

Department of Family Ministries of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Adapted from the West Central Brazil Union Mission in the South American Division  
A Department of Family Ministries Publication  
Willie and Elaine Oliver, Editors  
Directors, Department of Family Ministries  
General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Available from  
*AdventSource*  
5120 Prescott Avenue  
Lincoln, NE 68506  
[www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)  
402.486.8800  
800.328.0525

(c) 2013 Department of Family Ministries, General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

All rights reserved. The handouts in this resource may be used and reproduced for local church use without permission from the publisher. It may not be used or reproduced in other books or publications without prior permission from the copyright holder. Reprinting the content as a whole or for giveaway or resale is expressly prohibited.

\*Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references taken from the New International Version.

ISBN 978-1-62909-166-2



FAMILY-TO-FAMILY

## Church Guide

A Winsome Plan to Help Families Witness in Their Communities

Department of Family Ministries of the General Conference  
of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

# Table of Contents

Preface	
Introduction	7
A Word to Pastors	9
A Word to Church Leaders	10
How to Implement <i>Family-to-Family</i>	11
Introduction	11
Phase 1: Prepare	11
Phase 2: Care	12
Phase 3: Share	12
Simple Calendar Outline	12
Phase 1: Prepare	13
Month 1	13
Month 2	14
Phase 2: Care	17
Month 3	17
Month 4	18
Month 5	19
Month 6	21
Month 7	22
Month 8	24
Phase 3: Share	27
Month 9	27
Month 10	29
Month 11	30
Month 12	31

Appendix A - Handout: Overview of <i>Family-to-Family</i> Program.....	33
Appendix B - Four Sermons on the Family.....	34
Sermon 1 - A Prescription for Family Happiness.....	34
Sermon 2 - Sons of Promise.....	37
Sermon 3 - What Can You Do for Your Parents?.....	41
Sermon 4 - Three Secrets to a Happy Marriage.....	45
Appendix C - Sign-up Sheet for <i>Family-to-Family</i> .....	49
Appendix D - Copy of the <i>Family Guide</i> .....	50
Introduction.....	50
How to Use This <i>Family Guide</i> .....	51
Prayer Journal.....	52
Monthly Steps.....	55
Daily Devotionals.....	58
Appendix E - Day of Fasting and Prayer Guidelines.....	83
Appendix F - Mini Seminar on How to Make Friends for Christ.....	84
Introduction.....	84
Step 1 - Mingling with People.....	84
Step 2 - Showing Compassion.....	86
Step 3 - Ministering to Needs.....	87
Step 4 - Winning People's Confidence.....	88
Step 5 - Invite Them to Follow Jesus.....	89
Appendix G - 12 Tips on How to Give a Bible Study.....	91
Appendix H - Sample Calendar Outline.....	93
Appendix I - Blank Calendar.....	94
Appendix J - Ellen G. White on the Family as a Witness to Neighbors.....	95

# Preface

Families are a special gift from God. Despite the challenges at every step of the journey, there is nothing like a family to create a sense of belonging—a place where one is cherished despite one's share of imperfections.

God wants to use every family to be a blessing to those around them who are in need of His grace, His love and His salvation. For this notion to be a reality, families must know God for themselves and daily nurture their relationship with Him.

**Ellen White** declares: "Our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home...there is no missionary field more important than this" (*The Adventist Home*, p. 35).

It is not unusual for many Christians who are zealous for God to commit their full time and energies to reaching the lost and preaching the gospel at every opportunity. This is commendable. Nevertheless, as people of God we should be mindful of regarding our families as our first mission field.

When parents and children are devoted to Christ and are growing in grace each day, the Spirit of God can use them in a marked way to be effective witnesses for Him.

Our mission as Seventh-day Adventists is to tell the world about the saving power of Jesus Christ and His soon return to rescue us from this world of sin and pain. To be able to reach the entire world with this message and engage in a *mission to the cities* that is dynamic and sustainable, the families of the church will have to be empowered and fully engaged in carrying out this mandate.

*Family-to-Family* is an initiative of the Department of Family Ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that seeks to involve entire families in the mission of sharing the gospel with their neighbors, relatives and friends. Although often intimidating to many who have never engaged in this kind of work, *Family-to-Family* is the kind of resource that when employed by local churches and families will help make the apparently difficult simple.

Our heartfelt thanks to Pastor Jair Gois from the West Central Brazil Union Mission in the South American Division for pioneering this initiative in his field and making available much of the material for this resource.

We pray every family in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will avail themselves of this information and allow the Spirit of God to use them to reach neighbors, relatives and friends with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

Maranatha!

Willie and Elaine Oliver, Directors

Department of Family Ministries

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Silver Spring, Maryland

# Introduction



Everyone can see that families in our world are under attack. We are inundated with stories and statistics regarding high divorce rates, domestic violence, rebellious children, pornography, and babies born to unwed parents. New research continues to emphasize an old problem: Homes are falling to pieces. Communities are populated with overwhelmed single parents, angry teens, neglected children, etc. And no culture is untouched by these results of broken families.

The entertainment industry is not helping. Television programs, movies, videos, magazines, and books make it seem normal and almost trendy to loosen our grip on the values that make solid homes. If good families were to be compared to a sapling, Satan and his host of evil angels are chopping at the roots of the family tree in order to topple down forests of marriages.

We know the family is in trouble. But have we stopped to consider the powerful witness of a positive, Christian family? It's easy to see the dark side, with the broken pieces of deteriorated families all around us. But what can church families do to help struggling homes in our communities to heal and grow? How can we introduce more of our relatives, friends, and neighbors to the Savior who loves families? Is there something we have overlooked in reaching disintegrating homes for God?

Nothing is more powerful to reach floundering families and troubled people than a Christian home. When church families reach out to community families, Satan trembles—because God created families to be the influential building blocks of society. Imperfect as our homes might be, the world looks longingly for safe places for children to grow, for examples of purity and integrity, and for family units that stand against the tide of evil in our world.

The witnessing power of one single Christian family in a neighborhood is beyond estimation. We fear the evil influences of a bad family on a good family, but with proper boundaries it would be well for us to also think about the *good* influence a Christian home can have on those around us. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, a solid home can change a community.

Notice how Ellen White describes the powerful witness of a Christian home:

“A well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion—an argument that the infidel cannot gainsay. All can see that there is an influence at work in the family that affects the children, and that the God of Abraham is with them. If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mold, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be the ‘light of the world’” (*The Adventist Home*, p. 36).

*Family-to-Family* is a one-year church plan, provided by the Department of Family Ministries of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to make the family the center of all evangelistic work. It guides all the families in the church to witness to their neighbors as a family. It fosters a harmonious work between the departments of the church and the family units of the church to reach out to families in the community.

In the *Family-to-Family* resource kit you will find three items to organize your church families to be witnesses in their community:

1. The *Church Guide*, which you are now reading, is to help pastors, elders, and Family Ministries leaders implement *Family-to-Family* in your local church. It provides the vision, training, and practical steps to help each family prepare and reach out to at least one other family in their neighborhood.
2. The *Family Guide* is used by each family in your church to prepare for being a powerful witness in the community. It contains the basic steps to spiritually prepare each family to share Christ with another family. Ideally, every family in your church should have their own booklet.
3. The *Brochure Packet* contains samples of booklets and pamphlets on family-centered topics that church families may share with their neighbors. Some of them do expand into health and spiritual topics. Your local conference, union, or division may also have additional sample brochures you may use. The annual “sharing book of the year” is another option to use. Also check with your local Adventist bookstore for any other resources that may be useful in your region.

If the devil has given high priority to the destruction of families because of their power for good in the world, then perhaps it is time the church made it a high priority to build families as witnessing teams to transform our societies—not only from person to person, but from family to family. It is an exponential plan that is blessed by the Holy Spirit.

Is your church ready to be a mighty influence for good? Let us be prepared to be a powerful light in the world.

# A Word to Pastors



How would you like to powerfully share the gospel with your community while at the same time strengthening the families in your church? *Family-to-Family* (FTF) is a one-year plan to guide every family in your church to witness to at least one other family in their neighborhood. It is a simple approach based on the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to make families the center of your church evangelistic activities.

Instead of separating all the departments in your church into independent functioning units (Sabbath School, Personal Ministries, Pathfinders, etc.), FTF ties them all together. Each department cooperates to help families reach their neighbors for Jesus.

The primary role of the pastor is to provide a vision for FTF that is specific to his or her church. Your mission is *not* to conduct all the teaching or visitation. It is best not to embrace this work alone. Ideally the pastor will support a team of church members to organize and implement FTF. The body of Christ has many different parts (1 Cor. 12:14), and your job is to equip these different gifted people, bringing them together as a team (Eph 4:12, 16).

Work closely with your church board in crafting a vision for conducting FTF in your church. Then appoint a FTF leader. This may be your head elder, Personal Ministries leader, Family Ministries leader, Women's Ministries leader or Children's Ministries leader. Next, set up a committee to help carry this ministry forward. It may consist of key leaders in different departments of the church. Meet on a monthly basis to provide guidance and listen to progress reports.

Pastors also must remember to care for their own families while shepherding the flock. It is easy to pour all of your time and energy into helping church members with their problems while unintentionally neglecting the work under your own roof. Set regular times to nurture your marriage and show interest in your children. It weakens your effectiveness as a pastor to focus only on building up the church while taking little time to care for the heart of your spouse.

Read through this FTF *Church Guide*. Pray for God to give you a vision of how your church families can reach your community. Preach on the power of families that witness for Christ (sample sermons are available in Appendix B). Organize your leaders to implement FTF. Invite your members to enlist in this spiritual program. Challenge every family to enroll, and set an example in your own family. Meet regularly with your leaders to encourage them and to hear reports. Tackle problems as they arise. And overall, be ready to rejoice as new families are brought into your church!



# A Word to Church Leaders



*Family-to-Family* (FTF) is a powerful resource that helps every family in your church to be a collective witness for Christ to other families in their neighborhood. It is based on principles from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. This guide provides the simple steps to help prepare families to be witnesses for the Lord, giving practical ideas for building friendships and methods for sharing the gospel with other families.

How can church leaders help FTF be a success? First, it is essential for every church leader to spend time alone in prayer. Jesus' opening work every morning was to be alone with God. Next, it is critical for church leaders to work together with the pastor and other church leaders. God's vision for how the church is to function under Christ is like a human body. While every leader has a different function, they all have one purpose—to spread the gospel.

The power of FTF comes to your church through members who pray and work in unity. When the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2:1) after Jesus went back to heaven, they had first gathered together. They were unified. As one body they prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, your church will succeed when you work in partnership with your pastor and other church leaders. God blesses churches that operate in harmony.

Ellen G. White provides these helpful thoughts:

*Those who do labor together should seek to be in perfect harmony. And yet no one should feel that he cannot labor with those who do not see just as he sees, and who do not in their labors follow just his plans. If all manifest a humble, teachable spirit, there need be no difficulty. God has set in the church different gifts. These are precious in their proper places, and all may act a part in the work of preparing a people for Christ's soon coming (Gospel Workers, p. 481).*

Whichever position you may hold in the church, whatever role you may play in helping the body of Christ be a light in the community, make sure the flame of the Holy Spirit burns humbly and brightly in your own heart. It is by working together with your church family that FTF will be most effective in helping win others to Jesus.

# How to Implement *Family-to-Family*



## Introduction

*Family-to-Family* (FTF) is a plan that makes the family the center of all evangelistic work in your church. It helps every family in your church witness to at least one family in the community by building friendships, meeting needs, and inviting families to learn more about Jesus through Bible studies and evangelistic meetings.

Organized plans can be a blessing or a curse—it depends on how you use them. FTF is a simple concept: church families witnessing to community families. However, there is a general tendency to make church programs more complex than they need to be, so let's try to keep things basic. Perhaps there are some families in your church who already understand how to witness for Jesus and may currently be doing this. But many families will need stepping stones to guide them.

As you follow the plans for applying FTF, use wise judgment and be flexible in adapting this program to your church. These plans are not meant to be followed in a rigid, mechanical way. Some activities may not work as well in your culture or community. Make adjustments to fit your church calendar. Provide brochures and family programs that meet the unique needs of your neighborhood. Use Bible study materials that reach different types of people in your region. And most of all, foster a love for families in your community who need to know how much Jesus loves them and that He is coming back to take all God's people to a heavenly home.

The FTF implementation plan happens in three phases over the period of roughly one year. The following is a broad overview of the program. Later sections of this *Church Guide* will break down these phases into more detailed steps, complete with resources to carry them out.

## Phase 1: Prepare

The purpose of this first part is to invite the church to embrace the program and begin the work of preparing each person's heart to be a witness for Christ. This phase takes place over a two-month period. Here are four key groups that help implement FTF with a brief synopsis of their work:

**Pastor:** Introduces FTF to church board; preaches series on the family; invites families to enroll

**Church Board:** Learns about FTF; commits to program; establishes FTF committee; votes funds

**Family-to-Family Committee:** Meets to review the program and begin implementation

**Church Families:** Listen to sermon series on family; enroll in program; receive *Family Guide*; begin a prayer journal; begin reading daily family devotions found in *Family Guide*

## Phase 2: Care

The second part aims to encourage every church family to make *sincere* contacts with neighbors and build friendships with at least one other family in their area. Relationships take time to build so this phase takes longer than the others. A six-month period is recommended.

**Pastor:** Continue to speak positively about FTF; put FTF on board agenda each month; attend FTF committee meetings; assist with training

**Church Board:** Hear progress reports; provide support and funding for additional program needs

**Family-to-Family Committee:** Coordinate training on friendship building; provide brochures for families to give to friends; coordinate church social events; set up training on giving Bible studies in homes

**Church Families:** Participate in a day of fasting and prayer; choose one family to contact; begin building a friendship with that family by sharing resources, inviting them to events, and eventually (when the time is right) inviting them to a Bible study

## Phase 3: Share

The purpose of this final part is to *share* the gospel. Church families invite neighborhood families to attend an evangelistic meeting. This phase takes place over a four-month period. After the series everyone is encouraged to join a small group, meeting in a home, to foster continued growth in Christ.

**Pastor(s):** Plan and conduct an evangelistic series

**Church Board:** Continue to hear progress reports; support and promote evangelistic series

**Family-to-Family Committee:** Coordinate training on helping church families invite community families to evangelistic series; assist with special baptism celebrations; encourage small groups after evangelistic series

**Church Families:** Continue to build friendships with community family(ies); invite them to evangelistic series; attend series with them; hold follow-up Bible studies in homes

## Simple Calendar Outline

	Pastor	Church Board	FTF Committee	Church Families
Months 1 & 2 <b>PREPARE</b>	Cast vision; work with board; prepare church spiritually	Commit to program; establish FTF committee and funding	Begin planning/ implementation of FTF in church	Hear sermon series; enroll and receive <i>Family Guide</i> ; begin preparations
Months 3-8 <b>CARE</b>	Continue support; Attend FTF committee	Hear progress reports; continue support	Provide training and resources; plan church events	Choose family; fasting and prayer; make contacts
Months 9-12 <b>SHARE</b>	Prepare and carry out evangelistic series	Hear progress reports; continue support	Continue training and support; assist with evangelistic series	Invite to evangelistic series; attend series; provide follow-up

# Phase 1: Prepare



## Month 1

### Pastor

1. Prayerfully read through all FTF materials.
2. Prepare a presentation for the church board (copy and share Appendix A, "Overview of *Family-to-Family*") to gain their vote and commitment.
3. Preach a sermon series on the family (see Appendix B for sample sermons or copy and paste text from the *Resource CD* and modify to your preferences).
4. Invite every family in the church to enroll in the FTF program (use sign-up sheet in Appendix C).

### Church Board

1. Listen to a presentation on *Family-to-Family*, reviewing the materials and asking questions.
2. Vote to implement FTF and provide funds for the following materials and events. *Note: The board does not need to allocate all funds to the FTF committee all at once. Below are examples of financial needs to keep in mind. Suggested amounts are in parenthesis.*
  - a. Every family in the church will need a **Family Guide**. (Purchase, photocopy, or print from the *Resource CD*. One per family.)
  - b. **Brochures** for sharing will need to be purchased for families to distribute to their neighbors. (Estimate 4-8 brochures per family to distribute)
  - c. What types of **family programs/events** (health programs, children's programs, seminars on family issues) will your church hold this coming year? (Consider a goal of 3-5 church events)
  - d. What funds will be needed for **Bible study materials**? (Estimate 2-3 sets of lessons per family)
  - e. How much will need to be set aside for an **evangelistic series** at the end of the program?



## Phase 1: Prepare

3. Establish a *Family-to-Family* committee to implement the program.
  - a. Recommended size: 4-7 members
  - b. Recommended meeting frequency: once or twice a month, as needed
  - c. Example of committee makeup: pastor, an elder, Family Ministries leader, Women's Ministries leader, Children's Ministries leader, Vacation Bible School leader, Personal Ministries leader (or representatives from these ministries)
4. Vote a chairperson and secretary for FTF committee

### *Family-to-Family Committee*

1. If the church board hasn't already, choose a chairperson and secretary at the first meeting.
2. Review the *Family-to-Family Church Guide* to become better acquainted with the materials.
3. Have one person manage the list of names of church families who enrolled in the FTF program using the sign-up sheets. (Appendix C, or use index cards or set up a database.)
4. Determine how many *Family Guides* are needed and make sure they are ordered (or printed from the *Resource CD* or photocopied from Appendix D) and distributed. Every church family enrolled needs one *Family Guide*.
5. KEY POINT: The FTF committee is not meant to carry out all the work of the *Family-to-Family* program. This committee is encouraged to work with all departments of the church to involve them in supporting the program. For instance, Vacation Bible School is a wonderful way to connect families and children to your church, but the FTF committee does not run Vacation Bible School. The same is true for health programs, family ministries programs, and training people in friendship evangelism. We encourage you to cooperate with and involve many different departments to work in harmony with FTF. Members of the FTF committee are part of other ministries that will be involved in helping carry the program forward. Work as a team and share the responsibilities. *The FTF committee's primary purpose is coordination.*

### *Church Families*

1. Look at an overview of the *Family-to-Family* program. Use Appendix A as a handout.
2. Enroll in the program.
3. Study a *Family Guide* booklet (one per family).



### Month 2

#### Pastor

1. Put FTF on each month's church board agenda and have the FTF chairperson give a regular report.
2. Complete sermon series on the family (if not already done). Also consider preaching a sermon on the power of intercessory prayer in preparation for a day of fasting and prayer at your church.
3. Continue to invite every family in the church to enroll in the FTF program (use sign-up sheet in Appendix C, index cards or database program).
4. Encourage families to have morning and evening worship. The *Family Guide* provides 31 devotionals, one for each day of the month. This can begin at the end of the first month or sometime during the second month of the program.
5. Hold a day of fasting and prayer for families in your community sometime during this month. Suggestions for this day are found in Appendix E.

#### Church Board

1. Listen to FTF progress reports.
2. Provide additional support and funding as needed.
3. Vote additional FTF committee members if needed.
4. Vote on recommended programs by the FTF committee for the upcoming year:
  - a. Training events for church members
  - b. Family Ministries programs for community
  - c. Evangelistic series



## Phase 1: Prepare

### *Family-to-Family Committee*

1. Plan with the pastor a day of fasting and prayer for families in your community.
2. Begin plans for a training event for church members on how to build friendships with their neighbors:
  - a. When will the training event take place?
  - b. Who will conduct the training?
  - c. Have materials ready for this training (see Appendix F).
3. Manage the names of families enrolled in the FTF program using the sign-up sheets (Appendix C, index cards or database).
4. Determine if any more *Family Guides* are needed and make sure they are ordered (or printed from the *Resource CD* or photocopied from Appendix D) and distributed. Each family enrolled needs one *Family Guide*.
5. Encourage church members to begin using their *Family Guide* devotionals each day.
6. Invite church members to write down the names of families in their neighborhood in the prayer journal section of their *Family Guide*. Urge them to pray for God to help them know which family (or families) to contact.

### *Church Families*

1. Begin using the daily devotionals in the *Family Guide*.
2. Write down the names of families in your neighborhood in the prayer journal section of your *Family Guide* and begin praying for them each day. *Please note:* The families in your prayer journal do not need to be in your immediate neighborhood. They might be families in your larger community—families you know from your work, from your children's activities, or through other acquaintances. However, the families you will reach do need to be close enough for you to have regular contact with them.
3. Pray especially for God to help you choose one family to contact.
4. Participate in the day of fasting and prayer, asking God to help your family be a witness for Jesus to your neighbors.

