

# FamilyLife® Global

*News and information  
from FamilyLife partners  
around the world*

## Hope for Families Everywhere

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## Families on Mission: The Launch of FamilyLife Mission Trips

by Jayna Richardson



“I have shared my faith a lot through the years. To do this with my son was amazing.”

“I loved sharing clean physical and living spiritual water with others! It was also a great opportunity for families to be on mission together!”

“I saw how the kids on the trip were so joyful helping set up filters, making holes in buckets, and engaging with the kids in the homes.”

These were just a few of the reactions from mission trip team members following FamilyLife’s first family mission trip. This inaugural trip to the Dominican Republic provided an opportunity for families to grow in oneness as they shared their faith and served others in practical ways.

“Our vision is to create opportunities for families who want to grow in their walk with the Lord and go on mission together,” says Oscar Avalos, FamilyLife’s Director of Global Mobilization. “Often kids or teens tend to go on mission trips with a church or organization and the parents usually aren’t part of it. We thought, wouldn’t it be cool if the whole family could have this experience together?”

That vision came to fruition this past summer when FamilyLife partnered with Filter of Hope and invited 15 family units to spend a week in the Dominican Republic handing out water filters and sharing the gospel.

The participants received training to install and use the water filters and were also taught a simple way to share the gospel using an illustration involving dirty water and clean water to represent how Jesus makes us clean. Teams went door-to-door offering water filters, showing how the filters worked, and sharing their personal testimonies and the gospel message. Every team member, including the

children, had something they could do. The youngest kids helped collect dirt for a filtering demonstration; older kids drilled holes in the buckets for the filter; teens and adults shared their faith and prayed with new believers. In the process, families not only got to witness the joy of seeing people come to Christ, but they also grew closer to each other as they shared an incredible experience.

During the three days of on-the-streets ministry, the team led several people to Christ. A woman approached one of the groups near the end of one presentation. She had tears in her eyes and said that she wasn’t a Christian but wanted to know more. After hearing the gospel, she said she wasn’t ready to receive Christ, but she eventually revealed that it was because she felt the need to be clean first. The group reminded her of the illustration they had previously given, showing that pouring clean water into dirty water didn’t make the dirty water clean. They assured her of God’s love and that He wanted to make her clean, and that only He had the power to do

so. She then prayed to receive Christ with tears of joy.

One participant shared that in addition to blessing many others while on this trip, their own family had experienced personal blessings too. “I had the privilege of leading several people to Christ after sharing my personal story and presenting the gospel. I saw my children’s perspective on material possessions change. I saw them grow in confidence and develop more of a heart to reach people with the good news.”

One priority of FamilyLife mission trips is to include time for family devotions and hands-on activities to help families explore spiritual truths together. These times were invaluable in providing training, spiritual nourishment, and a bit of fun to equip and encourage each family as they prepared to do ministry.

And what would a trip to the Dominican Republic be without a day of fun to enjoy the culture? Families had the opportunity at the end of

*continued on page 5*



## Slovenia: Walking by Faith

How men in Slovenia are combining hiking and spiritual growth

by Jayna Richardson



“The decision to do something about myself and my relationship with God marked a turning point in my life and declared war on a passive life.” This was a comment from one of the men who participated in a prayer hike in Slovenia. These prayer hikes are a chance for men to read God’s word, pray, and discuss topics specific to men, such as being a husband and father, all while enjoying the beautiful Slovenian countryside and forming bonds with one another.

In a country of only about two million inhabitants, Family and Life (the Slovenian partner of FamilyLife US) has 270 permanent marriage small groups that meet regularly. Family and Life began organizing prayer hikes last spring, and most of the interest has been from men who are already involved in the marriage groups. The hikes have caught on as more and more men are discovering the effectiveness of taking time away together to grow in their faith as they attempt a physically challenging march.

The hikes are usually around 30-40 km (about 18-25 miles) long and can include significant elevation change. For this reason, the Family and Life team encourages men to be physically and mentally fit for the challenge prior to signing up.

The difficulty of the hikes allows the men to draw parallels to their own lives. “We believe that a man must be ready to withstand the physical and mental pressures of today’s times, while at the same time he must be in a constant relationship with God,” says Family and Life leader Benjamin Siter. “We are building husbands who will stay in families regardless of the hardships that will come.”

During the hike, the men discuss topics such as loving their wives, the trials and temptations faced by men, a husband’s role, and being a leader. They pray for their families, churches, and country. Each hike is limited to a maximum of twelve men so that they have a chance to get to know each other and share openly. One participant shared, “Every step along

the way became easier, the relations between the husbands more genuine (regardless of whether we had just met for the first time), and Slovenian nature became more and more beautiful.”

“The hike was something I had wanted to do for a long time,” said another of the men who went on a hike earlier this year. Even though he started out not knowing most of the other men in his group, by the end of the hike, “It felt like we had known each other forever... I was enjoying the hike so much that I didn’t even notice when we reached our destination.”

The positive responses show that many men are eager for opportunities to connect with other men and grow in their faith. The journey can be strenuous, but focusing on God and traveling with trustworthy companions can make all the difference.



# 2022-2023 Events Calendar

## Europe (Eastern)

Slovenia . . . . . Nov 4-6, 2022 . . . . . Redeemed for a High Price. . . . . Izola  
 Slovenia . . . . . Nov 11-13, 2022 . . . . . Marriage conference . . . . . Izola  
 Slovenia . . . . . Nov 25-27, 2022 . . . . . Redeemed for a High Price. . . . . Catez

## Europe (Western)

Germany . . . . . Nov 3, 2022 . . . . . Evening for couples . . . . . Burgstädt  
 Germany . . . . . Nov 5, 2022 . . . . . Marriage seminar . . . . . Breitscheid  
 Germany . . . . . Nov 12, 2022 . . . . . Marriage seminar . . . . . Giessen  
 Germany . . . . . Nov 19, 2022 . . . . . Marriage mentor training . . . . . Munich  
 Germany . . . . . Nov 25-26, 2022 . . . . . Marriage mentor training . . . . . (online)  
 Switzerland . . . . . Nov 17, 2022 . . . . . Marriage preparation course . . . . . (online)  
 Switzerland . . . . . Jan 28, 2023 . . . . . Prepare/Enrich training . . . . . Zurich  
 Switzerland . . . . . Mar 11-12, 2023 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Zurich  
 Switzerland . . . . . Sep 8, 2023 . . . . . Prepare/Enrich training . . . . . Zurich  
 UK . . . . . Nov 5, 2022 . . . . . A Day Together . . . . . Cambridge  
 UK . . . . . Nov 12, 2022 . . . . . A Day Together . . . . . Hull

## Middle East and North Africa

*Due to sensitive nature of these countries, please contact [global@familylife.com](mailto:global@familylife.com) for further information.*

## North America

*United States—Phone 1-800-358-6329 or [www.familylife.com](http://www.familylife.com) for a complete listing of conferences.*

Canada . . . . . Nov 4-6, 2022 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Huntsville, ON  
 Canada . . . . . Nov 11-13, 2022 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Whistler, BC  
 Canada . . . . . Nov 18-20, 2022 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Jasper, AB  
 Canada . . . . . Nov 25-27, 2022 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Hecla Island, MB  
 Canada . . . . . Feb 10-12, 2023 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Victoria, BC  
 Canada . . . . . Mar 3-5, 2023 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON  
 Canada . . . . . Mar 31-Apr 2, 2023 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Montebello, QC  
 Canada . . . . . Apr 21-23, 2023 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Waskesiu Lake, SK  
 Canada . . . . . Apr 28-30, 2023 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . Lake Louise, AB  
 Canada . . . . . May 5-7, 2023 . . . . . Weekend Getaway . . . . . St. Andrews, NB

## Oceania

Fiji . . . . . Nov 19-20, 2022 . . . . . Art of Marriage . . . . . Suva  
 New Zealand . . . . . Nov 4-6, 2022 . . . . . Weekend to Remember . . . . . Auckland  
 New Zealand . . . . . Nov 18-20, 2022 . . . . . Weekend to Remember . . . . . Christchurch

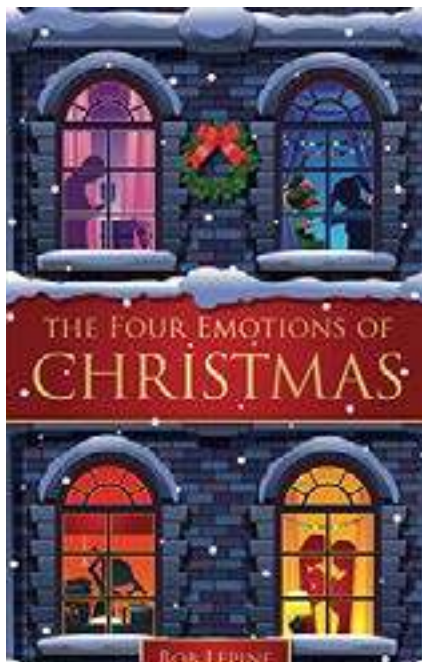
**From a recent event in Canada:**

*“It brought us back from ‘surviving’ to loving each other again.”*

*“Wish we would have come even earlier in our marriage. Helped us realize that we are working towards a common goal of being one in Christ.”*

*“We talked! We made eye contact. We were able to talk about things that were taboo in the past.”*

*“Haven’t laughed so hard in ages.”*



**New Resource**

## The Four Emotions of Christmas

by Bob Lepine

We expect Christmas to be a season filled with magic. And yet so often, we experience disappointment when our deepest longings go unfulfilled. What we want to be a nice, relaxing day turns into a stress-packed 24-hour period of time. Our loneliness and sadness are amplified because of how out of sync they are with what the season promises. Is there anything that could bring us lasting joy?

For more information, or to order a copy, visit <https://shop.familylife.com/p-6295-the-four-emotions-of-christmas.aspx>.

*Families on Mission continued...*

the trip to hike up a small mountain and descend alongside waterfalls. The activity provided a final bonding experience for families and gave them an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate all that God had done through them during the week.

Additional FamilyLife mission trips are in the works. FamilyLife will be partnering with Filter of Hope again in April and June 2023 for trips to countries like Cuba, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. FamilyLife also plans to partner with Unto@ (Cru's humanitarian aid ministry) to organize eye clinics in Southeast Asia next summer, as well as other mission

organizations inside and outside of Cru. An August 2023 mission trip to the boardwalk in New Jersey will be an opportunity for families to do evangelism together.

FamilyLife is excited to team up with mission organizations and families to share the good news of the gospel and see families develop a passion for serving God—together.

**Editor's note:** *If you would like to suggest a ministry that could be a good partner for FamilyLife mission trips, or if you're interested in going on a mission trip yourself, please reach out to us at [missions@familylife.com](mailto:missions@familylife.com).*



## Canada—Equipping Indigenous Leaders

By Neil and Sharol Josephson

**“We want to rewrite history with FamilyLife. We want to do what the residential schools didn’t do... teach couples to be a husband and a wife, a father and a mother.”**

*-Kirby James, a First Nations speaker for FamilyLife Canada.*

This might be the most inspiring and exciting thing we’ve heard in a long time! What a privilege it is to hear Kirby’s heart—to know that his mission, along with FamilyLife Canada, is to help heal the generational brokenness caused, in large part, by the historic injustices committed against First Nations Peoples.

Earlier this year in Red Deer, we teamed up with Kirby James and his wife Bernadette, as well as Allen and Marlene Matoush, to teach the first ever Indigenous Couples’ Getaway in Alberta!

The weekend was an answer to prayer. Allen and Marlene have been part of a team leading retreats for Indigenous couples in Quebec for about twenty years, and they’ve been praying for this kind of ministry to spread from coast to coast.

“It’s been our dream to encourage Indigenous people on the east side of Canada and right across Canada,” said Allen and Marlene. “[We] hope that the Indigenous in the West will share the same treasure and will help the next generations learn about togetherness and family because we know God wants to heal families, to strengthen families, and to strengthen marriages.”



Kirby and Bernadette James, who live “in the West,” have caught the vision! They were one of seven Indigenous couples receiving speaker training in early April. Two months later, they were teaching at the Getaway in Red Deer, and they were great!

The decades-long prayer of our FamilyLife team is coming true, with three more Indigenous Getaways in the works, expanding into Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Ottawa area.

We see that God is doing a beautiful,

restorative work in opening doors for First Nations families to find healing and hope for their relationships. Imagine hundreds of Indigenous Christ-followers actively engaged in bringing hope and healing to marriages in their communities. That’s our dream and our prayer!

So many families were torn apart through historic injustices committed against Indigenous families. This ministry is one way the good work of restoration has begun and will continue.