

Christian Home & Marriage Week

An Overview

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Pastors and family ministries leaders can make Christian Home and Marriage Week an extra special time for all those who come to church and those whose lives are touched by those who attend church. How? First of all, it is important to think about all who will be influenced by the messages and programs offered at church during this week.

For sure there will be the regular church attendees. But there will likely be visitors, some coming to church for perhaps the first time, men, women, children and teens—all with individual and relational needs.

There will be those who are married and those who are not. Singles often make up a majority of the congregation. How will this Christian Home and Marriage Week impact them? Is this relevant to them? How can this week be celebrated in a home that is occupied by only one person?

We need also to think about the people who are in the daily lives of these churchgoers. What can those who participate in these special programs and events gain this week that they can share with such friends, family, work or school mates?

The resources for Christian Home and Marriage Week embrace both an emphasis on marriage and on parenting and parent-child relationships. They are of several types:

Sermons

- *Back in Vogue: Marriage Tips From 1913*. A sermon on marriage by Cyril Sweeney.
- *Dating: Making the Right Choice*. This sermon on dating relationships by Mary and Jonathan Barrett could be used for youth attending a seeker-style service.
- *Parenting for Growth*. A sermon by Victor Marley and Supplementary Material and Children's Activities by Gry Marley combine to provide a resource for an interactive worship service on the topic of parent-child relationships.
- *Show Jesus to the Children*. A sermon on a crucial aspect of parenting by Anne-May Müller.

Mini-Seminars

- *SoulMates: Reaching Out to Married Couples*. Karen and Bernie Holford offer a fun-filled evening program to help retain the sparkle of marital romance.
- *Love Connects – A Day Retreat for Married Couples*. This unique seminar by Bernie and Karen Holford focuses on a couple's love for God and each other and helps them explore ways they can team up to share God's love with others.
- *Our Children, Our Responsibility, Our Time - Being a Christian Parent Today*. Carina Lillbäck-Larsson's parenting seminar focuses squarely on the God-given responsibility parents have to communicate spiritual values to their children.
- *Passing Spiritual Values to Children: A Study of Bible Parents & Caregivers*. This parenting seminar by Lotte Rechter gives parents an opportunity to discover parenting principles from several biblical families.

Children's Stories

Two children's stories help include the younger set in worship and provide lessons on how children can build their relationships with God and others.

- *Building Friendships* by Heather Haworth
- *I Want to Do Something for God - Together With You* by Carina Lillbäck-Larsson

Family Ministries Leadership

- *Babies Bring Families to Church*. This interview with Pastor Mick Smart on a service called "Baby Blessing" offers an interesting idea for outreach to families in the community.
- *Family Camps: Reaching People for Jesus!* Karen Holford shares a number of helpful pointers for planning and conducting family camps to enrich the lives of Christian families and appeal to those who are "not-yet-Christian."

The Marriage Course: A Personal Report. John and Delivon Francis provide a testimony of their couple enrichment and stimulus to minister to other couples growing out of their experience with *The Marriage Course*.

Reprinted Articles

Three articles by Karen Holford suggest things to practise and share during the week that will help us relate better in our own home and family, with friends, people at work, at school and in college. Taken from *The Family Book – Creative Ideas for Families*, published by The Stanborough Press Ltd.

- *Relating to Each Other in a Biblical Way*

- *Building a Closer Relationship with Someone You Love*
- *Strengthening the Marriages of Family & Friends*

Book Review

- *Families Finding Faith* by John Hattam. Augustus Lawrence reviews Hattam's concept that the church needs to put greater emphasis on relational evangelism as the starting point for drawing families to Christ.

We are hopeful that the various resources offered in this section of the Family Ministries Planbook will help to address the needs in the lives of those in our congregations and those within their realm of influence. May they help all to build relationships for now and eternity.