



FAMILYLIFE®

# BUILDING

Strong Marriages  
in Your

# CHURCH

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GLOBAL TRAINING MANUAL





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## **Building Strong Marriages in Your Church**

Published by FamilyLife Global  
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100 Lake Hart Drive  
Orlando, FL 32832  
[www.familylife.com](http://www.familylife.com)

FamilyLife Global Outreach  
Telephone: 1-800-FL-TODAY; E-Mail: [global@familylife.com](mailto:global@familylife.com)

Designed by Julie Sullivan, [MerakiLifeDesigns.com](http://MerakiLifeDesigns.com)

**FAMILYLIFE®**

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# OVERVIEW OF BUILDING STRONG MARRIAGES IN YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

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*"If we reach the family, we reach the world for Christ."* –BILL BRIGHT,  
Founder of Campus Crusade for  
Christ International (Cru)

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS TRAINING:

The purpose of this training manual is to help pastors and spiritual leaders in every country of the world launch and grow a lay-led ministry to families in their churches and communities. Through a strong family ministry, marriages will be strengthened in their relationship with God, and families will become strong foundations in the church, in the community, and throughout your country.

1. This session gives an overview of the entire training and introduces FamilyLife.
2. Session II describes the family in crisis and calls for the urgent need to minister to families.
3. Session III helps pastors and their wives to understand the importance of their own marriage in the context of ministry to others.
4. Session IV helps the pastor and lay-leader couples form a Family Ministry Team.

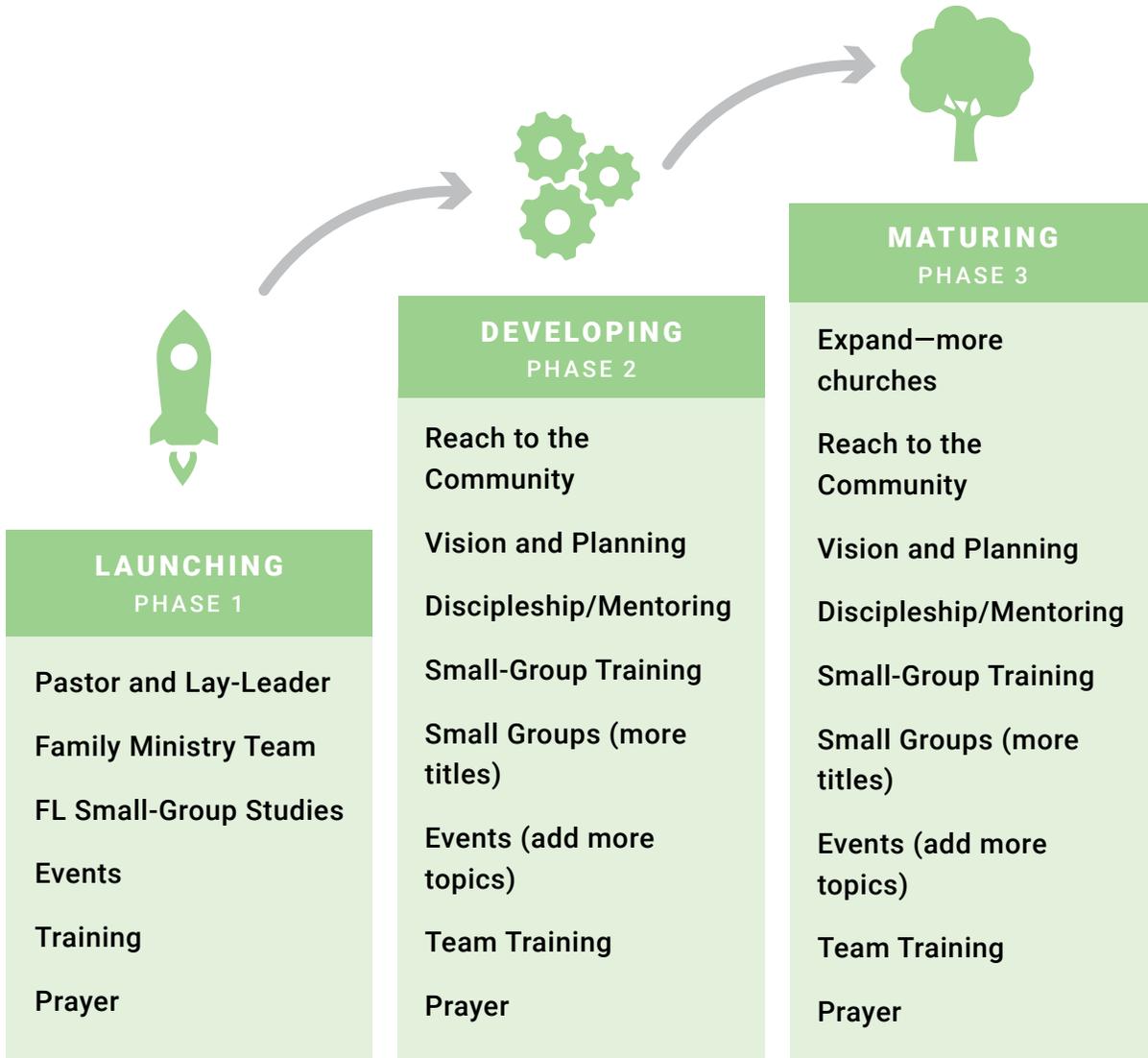


## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

- Describe the overall purpose of this training.
  - Describe background information about Cru and FamilyLife.
  - Describe how your marriage is the foundation to ministry effectiveness.
-

5. Session V is an orientation to the FamilyLife Couples and Parenting studies.
6. Session VI describes the role of events in growing a ministry to families.
7. Session VII provides the strategy for launching and growing a ministry to families.

There are three phases of growing a ministry to families in churches:



Here's what we expect participants will do after completing this training:

- Launch or expand a family ministry in their church
- Launch small groups
- Lead or participate in a small group
- Lead or participate in a Family Ministry Team

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## **A NOTE ON MINISTRY AS A SINGLE**

We encourage couples to do marriage and family ministry together because it provides a visible demonstration of the power of teamwork in marriage. However, we realize that some individuals (married or single) may choose to develop a ministry to families on their own. If this applies to you, we affirm and appreciate your contribution to the Kingdom of God. Although our training manuals are worded to address couples who are doing ministry together, please adapt and apply the material to fit your situation.

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## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CCCI AND FAMILYLIFE**

This section gives an overview of FamilyLife and its parent organization, Campus Crusade for Christ International, or CCCI (now known as Cru in the US). Also, this session explains how your marriage is the foundation to your ministry effectiveness.

### **1. CCCI Mission Statement**

CCCI's mission statement is, "Win, build, and send Christ-centered multiplying disciples."

CCCI is an interdenominational ministry committed to presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. We cooperate with millions of Christians from many denominations and hundreds of Christian organizations around the world to help Christians grow in their faith and share the gospel message with fellow countrymen. Since 1951, God has used CCCI to reach millions of people with the gospel. CCCI and FamilyLife want to "build movements everywhere so that everyone knows someone who truly follows Jesus."

What is CCCI/Cru? Visit [www.cru.org](http://www.cru.org).

## 2. The Launch of FamilyLife

Strong marriage and family life has been a core value of CCCI from its beginning. Staff surveys of the mid '70s and anecdotal evidence revealed a serious decline in the health and well-being of family life, so the leaders of CCCI worked to develop the needed resources to address this issue. They also developed resources for pre-married couples. The result was a weekend marriage conference for engaged staff couples. The first conference was held in California, attended by 43 people.

In its early days the ministry effort was focused solely on serving the staff of CCCI in order to address their significant family needs. But it only took a couple years for the word to get out that the weekends were life changing. Once again the marriages and families of CCCI were flourishing. Staff members told their story to ministry partners, pastors, and friends everywhere. As a result, the Weekend to Remember® conference was offered to the public in cities across the US and Canada.

The need for follow-up resources after the Weekend to Remember gave birth to the FamilyLife Couples Studies (formerly called HomeBuilders Couples Series®). Other books to provide the biblical plan for marriage and family life were also produced. The daily radio program, FamilyLife Today®, and the website, [www.familylife.com](http://www.familylife.com), were launched. Today FamilyLife Today is heard around the world and is broadcast in Spanish throughout Latin America and on Hispanic radio stations in the US (Vida en Familia Hoy\*). FamilyLife Today has also been translated into Mandarin and Russian. The needs and challenges of family life are universal, so now the ministry has spread to nations around the world. FamilyLife Global Outreach was launched in September 1992. What was first available in the US is now available worldwide.

\*Audio programs and transcripts are available online: [vidaenfamilia.org](http://vidaenfamilia.org)



### 3. FamilyLife Mission Statement

FamilyLife’s mission statement is “To effectively develop godly marriages and families who change the world one home at a time.”

### 4. FamilyLife Vision

FamilyLife’s vision is “Every home a godly home.”

### 5. What does FamilyLife Believe?

- a. We affirm the CCCI Doctrinal Statement, and we consider the following values as presuppositions to our core values. They should be common to all healthy Christian lives.

We embrace each of these wholeheartedly as foundational elements of kingdom life:

- Authority of Scripture **2 Timothy 3:15–17**
- Evangelistically Oriented **Colossians 1:28–29**
- Holy Spirit Filled and Guided **Ephesians 5:18–21**
- Importance of the Local Church **Matthew 16:18**
- Prayer **Philippians 4:6–7**

- b. With the Scriptures as our authority, The Family Manifesto also affirms our core beliefs and is the guide for all products and ministries. It is an excellent source document that provides specific biblical references for a model for marriages and families. We encourage pastors and teachers to use this resource as a starting point for sermons or other presentations.

### 6. Your Marriage is the Foundation

The basic premise of this training is that your own marriage is the foundation for ministry effectiveness. We believe that in every ministry endeavor—as a pastor couple or a lay-leader couple—your own marriage is of primary importance to the overall effectiveness in what you are doing to minister to others.



**Key Principle 1.1:** This process of growth begins with your own marriage first.

**Mini Activity:** Spend one to two minutes in quiet meditation and ask this question: Am I open to God working in my marriage as the first step in building a foundation for any ministry effort?

The single most important testimony that will encourage others to consider God's principles for marriage is your own testimony of how God has changed your life and your marriage. As other couples hear your story and see your role model of applying biblical principles in your marriage, they will be drawn to getting involved also. Then as they experience God's power in changing their own lives and their own marriages, they will readily consider joining with you in building a family ministry in your church that can reach out to hundreds and thousands of other couples.

So back to the main point: Your own marriage is the foundation for ministry effectiveness, and when you personally experience God's hand of change, hope, and encouragement, that experience will generate a personal passion and a vision to reach out to other couples.



**Key Principle 1.2:** Your own marriage is the foundation for ministry effectiveness.

## **7. The benefits of a family ministry in your church:**

There are many benefits to launching and expanding a family ministry in your church and community. Here is a list of some of the benefits:

- a.** Opens opportunities to touch lives in every segment of society.
- b.** Uses the universal needs of marriages and families as an entry to minister deeply to their spiritual lives, drawing them to Jesus and instilling a biblical mindset to experience a fulfilling, dynamic marriage.
- c.** Encourages husbands and wives to grow spiritually together rather than attending separate Bible studies, thus encouraging oneness and cutting down on separate time commitments away from home.
- d.** Gives couples the opportunity to minister as a team, thereby raising marriage to a level where God gives them an eternal task to complete together.

- e. Provides great opportunities to grow the size of your church. Couples are eager to engage in small-group studies and attend events that touch a felt need in their lives: issues of marriage and family.
- f. Helps people see their need for the Lordship of Jesus in their personal lives as a fundamental step to having a successful marriage.
- g. Calls pastors and lay-leaders to make their marriages a priority—even above their ministry responsibilities. This first-place priority helps these couples move toward oneness and defeat isolation in the midst of ministry activities.

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## **SUMMARY**

FamilyLife has a vision to partner with pastors and lay-leader couples to equip them to launch and expand a family ministry in their churches. The first step to building a family ministry and the essential foundation for ministry effectiveness is your own marriage.



## **KEY PRINCIPLES:**

- The process of growth begins with your own marriage first.
  - Your own marriage is the foundation for ministry effectiveness.
-

# ACTIVITY

## Expectations for this Training

(10 minutes)

---

### LEADER NOTES:

**Materials needed:** Colored Paper (bright-colored paper; 3-4 sheets per person; 10mm x 20mm. Use additional sheets if necessary); Masking Tape; Markers (large, dark colors; one per person)

**Grouping:** Participants will work individually.

**Instructions:** This activity should be completed prior to presenting the second session and after the overall objectives for the training have been covered.

**Before activity:** Hand out paper and markers.

**After activity:** Collect the sheets and tape them to a wall during a break, where they can remain during the entire training event. Categorize (group) by similarities. Look for repetition, common themes, etc.

Refer to the Expectation Wall when the second session begins. Also, periodically refer to the expectations as the training progresses. The idea is to connect the expectations of the participants to the content of the manual.

Refer to the Expectation Wall during the last session as you wrap up the training. The sheets of paper can be moved to another location if the group plans to gather for a dinner or other closing activity.

### PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:

Write down your expectations for this training event. Use one sheet of paper for each topic, with two to four words for each sheet of paper.



# THE NEED TO MINISTER TO FAMILIES

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The felt needs of the family give the church a tremendous open door of opportunity to step into people's lives, encourage them, give them hope, and help them understand God's plan for marriage and families.

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## **CULTURAL TRENDS ARE NEGATIVE, POWERFUL, AND MOVING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION**

### **a. Marriage is no longer an honorable institution**

A George Barna research report, "Reflections on Marriage and Divorce" (Barna Group, March 2008), noted that many couples have grown comfortable with divorce as a natural part of life.

*"There no longer seems to be much of a stigma attached to divorce; it is now seen as an unavoidable rite of passage. There is also evidence that many young people are moving toward embracing the idea of multiple marriages, in which a person gets married two or three times, seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life."*

### **b. Decline in morality—right and wrong is relative, not absolute**

According to George Barna in a survey conducted in 2008, the moral code began to disintegrate when the current generation pushed the moral limits beyond their parents' limits, who had already pushed the limits beyond the previous



### **PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:**

- Describe the negative forces contributing to the breakdown of the family.
  - Describe some of the consequences related to the negative influences.
-

generation's limits. The result is that without much fanfare or visible leadership, the US has created a moral system based on convenience, feelings, and selfishness.

The consistent deterioration of the Bible as the source of moral truth has led to a nation where people have become independent judges of right and wrong, basing their choices on feelings and circumstances.

As a result we see these perspectives becoming mainstream:

- Homosexuality moves from being tolerated to being celebrated.
- Casual sex is the norm with no consequences.
- Marital infidelity is accepted as "part of life."
- Pornography invades homes through television and the internet.

---

## **THE IMPACT ON OUR FAMILY**

As we look around us we see the chaos of divorce, the pain of abuse, and the struggles of poverty, which all can be traced to the disintegration of our family values and structure. These problems are not theoretical; they are real and personal in our own families.

The reality of this pain and its personal consequences can be a great motivator to take action. We have the opportunity to step up to the challenge and engage in the battle to save our families.

# ACTIVITY

## The Impact on Our Family

*(10 minutes)*

---

### **LEADER NOTES:**

**Materials needed:** Flip chart paper, markers

**Grouping:** Participants work in small groups, 3-4 couples.

**Instructions:** As a group make a list of negative cultural issues that affect the family in your area. Then ask each individual to share a personal example of one of the issues they have seen in their own family.

**Note:** Use about 3 minutes to make the list and then have each person share their example in about 30 seconds to 1 minute each.





# FIRST FAMILY, FIRST

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1 Timothy 3:1-7 provides instructions for leaders in a church: “He must manage his own household well.”



*“Your relationship with your spouse and children is the most important message on the family your church will ever hear you preach.”*

—DENNIS RAINEY

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## **THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION:**

The purpose of this session is to help pastors and their wives (and also lay-leader couples) to understand the importance of their own marriage in the context of ministry to others. We often see that church leaders are so involved in their ministry activities that they do not give proper time and attention to their own marriages. As a result, marriages in the church are not strengthened with the biblical principles God has given us.

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## **WHAT ABOUT YOUR MARRIAGE?**

Ben Freudenburg is a pastor. He was interviewed on the radio program FamilyLife Today. He was explaining the problem of pastors who are too busy. He said, “We have become pastors because we have this great passion to care for and love people to Christ. We’ll just do whatever it takes, and sometimes we get misguided

and put so much energy into the work of the church that we don't realize what we are doing to our own families and to our own lives and children."

FamilyLife has frequently talked with pastors, listened to pastors, and met with pastors in focus groups. We asked these pastors one question: "What is your greatest need when it comes to strengthening families in your church?" They answered: "My marriage and family."

We concluded that the number-one way that FamilyLife could assist these pastors was to help them in their own families. The weight that pastors and other ministry leaders carry is one of the most difficult jobs in all of life.

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## **IT'S A MATTER OF INTEGRITY**

When Paul spoke of his ministry, he emphasized both the sharing of the gospel and the example of his own life (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12). He backed up his communicating of the gospel by his exemplary life. Probably nothing reveals more about a man's character than how he relates to his wife and children.

David makes very pointed remarks on personal integrity in Psalm 101:2: "I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart." Psalm 101:6 says, "He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me." This is what pastors and other leaders seek—to live clean, honest lives that will inspire and encourage others to do likewise.



## IDEAS ON HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Many church leaders and their families are weary of feeling that they have to be “perfect examples” of a Christian family. But that’s not what your church needs—they don’t need a “perfect example.” In fact, we should reject this stereotype of what constitutes a godly marriage and family. As a couple in ministry, you won’t have a perfect family, and you shouldn’t try to project to others that you have a perfect family.

You don’t have to be a perfect model. In fact, people need to know how you apply the Christian life to the struggles in your marriage and family. We have learned that many times God wants to use our failure to show others how to get back on track. Many times our most profound ministry comes from our weakness.



*“The most strategic thing a pastor [or lay-leader] can do to encourage strong marriages and families in the church is to model a strong marriage. Model attentiveness. Model intimacy. Model loving parenthood. That’s the first thing. Remember that your marriage and your family are more important than your ministry.”* —H.B.LONDON, pastor, 31 years

### a. Minister first to your spouse.

- Ministry couples are not exempt from Satan’s fiery darts; they need to protect and fortify their marriages against overwhelming stress.
- Make dating a priority—see if you can have a date without discussing issues related to your ministry.
- Pray about developing healthy boundaries for the two of you.
- Have a family time together once a week. Read, learn, and grow together.
- Pray together daily.

### b. Raise children, not “preacher’s kids.”

- Be alert to your children’s spiritual needs. Satan crouches outside every door, and he would love to significantly interfere with your family.
- Cultivate a focused relationship with each child. Your children will feel your love when each one of them knows that you will regularly devote special time and attention to them.

- Explain to your kids what you do and why. Share your passion, enthusiasm, and urgency with family members. They have a desire and a right to be proud of what you do.
- Save some pastoral time for your own sheep. Your children need you too! After your spouse, your children are your most important disciples.

**c. Redeem the time (learn how to say no).**

Church leaders might be expected to be “on call” or ready to respond 24/7 (even 365 days a year). Those in ministry need a strategy to set boundaries for their work if they are to remain effective at home:

- Use your calendar to say no: “I’m sorry, but that date conflicts with another appointment.”
- Appeal to a higher authority: “I must first consult with my spouse.”
- Decline because of your pre-determined personal boundaries: “Thank you for that opportunity, but I need time for rest.”
- Have someone else say no for you. Your spouse or perhaps a church secretary can pass along the “no.”
- Use your answering machine or cell phone to screen your calls. Just because the phone rings does not mean you must answer it at that moment.
- Take time off each week without guilt. Having a day for rest and refreshment is God’s idea.



#### **d. Guard your heart.**

Modeling a healthy, God-honoring marriage and family can be one of the most significant contributions you make to your church, your home, and your life.

- Take inventory: Is there anything you need to repent of in your life and family?
  - Selfishness
  - Arrogance
  - Disrespect for your spouse
  - Ignoring your children
  - Anger at a child who is difficult to love
  - Failure to pray together with your spouse
  - Etc.
- Repent. Seek help from an older mentor.
- Claim cleansing and forgiveness.

# ACTIVITY

## Assessing Priorities for Making Your First Family First

*(5 minutes)*

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### **Individually:**

1. Review each of the “Ideas on How to Improve Your Marriage and Your Family” in this session.
2. Place a (+) next to items you feel you are doing okay, and a (-) next to those you would like to work on.

### **As a Couple:**

1. Share your pluses and minuses. Do not comment on your spouse’s assessment—just listen.
2. Select one or two areas that you would most like to improve on—share it with your spouse.
3. Set a time/date/location when you will commit to continue the discussion.

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Time:\_\_\_\_\_ Place:\_\_\_\_\_



# ORGANIZE A FAMILY MINISTRY TEAM IN YOUR CHURCH

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION:

The purpose of this session is to help the pastor and lay-leader couples form a Family Ministry Team. The idea is to form a team of couples, led by a lay-leader couple, to carry the load and implement the plans for launching and growing a ministry to families. Key roles on the team include: team leader couple, prayer couple, small-group couple, and events couple.

The team may grow and expand to other outreach opportunities in the future. A great way to get singles involved is to recruit them to lead ministries to other singles, youth, the elderly, etc. But for now, we will focus on some FamilyLife basics.

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## THE FAMILY MINISTRY TEAM

This session describes a suggested organizational structure, the role of the Family Ministry Team leader couple, and the roles of the team members.

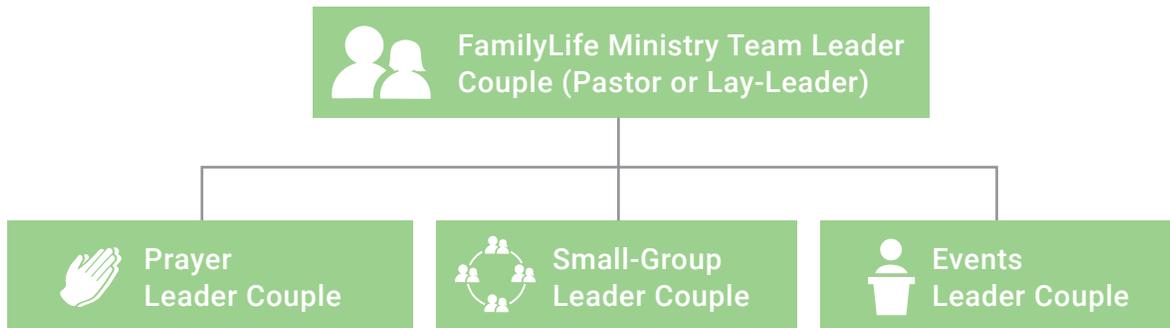


## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

- Explain the basic organization of the Family Ministry Team and the roles of the small-group leader, prayer leader, and event leader.
  - Describe the Family Ministry Team leader role.
-

## ORGANIZING THE FAMILY MINISTRY TEAM

This is a suggested team structure. You should feel free to make changes or adjustments as needed.



### FAMILY MINISTRY TEAM LEADER COUPLE ROLE

The role of the Family Ministry Team leader couple is to work with the pastor and launch a Family Ministry in a church. The leader couple fulfills this role by organizing and leading a team. During this launching phase it is very important to follow the lead of the pastor. Specific tasks may include: recruiting team members, launching small groups, and developing a plan and a vision (in cooperation with the pastor).

First, focus on the discipleship process by helping couples develop Christian maturity. Second, focus the training on specific ministry skills for developing a Family Ministry.

- a. The discipleship and training role is very critical to ongoing team development. The leader couple needs to encourage and lead the spiritual development of team couples.
- b. Training for ministry skills should also be an ongoing process. The training should cover basic skills of leading small groups, organizing events, and implementing the strategies to grow the Family Ministry.



**Key Principle 4.1:** Build the discipleship process into the Family Ministry Team from the very beginning.

The Family Ministry Team leader couple and each couple on the Family Ministry Team should lead a FamilyLife small-group study or participate in a small group. The FamilyLife Couples Studies and FamilyLife Parenting Studies are excellent resources to use in building your Family Ministry Team. Consider meeting regularly for two to three years to build the foundation of the Family Ministry Team for future growth.



**Key Principle 4.2:** Build a team through personal relationships and mentoring.

The idea is for the Family Ministry Team to be involved in regular meetings that focus on the marriages of the team members. The goal is to intentionally minister to couples in a personal and powerful manner. Couples will observe and learn the leadership style for facilitating a FamilyLife study. The FamilyLife team leader and his spouse will be modeling a key concept: God can use a husband and a wife as a couple in order to minister to others. This powerful “ministry as a couple” concept will continue to attract new couples to the Family Ministry effort.



**Key Principle 4.3:** Developing the concept for “ministry as a couple” will provide a powerful example for the growth of the entire family ministry.

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## **FAMILYLIFE TEAM MEMBERS**

- a.** The prayer team leader couple organizes and leads a single group or multiple groups of prayer intercessors.
- b.** The small-group team leader couple is responsible for the growth and development of FamilyLife groups in the church and expanding to the surrounding community.
- c.** The event team leader couple recruits the event team and plans the logistical details for each event.

## VOLUNTEERS

Many couples have the desire and personal capacity to engage in active volunteer roles with the Family Ministry Team. An important concept is to “mobilize volunteer couples” in order to involve them in what God is doing and help them catch the vision for “ministry as a couple.” When people are given tasks and responsibilities they begin to have a personal investment in the outcome. That means they care what happens. The more they care, the more energy they contribute.



**Key Principle 4.4:** Mobilizing volunteer couples will help them catch the vision for “ministry as a couple.”

Note: The growth of the Family Ministry is dependent on the number of people who are willing to get involved. There is much work to be done to meet a wide variety of felt needs for the people in the church and outside the church. Couples who are being ministered to effectively will be the most willing to help others.



**Key Principle 4.5:** Thanking and affirming volunteers and also celebrating what God is doing are essential ingredients to growing a family ministry.

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## YOUR TEAM/YOUR DISCIPLES

The pastor and the Family Ministry Team leader must intentionally engage in the process of training and discipling a Family Ministry Team. They should focus on three aspects of Christian maturity. The first and most important aspect is godly character. The second aspect is allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives—to be Spirit-filled; this will help develop the likeness of Jesus Christ in our lives. The character of Jesus will manifest itself in us by our love for God, our love for our spouse, our love for our neighbors, and our obedience to His commandments (Matthew 22:37-39, John 14:21). Please note that our love for our spouse will be evident and a powerful testimony and role model for the couples on the Family Ministry Team.



**Key Principle 4.6:** The first and most important aspect of Christian maturity is godly character.

**Mini-Activity:** *Make a short list of specific ways you demonstrate your love for your spouse that would be good examples for others.*

The third aspect of Christian maturity relates to ministry skills. Ministry skills help us to be effective vessels that God uses to encourage and influence others to seek after Him. These skills include such things as being an effective small-group facilitator, training others to be small-group facilitators, speaking at events, building and discipling a team, etc.



**Key Principle 4.7:** The Family Ministry Team Leader must intentionally engage in the process of training and discipling a Family Ministry Team.

As ministry leaders you must engage in regular Bible study, prayer, and meditation on God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17). There are many Bible studies that will help believers mature as Christians. Remember, the FamilyLife Couples Studies are uniquely suited to help you build into the lives and marriages of the couples on your team and grow in your relationship with your spouse at the same time.

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## SUMMARY

The role of the Family Ministry Team leader couple is to work with the pastor and launch a Family Ministry in a church. The leader couple fulfills this role by organizing and leading a team.

First, focus on the discipleship process by helping couples develop Christian maturity. Second, focus the training on specific ministry skills for developing a Family Ministry. The Family Ministry team leader couple and each couple on the Family Ministry team should lead a FamilyLife small-group study or participate in a small group. The FamilyLife Couples Studies and Parenting Studies are excellent resources to use in building your Family Ministry team. Consider meeting regularly for two to three years to build the foundation of the Family Ministry Team for future growth.

Many couples have the desire and personal capacity to engage in active volunteer roles with the Family Ministry Team. An important concept is to “mobilize volunteer couples” in order to involve them in what God is doing and help them catch the vision for “ministry as a couple.”



### **KEY PRINCIPLES:**

- Build the discipleship process into the Family Ministry Team from the very beginning.
- Build a team through personal relationships and mentoring.
- Developing this concept for “ministry as a couple” will provide a powerful example for the growth of the entire family ministry.
- Mobilizing volunteer couples will help them catch the vision for “ministry as a couple.”
- Thanking and affirming volunteers and also celebrating what God is doing is an essential ingredient to growing a family ministry.
- The first and most important aspect of Christian maturity is godly character.
- The Family Ministry Team leader must intentionally engage in the process of training and discipling a Family Ministry Team.

# ACTIVITY

## Develop a Job Description for Family Ministry Team Members

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### LEADER NOTES:

**Materials needed:** Large paper; markers

**Grouping:** Divide participants into small groups.

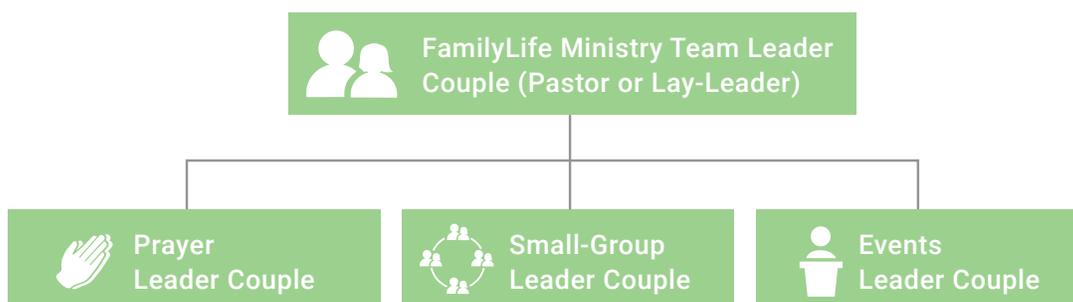
### Participant Instructions:

**Scenario:** You are having your first team meeting with the couples who have volunteered to be on your Family Ministry Team. You have reviewed the organizational chart and now you need to develop a written job description for each position. You may use the job titles on the diagram below or you may revise the job titles as appropriate to your situation.

### Part I: Preparation (20 min)

**Step 1:** Assign each couple in your group to one of the positions on the organizational diagram. Work individually as couples or work together as a group to write down your draft ideas for each job description. Include specific ideas that help to describe the job that needs to be done and how to do it.

**Step 2:** Sketch the organizational chart and place the job descriptions in each box.



**Part II: Presentation (10 minutes total—two minutes per group)**

Each team member will make a short presentation to report on their ideas for their assigned job description.



# THE FAMILYLIFE SMALL-GROUP ORIENTATION AND STRATEGY IN YOUR CHURCH

Can God use lay couples to have a significant impact with families? Yes!

The FamilyLife Couples Studies series consists of small-group Bible studies or discussion guides. These studies can be used as a primary tool to help get couples involved in a Family Ministry within your church. The idea is to mobilize couples and get them involved!

This session introduces FamilyLife Couples Studies and describes the benefits of being part of a small group. Most of this session provides ideas on starting a group and specifically addresses group size, preparation, and scheduling.

Additional information on this topic can be found in FamilyLife Global Outreach's Small-Group Training Manual.



**Key Principle 5.1:** Putting everything you hear about marriage into practice is like trying to swallow an elephant. FamilyLife Couples Studies can cut that elephant into bite-sized pieces.

FamilyLife's small-group studies are effective when couples develop close relationships, honestly apply Scripture in their own lives, and learn from each other.



## **PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:**

- Participants will identify the tips for leading a successful FamilyLife small group.
- Participants will identify the important elements for a good small-group environment.
- Participants will describe the group dynamic model for a FamilyLife small group.

God uses meaningful relationships, biblical truth, and the group dynamics of a FamilyLife Couples Study to change lives. The couple that leads a small group does not need to have a perfect marriage or be expert Bible teachers. God can use their shortcomings in the lives of other couples. In fact, God may have allowed difficulties and problems in their marriage so they would be equipped to encourage others. The most effective facilitators for these small groups are couples who are willing to be transparent and share about their own struggles and challenges.



**Key Principle 5.2:** Group facilitators do not have to be gifted teachers; they are there to facilitate discussion and discovery.

*"You make an impression on people from a distance. You make an impact on people when you get up close."* –**THE LATE HOWARD HENDRICKS**, Dallas Theological Seminary

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## **TIPS FOR LEADING A FAMILYLIFE COUPLES STUDY**

- a. Encourage balanced participation. Do not let a few people dominate the discussion.
- b. Lead by sharing personal examples. As you prepare the lesson, decide together as a couple which examples you will share. Remember, a perfect marriage is not mandatory to lead a small group. Sharing your experiences (successes and failures) shows your group that you are on this journey together.
- c. Manage the time throughout the study.
- d. Expect God to work! God, not you, causes change in people's lives!
- e. Create an environment where God's Spirit can work. Hospitality, warmth, acceptance, fun, and encouragement create an atmosphere where people can feel safe and spiritually nurtured.

*"But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us."* –**1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-8**

## CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE GOD CAN CHANGE LIVES

- a. Begin each session by reviewing the FamilyLife small-group ground rules:
  - Share nothing about your marriage that will embarrass your spouse.
  - You may pass on any question you do not want to answer.
  - Each couple should commit to complete the projects (questions for each couple to discuss and act on) between each session.
  - Maintain confidentiality within the group.
- b. Provide a comfortable, relaxed setting.
- c. Serve simple snacks and beverages. (The opportunity to serve can be rotated among the group members.)
- d. Greet each couple and introduce them to other group members.
- e. Show respect for everyone by beginning and ending on time.
- f. Encourage couples to complete their project for each and every session. Find creative ways to encourage this endeavor. Introduce accountability by asking each couple each week to give a short report about something they learned or discussed during their project time.
- g. Remember the ground rule that allows someone to pass if they would rather not respond.



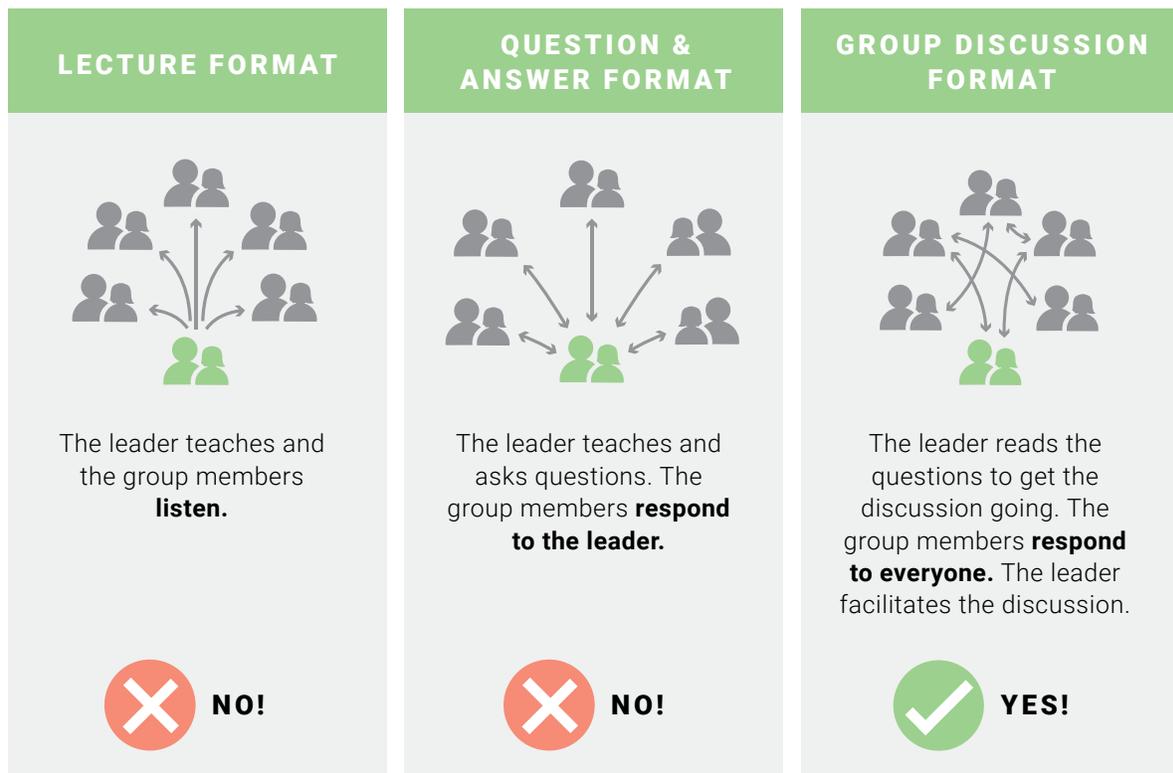
**Key Principle 5.3:** Ground rules encourage positive group dynamics and help couples avoid difficult situations.

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## GROUP DYNAMICS

- a. Arrange the group so that everyone can have eye contact.

- b. Before you ask someone to pray or read Scripture, be sure they are comfortable doing so.
- c. If any group members have difficulty finding Scripture passages, you may want to print them in advance.
- d. Don't be afraid of silence—someone will break it. Just ask the question and wait. Try to keep the discussion balanced. See diagram below.



**Key Principle 5.4:** Effective group facilitators encourage positive group dynamics.

# ACTIVITY

## FamilyLife Couples Study Sample Session—Teamwork in Marriage and Ministry

*(60 minutes)*

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### **LEADER NOTES:**

**Materials needed:** Bible; writing paper; pens/pencils; stop watch

**Grouping:** Divide participants into groups of four or five couples.

### **Instructions:**

Adjust the amount of time allotted for each section of the sample lesson as needed. Use the last 10-20 minutes of this activity for discussion on what was learned through the process.

### **PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Divide the questions below evenly between the couples in your group.
2. Read the following sample session.
3. Each couple will take a turn as the leader couple of your group.
4. Each couple will practice leading and participating in the lesson at 10-minute intervals.

This sample session gives participants the opportunity to experience what a full FamilyLife Couples Study would be like.

### **WARM-UP** | 10 Minutes

- Introduce yourself and share how you and your spouse met.
- Share with the group a time when you and your spouse worked together on something. Some ideas include cooking, doing a home renovation project, writing, speaking, building, organizing, etc. What challenges did you face? What were the benefits of working together?

### **BLUEPRINTS** | 30 Minutes

1. Share at least one way you and your mate complement each other as team members.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Consider the verse below. What are some of the obstacles in our culture that discourage couples from working as a team?

*“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?” ~ Ecclesiastes 4:9-11*

3. Do you think it is more difficult for a married couple to work as a team than others? Why?

4. Read and discuss the following verses one at a time. How can they help build teamwork in marriage?

- Hebrews 10:25

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- Ephesians 5:21

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- James 5:9

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- Romans 14:19

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- Philippians 2:3

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- James 5:16

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**WRAP-UP** | 10 Minutes

Individually write down as many ways as you can think of in one minute that you and your spouse have demonstrated positive teamwork. When time is up, exchange lists with your spouse. Share with the group something received.

WIFE'S LIST	HUSBAND'S LIST
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**MAKE A DATE**

Make a date with your spouse in the next week to complete the following project.

**PROJECT** | 60 Minutes

**Individually** (15 minutes)

1. In what ways have you seen Ecclesiastes 4:9-11 be true in your marriage?
  
2. Make a list of reasons you are thankful for your spouse.

**As a couple** (30 minutes)

1. Share your answers from the individual time with each other.

2. Brainstorm together for romantic ways you can develop your teamwork and grow closer to each other.
  
3. Finish your time together by praying that God will help you to work as a team in a way that honors and glorifies him.

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## **SUMMARY**

FamilyLife Couples Studies are a great tool to reach an expanding group of people within your church and community.



## **KEY PRINCIPLES:**

- Putting everything you hear about marriage into practice is like trying to swallow an elephant. FamilyLife Couples Studies can cut that elephant up into bite-sized pieces.
  - Leader couples do not have to be gifted teachers; they are there to facilitate discussion and discovery.
  - Ground rules encourage positive group dynamics and help couples avoid difficult situations.
  - Effective group facilitators encourage positive group dynamics.
-

# ACTIVITY

## Getting Started (Couples Project)

*(60 minutes)*

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### **LEADER NOTES:**

**Materials needed:** Pens/pencils

### **PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:**

**Answer the following questions as a couple:**

1. List several reasons you'd like to lead a FamilyLife small group (or other type of small group).
2. Discuss the following and write down your best answer at this time:
  - What sort of group would you like to trust God to organize (conference follow-up, church, neighborhood, outreach, mixed, or another type)?
  - When would you like to start?
  - Where would you like to meet?
  - What about child care?

3. What sort of arrangements are necessary to lead the group? (Some examples are house cleaning, arranging babysitters, lesson preparation, and ordering materials.) List three items you know of and discuss who might do each.

4. Discuss how to recruit group members. Write down some ideas. If you have time, you may wish to start listing prospective group members on the “Our Small-Group Prayer List” sheet on the next page.

5. Pray together, asking for God’s guidance as you trust Him for godly families. Ask Him to help you learn to maximize your efforts by working as a team. If you listed names on the “Our Small-Group Prayer List” sheet, then pray for these couples that God would be at work in their marriages and they would accept an invitation to join your small group.





# EVENTS—DEVELOPING A FAMILY MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH

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This session describes three types of events. An exposure event is an opportunity for a speaker to present material that encourages the audience to consider how to apply biblical principles to their lives. A training event provides the fuel for the fire that will equip lay couples and others. Major events are a full day or longer and typically are intended for larger audiences.

1. Exposure events
  2. Major events
  3. Training events
- 

## EXPOSURE EVENTS

What is an exposure event? It is an event at which the audience is encouraged to consider how to apply biblical principles to their lives. An exposure event is an opportunity for a FamilyLife speaker to present material that “exposes” the audience to biblical principles related to marriage and family.

An exposure event may have a single twenty- to forty-minute presentation, or it may have several presentations during a full day.



## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

- Describe the characteristics of exposure events.
  - Describe the characteristics of major events.
  - Identify three primary audiences for training events.
-

The following events have worked well in many locations:

**Small-group dinner:**

This venue can be a lot of fun for the hosts as well as for the guests. Encourage small-group couples to attend, as well as new couples. Whether it's candlelight romance or barbecue picnic, atmosphere is important. Be creative!

**FamilyLife Couples Studies orientation session and rally:**

The Family Ministry Team can sponsor this type of event during an evening. It could involve testimonies, group games and activities, and one humorous FamilyLife talk.

**Marriage seminars:**

Marriage seminars can be evangelistic and great for a community outreach. A seminar usually consists of two to four well-prepared FamilyLife talks and perhaps some special music. A simple couples' project is provided between the talks.

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**MAJOR EVENTS**

Major events can include full-day events or longer such as:

- a. Couples Relationship Seminar (evangelistic)
- b. Art of Marriage
- c. A Day to Treasure
- d. Weekend to Remember®
- e. I Still Do®
- f. Two-day marriage seminar

You may host a major event in your church, or consider a hotel or retreat center to provide a romantic getaway for couples. It's always important to consider costs and determine which venue will be affordable for couples.



**Key Principle 6.1:** Marriage seminars can be evangelistic and great for a community outreach.

## TRAINING EVENTS

Training events provide the energy and motivation that help to grow a Family Ministry. Consider three primary audiences for these training events:

- a. The Family Ministry core team (couples committed to building a Family Ministry in your church).
- b. Small-group facilitators (couples who desire to be effective small-group facilitators and contribute to the growth of a spiritual movement).
- c. Volunteers (people who have a heart for families and want to be used by God to strengthen families and help build a spiritual movement).

Each of these audiences needs to engage in training activities that:

- Disciple them in the basics of the Christian faith to help them grow spiritually.
- Build teamwork through regular meetings and consistently communicate their role in the vision to grow a Family Ministry.



**Key Principle 6.2:** Training provides the energy and motivation to grow a Family Ministry.

---

## SUMMARY

FamilyLife exposure events are great for generating interest in a FamilyLife ministry. Exposure events give your community the opportunity to become familiar with the FamilyLife ministry.

Major events are a full day or longer and provide momentum for the ministry.

Training is a critical element necessary to help a ministry grow.



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### **KEY PRINCIPLES:**

- Marriage seminars can be evangelistic and great for a community outreach.
  - Training provides the energy and motivation to grow a Family Ministry.
-

# ACTIVITY

## Develop a List of Potential Exposure Events

(35 minutes)

### LEADER NOTES:

**Materials needed:** Paper (flipcharts); markers

**Grouping:** Divide participants into groups of three or four couples.

### PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:

**Part 1** | 20 Minutes

1. Develop a list of potential exposure events. These events should be actual events that you could likely plan in the future (not theoretical). For example: marriage seminar, parenting seminar, women's event, men's event, Art of Marriage, etc.

2. As a group, fill in the chart below:

EXPOSURE EVENT	DATE	ATTENDANCE	TOPIC
Describe the group you want to minister to:	Which month will you host the event?	How many people do you expect to attend?	What is the audience interested in?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**Part 2** | *15 Minutes*

1. Select a spokesperson to present your group's chart to the entire group. The spokesperson should briefly describe the exposure events and topics of interest to these groups. Keep presentation to one minute.
  
2. After the presentations, tape all the charts to a wall so that everyone can review what other groups wrote.



# THE VISION AND STRATEGY TO LAUNCH AND GROW A FAMILYLIFE MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH

The challenge to bring about great change in any place or situation can be overwhelming. As you consider what your next steps will be, there is a rich resource in the story from the Old Testament of Nehemiah. God worked in his life so that Nehemiah provided the essential leadership, built teamwork, and handled the resistance with unusual wisdom. This session takes a close look at how he accomplished great things. Perhaps what he did can provide a pattern for you in what may seem like an impossible situation.

Nehemiah was faced with an impossible situation. How he got started may be observed in this sequence:

1. He had a clear picture of the challenging problem. **(Nehemiah 1:3)**
2. He was personally overwhelmed by the great need. **(1:4)**
3. The challenge drove him to prayer in brokenness for his nation and his people. **(1:5-10)**
4. He asked for God's hand of blessing and success upon the venture. **(1:11)**
5. He worked within the confines of his present employment, hoping that God would somehow open doors for him. **(1:11-2:6)**



**Key Principle 7.1:** A vision for changing families in a church, a city, and a nation begins with being overwhelmed with a personal burden for the great need.



## **PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:**

- Outline the process and identify the principles that Nehemiah established so that his objective of rebuilding the wall of the city was accomplished.
- Develop a brief three-year plan to grow a family ministry in your church.

## **IMPLEMENTING YOUR VISION WILL ALWAYS INCLUDE FINANCIAL RESOURCES:**

- a. Nehemiah assessed the financial needs that would be required for the project so that he was ready to present his vision when the opportunity arose. (2:7-9)
  - b. Nehemiah was given favor by his employer, the king. (2:6)
- 

## **IMPLEMENTING YOUR VISION WILL REQUIRE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES FOR SEEING IT FULFILLED:**

- a. The demographics and other details of the situation must be gathered. (2:11-20)
  - b. Nehemiah used the information-gathering process to motivate others to join him. (2:17)
- 

## **NOT EVERYONE WAS EXCITED ABOUT WHAT NEHEMIAH HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH:**

- a. There will be resistance to change. (2:19-20)
- b. Nehemiah faced ridicule and rejection from people of influence in the city. (4:1-5)



**Key Principle 7.2:** Anticipate opposition and resistance to your vision for bringing change.

## **MANY PEOPLE WERE INVOLVED IN FULFILLING THE CHALLENGE OF REBUILDING THE WALLS OF THE CITY:**

- a. Nehemiah enlisted volunteers to help him. **(3:1-32)**
- b. The volunteers worked close to their homes—they were motivated to help out where it mattered most. **(3:28, 30)**
- c. He inspired teamwork and a strategy to deal with the resistance. **(4:9-23)**



**Key Principle 7.3:** Fulfilling your vision will involve many people, eager to serve in your inspiring plans.

---

## **THE VISIONARY PROJECT WAS COMPLETED! THE WALL WAS REBUILT BY VOLUNTEERS ONE BRICK AT A TIME.**

- a. God blessed the project with motivated workers. **(4:6)**
- b. Nehemiah achieved the impossible, but he knew it was the hand of God that did it. **(6:15-16)**

## SUMMARY

Rebuilding the wall was a God-sized task and so is rebuilding the “walls of the family.” The task can be accomplished through a FamilyLife Team within a church with individuals who are obedient to God’s calling. Nehemiah was the leader; he shared his vision with others, recruited them to join him, and then developed effective teamwork.



### KEY PRINCIPLES:

- A vision to change families in a church, a community, a city, and a nation begins with being overwhelmed with a personal burden for the great need.
- Anticipate opposition and resistance to your vision for bringing change.
- Fulfilling your vision will involve many people who are eager to serve in response to your inspiring plans.

# ACTIVITY

## Using the Tools in the Toolbox

Developing a Vision and a Strategy for FamilyLife Ministry in Your Church

(30 minutes)

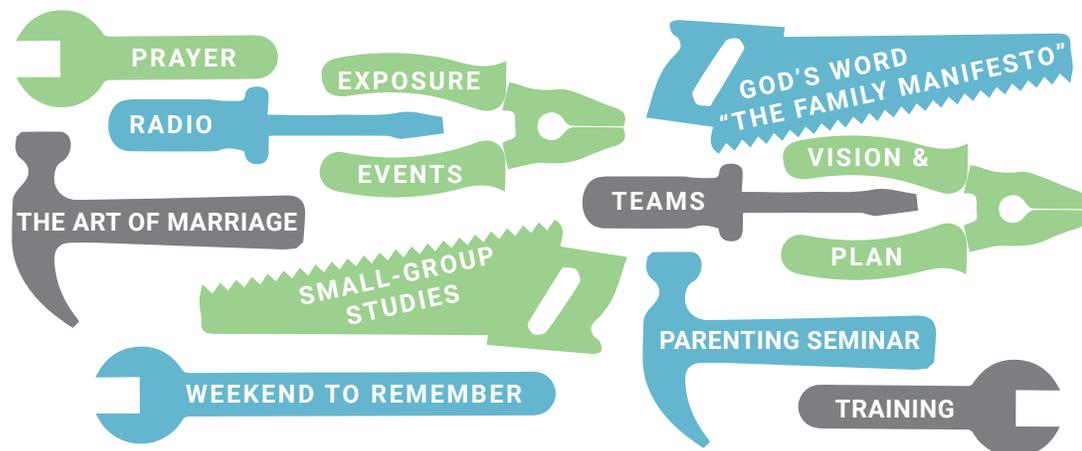
**Materials needed:** Flip chart paper, markers

**Grouping:** Participants work in small groups, three to four couples.

**Instructions:** Select one person to draw the chart on a large sheet of paper. Then fill in the spaces as the group develops their ideas and plans.

Use the FamilyLife Toolbox to develop a vision and a strategy to launch and grow a family ministry in your church. Start by asking the pastor and key lay-leader couples to join together in prayer and attend the training. During the training, develop the Family Ministry Team structure and a vision and plan. Next, launch small groups and nurture their growth through training facilitators, hosting events, and introducing new small-group titles.

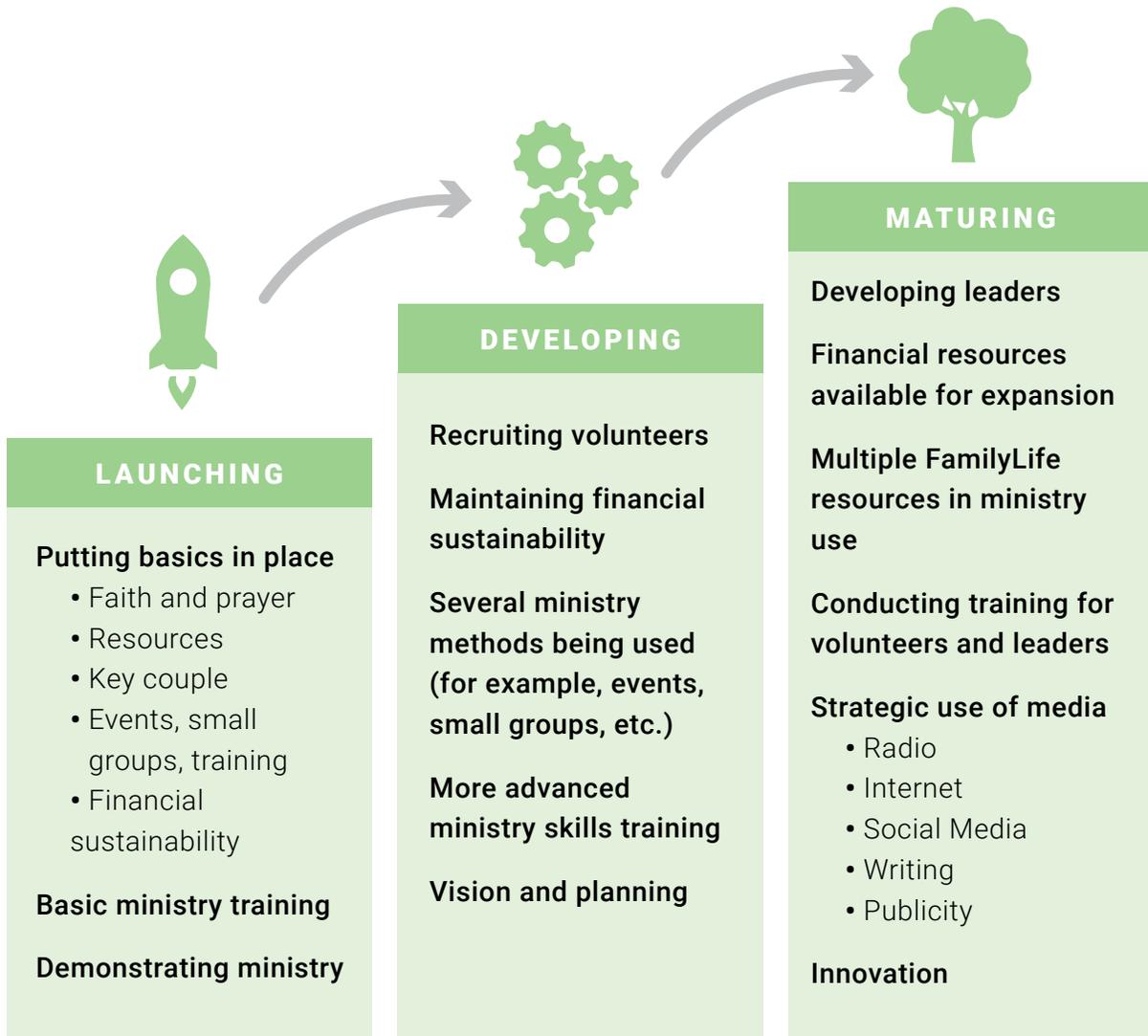
### FAMILYLIFE TOOLBOX



## FAMILYLIFE TOOLBOX

GETTING STARTED	TRAINING	EVENTS
Prayer	Global Outreach Strategies and Resources	For Men
Family Ministry Team		For Women
FamilyLife Couples and Parenting Studies	Speaker Training	For Youth
FamilyLife Small Groups	Small-Group Training	For Single Parents in the Community
Vision and Plan	Working with Volunteers	Family Camp
	Building Strong Marriages in Your Church	Parenting Seminars
	Promoting Events and Small Groups	Marriage Seminars
	Funding a FamilyLife Ministry	Art of Marriage
		Romantic Dinner
		Web (pastor sermons, other resources)

## PLAN FOR FIRST YEAR AND BEYOND





# APPENDIX A: THE FAMILY MANIFESTO

## A Declaration of Timeless Principles

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### **PREFACE**

During the latter half of the twentieth century the American culture has suffered an unrelenting decline. Although scientific and technological advances have created an outer veneer of prosperity and progress, our inner moral values and convictions have rapidly crumbled. Once, most Americans based their sense of right and wrong on Judeo-Christian principles, which provided them with a solid, biblical foundation for life. Today, a growing number of Americans see morality and ethics as relative and subjective and have developed their own version of “morality” with little regard to absolute standards.

This idea of moral tolerance has been eroding the foundation of the American family and society. Many Americans today have little or no concept of how to maintain a successful marriage and how to raise children to become responsible adults. In addition, a growing number of educators, politicians, and members of the media are attacking and redefining the family, creating a vast amount of confusion about what a family is. Many people today proclaim that “family values” are important, but the gradual shift to moral relativism has led to a great debate about what “family values” ought to be.

Abraham Lincoln once said, “The strength of a nation lies in the homes of its people.” It is our conviction that the family is the backbone of the Christian church and of society as a whole. History shows that, if any society wants to survive, it must uphold, strengthen, and continue to build upon the biblical institutions of marriage and family. The Bible begins in Genesis with the marriage of a man and a woman and ends in the Book of Revelation with the marriage of Christ and His bride, the Church. In between, God provides timeless blueprints for family life, which, if followed in a spirit of humility and obedience, provide us with the only true way to maintain healthy family relationships.

The following document affirms this biblical model and challenges us to consider how we should live within the walls of our own homes. It is offered in a spirit of love and humility, not of judgment or contention. Furthermore, it is not intended to be a comprehensive doctrinal statement about what the Bible says about marriage, family, and related subjects.

Unquestionably, this document attempts to face critical cultural issues. We invite response from anyone who wishes to affirm the truths of marriage and family from the Scriptures. It is our hope that this document will serve to accurately represent the truth God has revealed to us in Scripture, will provide insight into what a biblical family looks like, and will show how we can honor and glorify Him in our family relationships. We freely acknowledge that we, like all people, have often denied the biblical truths of family life by the way we live. We desire, however, to live by God's grace in accordance with the principles stated herein and to pass these principles on to future generations so that He will be honored and glorified as our families reflect His character.

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## **THE BIBLE**

We believe the Bible was written by men who were divinely inspired by God the Holy Spirit, and we believe it to be authoritative and errorless in its original autographs. We believe the Bible contains the blueprints for building solid marriage and family relationships. It teaches principles for marriage and family life that transcend time and culture. We are committed to communicating biblical truth in order to strengthen and give direction to a marriage and family. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 4:12)

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## **FAMILY**

We believe God is the originator of the family. It was established by God in His inaugural act of the marriage between a man and a woman. The Bible further defines the family through God's instruction for married couples to have children, whether by birth or by adoption. We believe the purpose of the family is to glorify and honor God by forming the spiritual, emotional, physical, and economic foundation for individuals, the church, and any society.

It is at home that children see manhood and womanhood modeled. It is at home that moral values are taught by parents and placed into the hearts of their children. It is at home that people see the reality of a relationship with Jesus Christ modeled. It is at home that people learn to live out their convictions. Therefore, we are committed to upholding the concept of family as God's original and primary means of producing a godly offspring and passing on godly values from generation to generation. (Ephesians

3:14-15; Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 8:15,23; John 1:12; Galatians 3:29; Psalm 78:5-7; Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

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## **MARRIAGE**

We believe God, not man, created marriage. We believe marriage was the first institution designed by God. We believe the Bible teaches that the covenant of marriage is sacred and life long. The Bible makes it clear that marriage is a legally binding public declaration of commitment and a private consummation between one man and one woman, never between the same sex. Therefore, we believe God gives a wife to a husband and a husband to a wife, and they are to receive one another as God's unique and personal provision to help meet their mutual needs.

We believe God created marriage for the purpose of couples glorifying God as one flesh, parenting godly children, and enjoying sexual pleasure. As iron sharpens iron, we believe God uses marriage to sharpen a man and woman into the image of Jesus Christ. Just as the Trinity reflects equal worth with differing roles, we believe God created a man and a woman with equal worth but with differing roles and responsibilities in marriage. Finally, we declare the marriage commitment must be upheld in our culture as that sacred institution of God in which men and women can experience the truest sense of spiritual, emotional, and physical intimacy, so that the two can become one. (Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:30-32; 1 Corinthians 7:3; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9, 12:25; Proverbs 27:17; Romans 1:26-27, 8:29; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 22:30; Deuteronomy 24:5; Song of Solomon)

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## **HUSBANDS**

We believe God has charged each husband to fulfill the responsibility of being the "head" (servant leader) of his wife. We believe God created a man incomplete, and as a husband, he needs his wife as his helper. We believe a husband will give account before God for how he has loved, served, and provided for his wife. We reject the notion that a husband is to dominate his wife. Likewise, we reject the notion that a husband is to abdicate his responsibilities to lead his wife. Rather, we believe his responsibility is to love his wife.

This love is characterized by taking the initiative to serve her, care for her, and honor her as a gift from God. We believe his responsibility is to protect his wife and help provide for her physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

We also believe a husband is to seek after and highly regard his wife's opinion and counsel and treat her as the equal partner she is in Christ. Therefore, we are committed to exhort and implore men not to abuse their God-given responsibilities as husbands, but rather to initiate a sacrificial love for their wives, in the same way Jesus Christ initiated sacrificial love and demonstrated it fully on the cross. (Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Timothy 5:8)

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## **WIVES**

We believe God has charged each wife to fulfill the responsibility of being her husband's "helper." We believe a wife will give account to God for how she has loved, respected, and given support to her husband. We uphold the biblical truth that she is of equal value with her husband before God. We reject the notion that a wife should assume the leadership responsibilities of her husband. Likewise, we reject the notion that a wife should passively defer to the dominance of her husband. We believe that her responsibility is to willingly and intelligently affirm, respect, and submit to her husband as the leader in the relationship and in his vocational calling. Therefore, we are committed to exhorting a wife to be in support of her husband by accepting and excelling in her responsibility as his helper. (Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6; Proverbs 31:10-12)

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## **SEXUAL UNION**

We believe the Bible clearly states that marriage is the only context for sexual intimacy. We believe contemporary culture is pressing single people to engage prematurely in acts that are intended only for the context of marriage. Our culture has rejected God's plan for intimacy by promoting sexual promiscuity of various kinds and, as a consequence, has brought upon itself sexual diseases and relational dysfunctions. We believe in sexual purity and fidelity.

Therefore, we are committed to training parents to teach their children at an early age to respect their sexuality and to preserve their virginity and purity until marriage. We are committed to communicating the message to teenagers, single adults, and married couples that sexual intimacy is available only in the context of marriage. (Genesis 2:24-25; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

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## **FATHERS**

We believe God has charged a father to execute the responsibilities of a family leader. He is accountable before God to lead his family by sacrificially loving his wife and children and by providing for their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. We believe the greatest way a father can love his children is to love their mother. We believe children gain much of their concept of God from their fathers.

We believe a father should teach his children, by instruction and example, truth from the Bible and how to apply it practically in daily life. Therefore, a father should spend a quantity of time, as well as quality time, with each child. We believe a father should demonstrate godly character revealed in humility, tenderness, and patience toward his children. We believe a father should demonstrate love by practicing consistent discipline with each child. Therefore, we are committed to turning the hearts of fathers back to their children by emphasizing the importance of their role as “father.” We are committed to exhorting every father to model a love for God and His Word, to model love for his wife, and to love his children. (Malachi 4:6; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:20-21; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:8)

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## **MOTHERS**

We believe God has uniquely designed women to be mothers. We believe the greatest way a mother can love her children is to love their father. We also believe God has created a woman with an innate and special ability to nurture and care for her children.

Therefore, we believe mothers are the primary people who execute the vital responsibilities of loving, nurturing, and mentoring children. We believe these responsibilities should be met

before a mother contemplates any other duties. We believe our culture has devalued the role of a mother by placing greater significance on activities outside the home than on those inside the home.

We realize there are cases where a mother will find it necessary to work outside the home (e.g. financial distress, single parenthood); however, we also believe some couples have made career and lifestyle choices that result in de-emphasizing the mother's role as nurturer. Therefore, we are committed to presenting a biblical framework through which couples can rightly evaluate their priorities in light of a mother's role. We are committed to elevating motherhood by rightly assessing its exalted value in God's economy of the family. We are committed to exhorting mothers to model love for God and His Word, to model love for her husband, and to love her children. (Titus 2:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:7; Proverbs 14:1, 31:1-31; Deuteronomy 6:6, 11:19; Ezekiel 16:44-45)

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## **CHILDREN**

We believe children are the gifts of God and should be received and treated as such. We believe a child's life begins at conception. We believe children have a special responsibility to God in obeying and honoring their parents. We believe a child's identity and spiritual growth is either helped or hindered by his parents' devotion to God, to one another, and to him. Parents should see themselves as God's ambassadors, working to build strong character in the lives of their children through consistent godly living, nurturing, discipline, and teaching them right from wrong. We are committed to God's plan for passing His love down through the ages by encouraging parents to love their children "so the generations to come might know" the love and forgiveness of Christ. (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20; Psalms 78:5-8, 127:3-5, 139:13-16; Proverbs 4:1, 6:20)

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## **CHILDLESS COUPLES**

We believe God has allowed some couples to be without biological children according to His sovereign plan in their lives. We believe couples without children are of no less value before God than those with children. We believe in encouraging childless couples to consider adoption as a family alternative. We are committed to encouraging childless couples to pass on a godly legacy through involvement with children in their immediate families, churches, and communities. (Luke 1:6-7; Romans 8:28-29)

## **GRANDPARENTS**

We believe grandparents are to be honored as valued family members. We believe their wisdom in living should be sought and passed on to their children and their children's children. We also believe that grandparents have the responsibility of teaching and modeling to their grandchildren how to know Jesus Christ and grow in a relationship with Him as well as passing along biblical principles for godly living. The Old Testament is filled with examples of grandfathers and grandmothers who excelled in their roles of grandparenting.

Therefore, we are committed to giving honor to grandparents by encouraging their children and grandchildren to listen to their voices of wisdom. We are also committed to exhorting grandparents to pray for and become actively involved with children and grandchildren whenever it is possible. (1 Timothy 5:4; Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 17:6; Psalm 78)

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## **CHURCH**

We believe the family and the church are interdependent. A primary responsibility of the church is to help build godly families, and godly families also help build the church. We believe the family supplies the relational rudiments of the local church. We believe the local church is the spiritual home where families should corporately worship God. It is the place where the knowledge and love of God may be communicated to fathers, mothers, and children.

Therefore, we are committed to exhorting families to support the local church through their involvement. We are also committed to exhorting the local church to uphold the priority of helping build godly marriages and families. (1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 5:22-33; Philemon 1:2; Colossians 4:15)

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## **DIVORCE**

We believe God's plan for marriage is that it be a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman. We believe God hates divorce. We believe divorce brings harm to every

person involved. Therefore, reconciliation of a marriage should be encouraged and divorce discouraged. We also believe that God allows for divorce in certain situations, not because He wills it, but because of the hardness of people's hearts. We believe the Bible teaches that God allows for divorce in the case of adultery and in the case where an unbelieving spouse has chosen to abandon the commitment of marriage.

We believe, however, that it is God's priority that marital oneness be restored and that, through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, forgiveness and reconciliation be experienced. We believe that in the unfortunate cases of abuse and abandonment, God has provided protection for an abused spouse and provision for child support through the church, civil law, godly counselors, prayer, and other practical measures. We believe God can restore broken people and broken marriages by His grace, by the power of His Spirit, and by His practical truths found in the Bible. (Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-3; Romans 13:1-5; 1 Corinthians 7:15)

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## **SINGLE PARENTS**

We believe that, ideally, a child needs the influence of both a father and mother for healthy development in life and relationships. At the same time, we recognize that God's grace is sufficient and that He is a father to the fatherless and a husband to the husbandless. We also believe He is a guardian to children without a mother and a friend to a husband who has lost his wife.

We believe God, by His grace, can use the void left from a missing parent to accomplish His eternal purposes of building Christlike character in single parents and their children. We believe a single parent and his or her children are a family and that the Bible contains principles for them to grow as a family. We believe the local church should be a home for single parents, providing their children with godly people who serve as role models in place of the missing parent.

Therefore, we are committed to exhorting Christians within the local church to creatively help meet the needs associated with single-parent homes. We are committed to comforting and encouraging single-parent families by providing resources and developing biblical principles to assist those who struggle in the role of a single parent. (Psalm 68:5-6; 1 Corinthians 7:32; James 1:27; 1 Timothy 5:3-16; Romans 8:28-29; Luke 18:3-5)

## **BROKEN AND BLENDED FAMILIES**

We believe God has allowed men and women, either by circumstance or by choice, to endure difficult and painful consequences in their marriages and family relationships. We also believe God gives abundant grace to the broken, blended, and single-parent families. Therefore, we believe He can and does enable them to carry out His functions and principles for healthy family life. We are committed to comforting, encouraging, and teaching these families God's principles of marriage and family life. We are also committed to exhorting the local church to help with the burden of the broken family. (James 1:27; 1 Timothy 5:16; Philippians 4:13)

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## **WORK AND THE FAMILY**

We believe work is an important and necessary aspect of one's service to God and one's responsibility to provide for the needs of the family. We also believe security and significance cannot be found through pursuing career goals or financial achievement apart from one's responsibility to God and one's spouse and family. Instead, we believe those needs are best met in the warmth of a home where parents and children are experiencing harmony in their relationships with each other and with Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are committed to challenging any person or couple to rearrange their priorities so that over the course of a lifetime they can be successful at home and not merely successful in their careers. (Revelation 3:14-22; Ephesians 6:7-8; Matthew 6:33; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12)

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## **MENTORS**

We believe in the biblical admonition for older men and women to teach younger men and women. We believe younger couples today should seek out older couples for their wisdom and counsel in matters of marriage and family. We believe older couples should be taught and encouraged to mentor younger couples and we believe this is best accomplished through the local church. Therefore, we are committed to establishing a strategy for mentoring that the local church may implement and use to build strong marriages and families. (Titus 2:3-5)

## **MARRIAGE EDUCATION**

We believe single adults who choose to marry should be taught the biblical principles of marriage. We also believe the education of a married couple does not end after the wedding ceremony is over, but continues throughout life. Therefore, we believe that both premarital and post-marital education is helpful and essential in a couple's growth toward and in oneness. We are committed to elevating, establishing, and teaching the precepts of marriage by which single adults can rightly evaluate their relationships and equip themselves for marriage. We are committed to providing the teaching and training necessary to equip married couples to live a lifetime together as one. Finally, we are committed to showing couples how their marriages can be used by God to give others the hope found only in Jesus Christ. (Titus 2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 16:31-34; John 4:53)

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## **THE DECEIVER AND CULTURE**

We believe there is a living Devil who is God's enemy and whose nature and objective is to lie and deceive. We believe the Devil has attacked God's plan for the family from the beginning of man until now. We believe he uses the various aspects of the culture to promote personal independence, distort the differences between men and women, confuse their roles, and elevate personal rights over marital responsibilities. We believe the Devil seeks to persuade people to move away from God's plan for intimacy and oneness and toward isolation and divorce. (John 8:44; Genesis 3; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-18; 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 2:15)

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## **GOD - THE CREATOR OF THE FAMILY**

### **Father**

We believe in the Fatherhood of God. The title "Father" implies that God is a relational being. The Bible reveals God has four primary relationships as Father: He is the Father of creation, of the nations, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of all believers. We believe the Bible presents the title "Father" as one of the primary names Christians should use in addressing

and relating to God. In doing so, Christians identify themselves as children who belong to the family of God. We are committed to proclaiming and demonstrating this truth about who God is and who we are, so that God will be glorified, and that He might use us to bring others into His family through a personal relationship with His Son. (John 1:12; Exodus 3:14-15; Ephesians 3:16; Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:15; Acts 17:24-28)

### **Son**

We believe God the Son, fully revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, was God's final sacrifice for the sins of man through the shedding of His blood on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. We believe He is the only way to know God the Father and to experience His plan for marriage and family. We are committed to introducing people to Jesus Christ in order that, by faith, they might personally receive Him, be born into the family of God, receive forgiveness and eternal life, and begin a relationship with God that is essential in marriage and family life. (John 1:4,12, 17:3; 1 John 2:23-24; Ephesians 2:19-22; Colossians 1:13-18; Hebrews 1:1-4)

### **Holy Spirit**

We believe God the Holy Spirit is the agent and teacher of a godly marriage and family. We believe when Christian couples and their children consistently yield to His control and power, they will experience harmony in their marriages and families. Therefore, we are committed to sharing the ministry of the Holy Spirit with people so they may know God better, make Him known to others, and appropriate His power in fulfilling their duties in marriage and family relationships. (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:5-15; Ephesians 5:18-21)

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### **COMMITMENT**

In recognition of and in full agreement with these biblical principles regarding marriage and the family, I, by the grace of God, commit myself to adhere to, practice, and teach what God has made clear are my responsibilities within His design of marriage and the family.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX B: SPEAKING AT FAMILY MINISTRY EVENTS

Developing quality speakers is critical for holding exposure events. Quality speakers will help expand a Family Ministry. Speakers who effectively connect with audiences will increase the size of future audiences and build credibility for Family Ministry in your church.

In addition, exposure events are excellent venues to help relatively inexperienced speakers develop the FamilyLife style of presentation. We train and encourage speakers to develop a unique style (different from a typical sermon or lecture). This style helps you to have a great impact on audiences.



### **PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:**

- Know the basic skills needed for effective communication at exposure events.
- Create a plan to develop your speaking skills.
- Be equipped to begin constructing and delivering talks at exposure events.

FAMILY MINISTRY EVENTS	OTHER EVENTS
1. Connects to audience in a friendly way	1. Sermon or lecture style, often formal and distant
2. Speaker shares weaknesses from a posture of humility	2. Speakers are perceived as being perfect examples
3. Generous use of humor	3. Uses little or no humor
4. Effective use of personal illustrations	4. Few or no personal illustrations
5. Practical application	5. May be too theoretical
6. Talks start and end on time	6. Time can be more flexible
7. Adjusts to a non-Christian audience	7. Expects audience to adjust
8. Husband and wife speak as a team	8. Speakers speak alone



**Key Principle B.1:** God uses our personal illustrations to touch hearts. Good humor will encourage your audience to invite their friends in the future.

We encourage new speakers to develop some basic skills and then practice, practice, practice. If speakers fail to develop basic skills, they will be ineffective. Even advanced speakers must use basic skills. Every speaker needs to know and apply the basics when first beginning to speak at events.

Know and apply the most basic speaking skills:

- Provide effective content.
- Connect with the audience.
- Provide effective illustrations.
- Include humor.
- Begin and end talks on time.
- Speak as a couple.

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## PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CONTENT

Ultimately, it is God's principles from the Bible that change lives. Therefore, it is critical that our talks include meaningful material from God's Word. There are several ways in which we can ensure solid content.

- a. Use an outline.
- b. Use talks based on FamilyLife content, such as the Couples Relationship Seminar, or from discussions you've had during small-group sessions.
- c. Use other Christian sources along with the Bible.

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## CONNECT WITH THE AUDIENCE

*"The most important thing the audience thinks is what the speaker thinks about them." –Tim Downs*

Speakers must establish credibility, rapport, and trust as quickly as possible. The audience will then be more receptive to the sharing of biblical principles.

- a.** Allow the audience to know you right away.
  - Tell a personal story, perhaps how you met your spouse.
  - Show pictures and introduce your children.
  - Describe your background.
- b.** Speak well of the audience to the audience:
  - Distinguish the event from a church worship service.
- c.** Move away from the podium:
  - Approach the audience but don't walk behind the audience.
- d.** Speak as a couple, if possible:
  - We encourage couples to speak together as a team. This format allows for connecting with many people, especially women. Most important: When couples speak, they demonstrate a husband and wife working as a team—that will be remembered long after their words are forgotten.



**Key Principle B.2:** Personal illustrations and humor help speakers connect more deeply with the audience.

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## PROVIDE EFFECTIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

Using personal stories allows individuals in the audience to connect with the speaker's experiences and then apply the lessons learned. Speaking honestly about our failures prevents us from setting a high standard that makes the audience feel they can never achieve it. This style also distinguishes our events from a church sermon and ultimately helps us to reach a younger and more secular audience. Now is the time to begin and maintain an illustration file.

## Illustration Types:

- Personal stories (speak about your own experiences or lessons learned, but never share your spouse's failures or weaknesses).
- An incident or situation observed (be certain of accuracy).
- Something that happened to a friend or acquaintance (ask permission and give credit).
- Bible stories (tell, don't read).
- Quotations from a source (if possible, read from and show the source).

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## INCLUDE HUMOR

Any time humor is added, the quality of the event is enhanced. If an event establishes a fun and humorous atmosphere, then participants are more inclined to tell friends and bring them to future events. In using humor, it is important to be prepared. Even non-funny people can give a humorous talk with the proper preparation. Unrehearsed ad-libs are almost always guaranteed to fail.



**Key Principle B.3:** Every people group in the world enjoys laughter.

## Types of Humor

### a. Story jokes

The easiest type of humor to begin with is story jokes. For example, "There was a barber who ..." or "Three people were traveling on a long trip and..."

### b. Acting out humor

Use exaggerated gestures and facial expressions.

### c. Stories that reflect personal fallibility

Tell a story about your life—a lesson learned or a mistake made. End with an example that indicates you did something that was not very smart. Never tell stories where the

audience laughs at something that your spouse did. Let your partner share about himself or herself.

**d.** Surprise humor

Use quips and one-liners to catch them by surprise.



**Key Principle B.4:** Look past your own feelings and inhibitions and focus on getting the audience to respond to you.

FamilyLife has several resources that contain humorous illustrations. Avoid common mistakes:

- Do not overuse humor. Ten laughs an hour is appropriate.
- Do not use poor taste (judgment).
- Avoid puns, ethnic stories, and gender-based stories.
- Never tell a joke at your spouse's expense.
- Do not laugh at your own jokes until the audience does.

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## **BEGIN AND END TALKS ON TIME**

Remaining on schedule and ending on time communicate that you value the audience.

FamilyLife events are about changed lives, not how much information we can convey. Every audience has limited reserves of attentiveness and ability to absorb information. Remaining on time forces you to emphasize the most important points.

- a.** Start and end sessions on time.
- b.** Plan time for announcements and project introduction (estimate needed time in advance).
- c.** End early if possible.
- d.** Take a watch or small clock to the podium.

- e. When most or part of an audience is late:
    - Honor those present by starting.
    - Stall by giving gifts and telling a few jokes until others can arrive.
    - Save the important content until most have arrived.
- 

## **SPEAK AS A COUPLE**

Couples who can speak together as a team greatly enhance their presentation.

- a. You will appeal to a wider audience.
  - b. After those in the audience forget everything you said, they will remember the biblical example of a husband and wife working together as a team.
  - c. You will add different strengths to your combined presentation.
- 

## **COMMITMENT TO ONGOING SPEAKER DEVELOPMENT**

Learning to speak effectively takes an ongoing commitment to developing skills. Crucial to speaker development is building into one's own marriage. One way to accomplish this is by leading small groups on an ongoing basis. This will help speakers gain experience and become effective at extemporaneous speaking, gain illustrations, and learn biblical principles for marriage and family.



**Key Principle B.5:** Effective speakers will benefit from personally leading FamilyLife small groups.

In addition, speakers are strongly encouraged to:

- Review FamilyLife Global's Speaker Training manual.
- Become involved in Toastmasters International and, at a minimum, complete the Competent Toastmaster (CTM) designation. A local Toastmasters group can be found at [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org).

- Find a mentor/coach trained in the FamilyLife method.
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## **SUMMARY**

The FamilyLife speaking style connects with the audience by using effective personal illustrations, appropriately timed humor, and sensitivity to the allotted time period. The development of these skills is an ongoing process.



## **KEY PRINCIPLES:**

- God uses our personal illustrations to touch hearts. Good humor will encourage your audience to invite their friends in the future.
  - Personal illustrations and humor help speakers connect more deeply with the audience.
  - Every people group in the world enjoys laughter.
  - Look past your own feelings and inhibitions, and focus on getting the audience to respond to you.
  - Effective speakers will benefit from personally leading FamilyLife small groups.
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# ACTIVITY

## Testimony

(30 minutes)

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### **PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:**

Apply the principles learned in this session by preparing your personal testimony of how you came to Christ.

#### **Personal Testimony Outline (Acts 26:1-23):**

The main objective is to communicate your testimony so that others will know how to receive Christ. Build your testimony around a single theme of how Christ has changed your life.

#### **a. First Section: My Life Before I Received Christ**

Begin your testimony with an attention-getting statement, question, or story. If you came to Christ at a very early age, you may wish to emphasize what your life could have been like, or draw from experiences when you may have strayed from your walk with God. Do not share graphic sins such as sexual immorality. But emphasize the attitudes and root causes of sin such as pride or selfishness.

#### **b. Second Section: My Conversion Experience**

Relate what happened that changed your thoughts, attitudes, or misconceptions about Christianity. Be specific about how you received Christ. The “how” is more important than the “when” or “where.” Possibly include one related and meaningful Bible verse.

#### **c. Third Section: My Life After Receiving Christ**

Explain the changes that took place, and be specific. Be sure the changes relate to attitudes and actions mentioned in the “Before I Received Christ” section. Briefly explain what your relationship with Christ means now.

# ACTIVITY

## Speaker Guidelines

*(30 minutes)*

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### **PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:**

The following page gives the complete list of speaking guidelines from FamilyLife's Speaker Training manual. The speaker should review the FamilyLife speaking priorities prior to delivering a talk. Space is available for the trainer to take notes on how the speaker is incorporating each item on the list.





# ACTIVITY

## Presenting a Talk

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### LEADER NOTES:

**Materials needed:** Stopwatch; evaluation sheet

**Grouping:** If time allows, each participant is to give their talk in front of the entire group. If time is limited, then divide the audience into groups of six to eight people and have each person give their presentation to the small group.

**Instructions:** (Before presentations): Assign a timer and direct everyone's attention to the evaluation sheet.

(After presentations): Give verbal feedback to each of the trainees highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. If other participants provide feedback, it should be positive feedback.

### PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:

#### Part 1

Prepare a three- to five-minute talk prior to coming to the training event.

Topic should be \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare your presentation with the basic speaking skills in mind:

1. Use biblical content.
2. Connect with the audience.
3. Use personal illustrations.
4. Include humor.
5. Begin and end talks on time (stay within the three- to five-minute limit).
6. Speak as a couple.

#### Part 2

Present your talk.



# Global Outreach

## TRAINING MANUALS



Global Outreach Strategies and Resources (GOSAR): This manual provides an overview of Global Outreach's FamilyLife strategy and is the foundational training document for developing an international FamilyLife ministry.

The following how-to manuals build upon the strategies and resources given in the GOSAR:

