Growing FAITH at home

Congregational User's Guide

Many congregations use GROWING FAITH AT HOME as a "home handout" that can be taken home from Sunday worship. While it is always a good thing to place Christian resources in the hands of individuals and households, the real questions are:

"Is it being used at home?"

"Do individuals and households have the basic skills and habits needed to use it?"

"Is it making a difference in the lives of people?"

Experience suggests that GROWING FAITH AT HOME will serve your congregation best when it is reinforced and supported through your wider congregational activities – through worship, preaching, teaching and your children and youth ministry activities.

This Congregational User's Guide will give you advice and suggestions to help you make the most of the resources.

Give a GOOD Introduction

Take some time planning to introduce GROWING FAITH AT HOME to your congregation. It will make the most impact if individuals and households understand its value and how they can use it in their daily lives right from the very start.

- Introduce GROWING FAITH AT HOME to the leaders of your congregation. Encourage them to start using it in their own home lives to set an example for the rest of your faith community.
- Choose a particular Sunday to launch GROWING FAITH AT HOME in your congregation. Have the pastor pull it out and announce its presence, explain why your congregation is beginning to use it, and describe what you'd like your congregational family to do with it during the week.
- In subsequent Sundays, give a brief focus in worship to one aspect of GROWING FAITH AT HOME e.g. Caring Conversations, Daily Bible Readings, Blessing, Creative Response. Talk about how to use this part of the resources. Model it if you can and, if possible, ask them to practice it there and then with one another (e.g. to bless one another).
- Gather stories and feedback on how people are using GROWING FAITH AT HOME. Share these in sermons, announcements and printed material over the first few months.

Make it a Regular Part of your Sunday Worship Life

The more you are able to utilise GROWING FAITH AT HOME in your weekly congregational worship, the more your households will become familiar with it and grow in their usage. Try these ideas for weaving GROWING FAITH AT HOME into your gathered worship times:

- Introduce a two minute *Home Moment* to your weekly worship services, perhaps after the Children's Time or the pastor's sermon. Use this time to highlight one of the suggestions for the coming week.
- Wherever appropriate, have the pastor refer to the ideas or tools in GROWING FAITH AT HOME in the sermon.
- Have worship attendees locate and speak aloud together the Scripture Verse of the Week. Encourage households to say the verse together during the week.
- At the end of your worship service, ask attendees to bless one another using the printed blessing.
- Where applicable, have the pastor ask congregational members to share their responses to one of the Caring Conversations questions with one another.

Use in a Variety of Settings

Beyond the household, there are many different settings where GROWING FAITH AT HOME can be used to enhance the faith life of a congregation during the week. Using it in various settings will also help your members become more confident in using it in their homes.

Here are some examples of settings where the resource can be used . . .

Church Council/Board meetings
Ministry team, task force or committee meetings
While visiting shut ins
While conducting hospital visits
Youth group or children's ministry events
Parent gatherings
Fellowship time
(ask people to have caring conversations, or share their highs & lows over coffee)
New member classes
Bible study groups
Small groups
Prayer groups
Confirmation classes
Pre-marriage sessions

Think outside the box!!

Equip Households to use Growing FAITH at home well

Simply giving households the GROWING FAITH AT HOME materials is unlikely to bear much fruit unless they are helped to:

(a) understand why they should use it;
(b) gain skills for using it;
(c) make it part of their weekly home routines.

Teach 1

Use all the teaching opportunities you have with parents and other adult care-givers to emphasise the vital role they have in passing on faith to children and young people - these opportunities include baptismal preparation, child and youth ministry parent evenings and intergenerational gatherings.

Introduce parents and care-givers to the "Four Keys".

FOURKEYS

Faith becomes real when others can see God working in the lives of people. The Four Keys of Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions provide some ideas that can assist us.

Caring Conversations

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cSvt_OgXFM&t=6s

Christian faith and values are passed on to the next generation through supportive conversations.

Devotions

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_Ja0wCKsg4

Our faith shapes the whole of our lives and involves a lifetime of Bible study, reflection and prayer.

Service

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTFYimo-Y1Q

Serving others together provides an opportunity for children to see people's gifts, faith and values in action.

Rituals and Traditions

www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWyl8Eqo6sc&t=22s

Rituals and traditions communicate meaning, values and the relationship that exists between people and God.

Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel.

MARTIN LUTHER - 1522

Growing FAITH at home

Developed by The Lutheran Church of Australia, Grow Ministries

Model 2

Don't assume that today's households can easily transfer spiritual information into application. Model for them basic faith practices like reading the Bible, having a home devotion, praying together and blessing one another. Where possible, have them practice at church what you would like them implement at home! Help households to think through the practicalities of beginning new habits and applying them into their lives. Be persistent and patient. Don't expect instant results . . . but expect that over time God will do big things!

Resource 3

Aim to make it as easy as possible for your households to use the ideas in GROWING FAITH AT HOME e.g. provide basic materials that may be needed for an activity. Look ahead at the editions for coming Sundays and consider how you might best help your homes move from idea to action.

Gift 4

Gift your households with aids to help them practice the faith in the home e.g. table crosses, devotional bibles, posters with prayers and blessings.

For more information or subscriptions contact the Grow Ministries team
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