

EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

Making a faith chest



Many of you will remember the Child in Our Hands Conferences, held around Australia in 2001. These conferences encouraged congregations and families to be partners in nurturing the faith.

One of the great legacies remaining from this time of rejuvenation has been the gift of a faith chest, presented by congregations to children at the time of their baptism. Many churches embraced this idea as an opportunity to encourage families to nurture faith at home.

The faith chest is a box or wooden chest housing the spiritual treasures given by church and family, to be used to nurture faith at home throughout childhood years. We believe that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the family has the greatest influence on a child's faith.

We also believe that the church is called to partner with and equip parents and grandparents to be the primary faith nurturers for their children, as intended by God (Deuteronomy 6).



Ella

Every couple of months, four-year-old Ella takes her faith chest (or baptism box as she calls it) and sits on the lounge-room floor, eager to look through it with mum Naomi.

The day I visited, she took great delight in telling me all about the things inside. There is an embroidered towel that the pastor used to 'wipe the water off'. There are some prayer books and a DVD with a beautiful letter from the lady who puts the boxes together for Ella's congregation. All of the baptism cards Ella received are in there too.

Ella displayed great enthusiasm in showing me her favourite one with a baby on the front: 'She is so cute isn't she!' Ella also likes to light her baptism candle at night-time to remind her of her baptism.

Ella is an amazing example of childlike faith and of faith that is being formed and encouraged at home. She was so happy to share how Jesus looks after her at night-time and keeps her safe, so she's not scared of the dark anymore.

Ella loves to pray with Jesus and say her night-time prayers. She also enjoys watching the new babies being baptised at church.

She understands that when you are baptised you become a part of God's family and that you are His precious child.

It was lovely to spend precious time sharing what was in the box with Ella, her mum Naomi, and Ella's grandma Ruth.



We had a very special afternoon sharing our faith with each other. It was a perfect example of intergenerational faith sharing.

(Naomi and Ella are members at Langmeil Lutheran Church, Tanunda along with dad Jarome and Ella's little brother Eli.)

Ideas for making faith chests

A faith chest can be made of wood or you could use a decorated cardboard box from a discount shop.

IDEAS FOR ITEMS THAT MAY BE PLACED IN A FAITH CHEST INCLUDE:

- baptism certificate
- baptismal candle
- candle holder
- a set of prayers to share around the table
- Faith5 bookmark
- devotion book
- Bible
- napkin / towel used during baptism
- music CDs or DVDs
- tracts from Lutheran Tract Mission
- information about church ministries and schools

ITEMS THAT CAN BE ADDED TO A FAITH CHEST OVER TIME THAT CAN HELP TO NURTURE FAITH:

- baptism cards
- Sunday school projects
- items that the child has received during their faith journey that enhance and encourage their faith walk, such as devotion or prayer books
- Confirmation certificate

Let your imagination run wild. What can you think of that will encourage parents to share their faith with their children?



Faith Trail ministry is a way to celebrate with families in your congregation the promises made in baptism. It helps equip families with resources for sharing their faith stories.



"Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night." DEUTERONOMY 6:6-8

Faith Trail markers are celebrated with an event for children and parents to attend together, and are recognised in worship through prayer, blessing and gifting.

Faith Trail ministry helps families place all of life in God's care. It helps to remind parents to celebrate and bless their children at every new beginning or transition in life. It equips parents to talk about their own faith and life experience as they weave their stories with God's story in every way, in every place.