for family worship habits. Include an overview of how the 'Table Talk Tin' and/or 'Daily Bites' works (available from your Conference/Mission Children's Ministry Department).











# SERMONETTE 3

## HOMES

## EMPOWERED

There is a story of a mother who made no excuses. She had a difficult situation, yet she still raised her children to love the Lord. Susannah Wesley spent one hour each day praying for her 17 children.

In addition, she took each child aside for a full hour every week to discuss spiritual matters with him or her. No wonder two of her sons, Charles and John, were used by God to bring blessing to all of England and much of America. Here are a few rules she followed in training her children.

### She said:

- Teach them to pray as soon as they can speak.
- Commend and reward good behaviour.
- Strictly observe all promises you have made to your child.

## What do Empowered Homes look like?

1. It is a place where Gods word is in our hearts. Remember that God told Moses to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart.' How do we do that?
  - First we need to know who God is and that, comes from the Bible. We need to read and meditate on that each day.
  - Then we need to share that with our children each day. Morning or evening worship should be a time of happiness, enjoyment, and closeness. It is not a time for punishment, severe words or harsh comments. We love best when there are smiles, hugs, a pat on the shoulder, laughter, enjoyment. This is the home where God is reflected.
  
2. It is a place where God is spoken about often. Talking about and honouring God should not be just a Sabbath happening. It should be in the home at all times.
  - Speak often about what God means to you and how He is helping you through the day.
  - Talk about answered prayers and what you have read in His word.
  - Teach your children Christian songs and sing them around the home.
  - When they do wrong, be careful in your discipline. Remember children will view God in the same way they view you. Correct with gentleness and with consistency. Remind them that God still loves them and so do you.
  
3. It is a place where the family are thinking about others. They are not focused on themselves at the expense of others in need.
  - Children learn early and imitate their parents in both actions and attitudes. Where a family are being selfish then the children will learn to be selfish as well. But where the parents are unselfish, then the children grow up that way too.
  - Strong Christian homes raise the likelihood of strong Christian children







# SERMONETTE 4

## HEALTHY MARRIAGE

## HEALTHY HOME

**This sermonette is to be presented by an adult.**

A child's primary picture of God is deeply connected to the picture they have of their father.

A child's understanding of how God relates to them is shaped by their observations of their parents marriage.

A child's ability to understand Gods grace is connected to the unconditional love of mum and dad.

**Marriage is a very important part of having empowered homes.**

Even if you're not married here today – you still have a big part to play in helping the people of our church family grow healthy marriages that model Gods love.

You can help with children, encourage them and make sure that busy parents know that they are valued and supported in this church.

Perhaps you have been married and for all sorts of reasons it hasn't worked. Does that mean your children miss out

on a healthy picture of God? No – it means you and our church family need to be extra helpful in making sure your children see positive pictures of relationships.

**To those who are married; Did you know that God is incredibly interested in your marriage?**

Quite apart from the fact that God is deeply in love with you, He has a big plan for your marriage. He wants to reveal His character through your marriage.

Watch the average sitcom, and marriage is portrayed in some very over-simplified ways. It's being seen as an old fashioned idea. Our society enjoys the wedding where we can be "movie stars for a day but it doesn't encourage long term commitment.

Some relationship "experts even claim that evolution designed us to have many partners and an institution like marriage that promotes monogamy is setting us up for dissatisfaction.

So, why do we still feel warm when we see an older couple deeply in love celebrating sixty years of marriage? Deep down we know that marriage was designed for something more than most of us experience.

**The truth is God created marriage and had some very good reasons for doing so.**

Your marriage, in part, is to be a model of the Trinity where God, you and your spouse form a deep connection. In our fast-paced life we often sacrifice deep community at the altar of busyness and success. When we do, we are sacrificing the very depths of feeling and connectedness that life is all about.

Every marriage is intended to be a picture of the marriage between God and His people (Ephesians 5:31-33). Your marriage is designed to reflect the deepest aspects of God's character where He serves, connects deeply and loves beyond Himself. God chooses to reveal part of His character through your relationship.

"Your marriage is about much, much more than a happy couple. It is about showing the next generation the reality of the gospel!" (*Kurt Brunner, Steve Stroope 'It Starts At Home'*)

In the 1960s a pretty reliable source told us, "All You Need is Love." Over the next few decades, however, millions of couples who entered marriage in love left it in shambles. "The Beatles were a great band, but terrible marriage counsellors." (*It Starts At Home*)

The reality is all you need is love and intentionality.

Contrary to what the Beatles and others have led us to believe, love is not simply an emotion. Love is a commitment. It is a commitment to first discover and intentionally meet the legitimate needs of others. Romantic feelings are a wonderful God-given part of dating and marriage. But they are the effect, not the cause. True, lasting love is more about conscious choices than chance encounters.

In 'It Starts At Home' Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope outline five foundational areas of healthy marriage. If you want to read about these areas in more detail you can buy a copy of their book from the ABC.

In order to dramatically stabilize your marriage, you must take the initiative to:

**Redefine Love:** Affirm that love is a choice to know and meet the needs of your spouse, no matter how you feel.

**Release Expectations:** Release unrealistic expectations and unhealthy dependencies on your spouse to make you happy.

**Redefine Communication:** Express love, communicate needs and resolve conflict in a clear, calm, current and constructive manner.

**Reboot Forgiveness:** Live out your faith before your family by extending God's grace to others.

**Reignite Intimacy:** Protect and nurture a healthy connection between one another and God.

## **SONG + ITEM**

Choose an item or congregational song that focuses on healthy loving relationships while showing pictures of the church family enjoying family time.

## **TAKE HOME**

Have children hand out seed packets with a faith shaper card attached. Remind people that seeds need good soil, water and sunlight to grow. Home empowered is about shaping our homes to be great faith growing soil.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Child or Children/Children's Ministry Leader/  
Pastor or Elder











## CONTACT US

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