



101 IDEAS

**for Involving
Families in
Global Mission**



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Beginning with the mission fields of their own homes, families can make a profound impact on the world for Christ.

Missionaries in the Family

“All can be home missionaries in their families and neighbourhoods.” (ChS 9) “As workers for God, our work is to begin with those nearest. It is to begin in our own home. There is no more important missionary field than this.” (CG 476) “Every family is a church, over which the parents preside. The first consideration of the parents should be to work for the salvation of their children.” (CG 549)

- Discuss as husband and wife the meaning of being “evangelists in the home, ministers of grace to your children.” List ways in which unsaved children are like non-Adventists living in our homes.
- Prepare a list of changes you would like to make to give a more evangelistic approach to your parenting. What will be necessary to implement these changes? Make one of the changes starting today.
- How is each family “a church”? Make a list of comparisons. What responsibility rests upon the home for the salvation of family members? How can the home cooperate with the church in this spiritual task?
- Discuss as parents the spiritual condition of your children. List their individual needs and differences.
- Plan strategies for giving your children opportunities to make their decisions to follow Christ and to be baptised.
- Pray for relatives. Discuss together what efforts the family members can make to lead unsaved relatives to Christ.
- During family worship relate what special opportunities for gospel sharing have occurred for each one during the day – in your family, at work, at school, in the neighbourhood.
- Discuss as a family the prospective spiritual interest of individuals in work, neighbourhood, school, family circles.
- Keep a prayer list of neighbourhood individuals and families to whom the family would like to witness and for whom the family regularly prays.
- During family worship talk about special ways of witnessing for the various interests listed.

The Family a Religious Training School

“Consider the family institution a training school, preparatory for the performance of religious duties.” (CG 482)

- Be a part of the Kids in Discipleship ministry that involves families in blessing others within the church, in their neighbourhood and other mission fields.
- Spend some extra time with your children today, reading together, talking, playing. Think about their spiritual development too.
- As parents, take time to talk together about how the upbringing of your children is affecting their present and future religious experience.

- Think of Bible examples of the religious training of children. What can be learned from the home lives of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Daniel about preparation for service to God?
- Talk together as parents about the meaning of making “your children your companions” and being their “very best friends.” (CG 496) How might this equip them to serve God among their companions now and to witness for Him as adults?
- How do the attitudes and skills such as communication, mutual respect, showing appreciation, teamwork, ability to solve problems and loyalty – which make for a satisfying relationship with God and others in His church – have their counterpart in the family?
- Allow God’s love for your children to be yours by reading and meditating on Christ’s love for children as indicated in Matthew 19:14.
- Read Spirit of Prophecy encouragement sections such as “Christ’s Encouragement to Mothers.” (CG 273-276).
- Make your teaching of spiritual values attractive to your children by your positive relationships with them, by smiling often, by entering into your child’s feelings.
- By modelling a high regard for all people, teach your children that with God there are no territorial lines, no artificial distinctions, no caste, no aristocracy. (6T 294).
- Cooperate with your child in some task of Christian service to which their abilities, strengths and interests are suited and from which they can gain some success and joy.
- Help your older children and young people to form a club with their playmates and schoolmates so they can help others, eg cut an old person’s grass.
- Show the value of singing and prayer to your children by singing and praying with them. In later years your child’s ability to sing and pray with others will be “genuine missionary work.” (CT 548).
- Teach children “to do little errands of love and mercy for those less fortunate than themselves.” (6T 435)
- Teach children that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) and that both male and female are one in Christ (Gal 3:28) by involving both boys and girls in acts of Christian help, work and missionary service.
- Prepare both “young men and women... to become workers in their own neighbourhoods and in other places” and “to do that for which they are best adapted.” (9T 118, 119)
- Give opportunities to girls and young women to excel in missionary work, recognising their gifts and abilities alongside boys and young men and realising that “they can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach.” (9T 128, 129)

Using the Spiritual Gifts of Individual Family Members

“A distinct work is assigned to every Christian.” (ChS 9) “Each one has a mission of some wonderful importance...” (ChS 10) “There is a variety of work, adapted to different minds and varied capabilities.” (ChS 12).

- Spend some family worship periods reading and studying the Bible texts on spiritual gifts – Rom 12; Cor 12, 13; Eph 4. Note that the gifts, though differing, combine in a harmonious way for the upbuilding of the work of God.
- Ask your church leaders about the possibility of taking a spiritual gift or temperament inventory to discuss the unique strengths and abilities which you and your family members possess.
- Study the lives of Old and New Testament men and women such as Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Miriam, Joseph, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Huldah, David, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Priscilla and Aquilla, looking especially for their spiritual gifts and capabilities and how these were used to glorify God and build up His cause.

- Watch DVDs and read biographies of Seventh-day Adventist pioneers, or other notable Christian leaders, whose spirit of service and spiritual gifts may inspire and encourage your family.
- Think together, pray about and discover what each family member's talents and abilities are and how they could be used by God in the home, in the church, in missionary work in the community.
- Take time to express appreciation in a special way for the unique talents, gifts and abilities of each one in your family, affirming the contribution each one makes to the smooth running of the family.
- The gifts that God has given your children may differ from yours as parents. Invite other Adventist Christian relatives or members in the church who may have spiritual gifts and abilities more nearly like those of your children to share their stories and experiences with your young people to help provide models and examples for them.
- Based on recognised individual talents and abilities, let each family member prepare a list of several specific things he or she could do to witness for God. Solicit help from other family members if you have difficulty preparing the list. Small children may draw pictures depicting their contributions.
- Ask family members to share on a regular basis how God has prompted them to use their talents and abilities in their everyday activities.

A Family Missionary Project

- Discuss how the family's various talents could fit together and be used cooperatively in a special, distinct missionary work.
- Consult with your church leadership for suggestions on special missionary projects that might be helped by your family's involvement.
- Invite each family member to offer a suggestion for a family missionary project. Consider the following variety of activities that are near to home, and add to this list your suggestions:
 - read the Bible or gospel literature to an elderly or visually impaired person
 - shop for a shut-in
 - raise funds for the Adventist Development & Relief Agency
 - write a letter of encouragement to a bereaved, grieving or discouraged family
 - visit the sick
 - provide a no-interest loan to a financially struggling family
 - bake bread for the hungry
 - offer a food basket to a family in need
 - provide once-a-week child care for a single parent
 - distribute gospel literature
 - take part in 'planting' a church
 - conduct a Bible study for fellow employees during your lunch break
 - give a few hours of service on occasion to families needing assistance in child care, home remodelling, financial management
 - provide foster child care for a young person in need
- Pray about and select together your special family missionary project or the ways you might become involved together in more than one project.
- Give everyone in the family an opportunity to share in some way in the project, utilising their special talents and skills.
- Solicit the help of extended family members in the family missionary project.
- If there are aspects to the missionary project which can be done during family worship, such as writing invitations, preparing mailings, developing Bible studies, then plan for some special worship time which will incorporate these, giving family members time to discuss their feelings about the missionary activity.
- Tailor the family's involvement to accommodate various ages of family members, keeping an appropriate balance between the family's personal needs and the need to share with others.

Strive toward an experience that has some measurable results and whereby all can feel a sense of success and fulfilment.

- Keep a log or journal with observances and reflections on the family's missionary activities. Note areas of need which are present and how God has blessed both participants and recipients of the activities.
- Pass the joy arising from the missionary project along to others sharing what God is doing through you in a report at prayer meetings, at youth meetings, at Sabbath School, at Divine Worship, or whenever opportunities are present.

A Family of Stewards

- Have a family worship on the topic of tithe. Review the Bible commands, promises and experience regarding tithe. Recommit yourselves as a family to faithfulness in returning the Lord's tithe.
- Ask your stewardship leader for information on how tithe supports God's work in your division and throughout the world. This will help your family members feel a part of the world missionary endeavour of the church.
- Plan some additional family worships, using "My Place in Space" material, on the subject of Christian stewardship as it relates to our time, talents, treasure and body temple. What does it mean to manage each of these areas for God? Recommit yourselves as a family to being faithful stewards over that which God has entrusted us to use for Him.
- Allow children and young people to manage a small amount of the family income as an allowance. The amount can be increased as children grow older. From this, teach the practical meaning of tithes and offerings, including contributions to missions, as well as management of the remainder for some of their needs and wants.
- Take an active interest in the distribution of mission offerings. Look up www.adventistmission.org for mission stories. Plan a special gift for the current thirteenth Sabbath offering.
- Plan a family investment project. Ask your Sabbath School superintendent for more information and suggestions on how your family can become involved in this plan of raising money for missions.
- As children develop the capacity to appreciate family finance, share with them the various aspects of a family budget, especially that portion which comprises tithe and offerings. Let the whole family take counsel together regarding the amount of offerings given from the family income. Study ways to reduce expenses so that more may be shared with missions.
- Establish a "Lord's Fund" as part of the family budget in addition to regular tithes and offerings. This money may be kept in the family treasury and distributed when family members feel especially impressed by God to assist in some unusual missionary project or some other special need that comes to their attention.

A Sacrificing Family

"Make special sacrifices in order to save souls." (ChS 8)

- Study and pray about the spirit of sacrifice. Read from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy on this topic. Note that sacrificial giving means a balanced approach to our management of that entrusted to us, and implies a Christian generosity and unselfishness.
- In addition to regular family tithes, offerings and church commitments, consider and pray about some missionary work with which your family might become sacrificially involved, such as the missionary project mentioned above or some other need that you have become acquainted with.
- Avoiding coercion or manipulation but in a spirit of cooperation as a family, think and pray about how the various means over which each family member has stewardship can be used

in your special missionary project. Invite each family member to contribute by making a voluntary sacrifice of money or other personal commitment.

Winning Ways with Spouses

- Be a source of emotional and spiritual encouragement for your non-Adventist spouse, striving not to be judgemental of his/her behaviour, but offering compliments and affirmation regularly.
- Provide an example of your belief in God's grace by living your Adventist Christianity before your spouse honestly. You need not hide your weaknesses and faults; they afford opportunities for communicating with your spouse about the forgiveness and continual renewal you are finding in Christ. Let everything you have learned about relationships in Christ make your experience in marriage better.
- Make extra efforts to identify and emphasize the things you and your spouse have in common. Seek points of agreement and enter willingly and happily into every possible aspect of your spouse's life. Discover together new activities and friends to replace those that have been left behind because of your beliefs, realising that the strength of your love bond together is the greatest asset you have in winning your loved one for Christ.
- As you develop acquaintances at church, invite men to befriend your husband, or women your wife. Often such same-sex friends can be a strong influence for good upon a non-believing spouse.
- Invite your spouse to participate in activities of church life that will be of greater interest or perhaps less threatening to him or her such as: social activities, health seminars, family life events, retreats, camp-outs, or church building/maintenance programmes. Build even a greater sense of participation on the part of your spouse in these and other events by recruiting and enlisting his or her expertise in some aspect of the event.

Missionaries in the Neighbourhood

"All can be home missionaries in their families and neighbourhoods." (ChS 9) "Visit every family in the neighbourhood and know their spiritual condition." (ChS 12)

- Plan as a family how and when you can become personally acquainted with the individuals and families living around you so as to know their spiritual condition.
- Discuss with your family the various possible motivations for visiting families in the neighbourhood and knowing their spiritual condition. Why do we visit? Out of fear and guilt for what will happen to us if we don't? Out of obedience to a command of God? Out of Christian responsibility? Out of love and joy with a desire to acquaint others with the Bible message?
- Talk together about how the Adventist Christian message can be both a warning message and a winsome message.
- Ask your pastor or a literature evangelist, or attend a training seminar, to gain guidance and suggestions about how to visit your neighbours.
- Ask an individual successful in visitation to take your family, or members of your family, on a visitation excursion into your neighbourhood. Allow this individual to coach you in appropriate manners, conversation and conduct of the visit.
- Discuss as a family how friendships develop and how the warmth of friendship is essential to authentic Christian witness.
- Discuss together how to form a winsome acquaintance with unbelievers and perhaps even genuine friendship, yet remain faithful to our Adventist Christian values.
- To provide an opportunity to become acquainted and begin to cultivate friendship, take a "Welcome to the Neighbourhood" gift to a family just moving in.
- Take a "Congratulations on your new baby" gift to a family with a newborn.
- Take a "congratulations on your wedding" gift to a newly wedded couple.

- Take an appropriate expression of sympathy to a family who has experienced some loss.
- Invite your neighbours to programmes at your church, ie Holiday Bible School, special holiday celebrations, socials, etc. so you will be prepared to invite them to evangelistic meetings and worship services.
- Take a gift of food to a neighbour. Allow your children to have a part in its preparation and its presentation.
- Give gifts that are tailored to perceived interests and tastes of your neighbours, perhaps a potted plant to a neighbour who likes plants, a stamp for a stamp collector, a recipe for one who enjoys cooking.
- Give gifts that will interest and delight your neighbour's children. Christian periodicals with stories, storybooks or tapes, for example are gifts that will be appreciated by both adults and children.
- Ask your neighbours for a favour. Show them that you need their friendship and help as a family.

Families that Help and Bless Others

"The members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless." (ChS 14) "There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts." (ChS 19)

- Have a "help and bless" thought-storming session with your family. What act of Christian helpfulness might your family perform right now for some acquaintance in your extended family, your church, your neighbourhood, your community? This is covered in the Kids in Discipleship ministry.
- Pay a friendship visit to someone who is housebound.
- Take a prepared meal to a family or individual in need. If appropriate, stay and enjoy the meal with them in their home, taking care of the necessary preparation and clean-up.

Sharing a Personal Testimony

"They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God ... We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ." (ChS 17)

- Share your personal testimony with your family during family worship. Invite others in the family to tell something of their experience.
- Look for opportunities to share your testimony with a close friend, a neighbour, a stranger whose experience at the moment may make them receptive to your sharing.

Offering Something Better

"The people of the world... are to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding something better." (ChS 15) "Let your voices be heard in humble prayer, in witness against intemperance, the folly and the amusements of this world, and in the proclamation of the truth for this time." (ChS 19)

- Have a family meeting about how to witness to others in "humble prayer," "against intemperance," and "the folly and the amusements of this world," and "the proclamation of the

truth for this time,” not denouncing them for their beliefs, habits, or opinions, but giving them something better to behold. Write down any ideas or suggestions that arise.

- When visiting homes of friends or acquaintances offer a humble prayer, concerning their needs, as you part company. Your prayer will be a powerful witness to your belief in God, His care, and the truth in which you believe.
- Invite other families, acquaintances of the family or those with whom you would like to become better acquainted, to your home for family worship. Make it brief, interesting and full of life. Sing songs that can be easily sung and pray short, simple prayers. Choose CDs/DVDs for listening or readings tailored to the age and interest level of those present.
- Invite others to your home for a meal. Teach principles of temperance and “something better” by sharing with others the way your family enjoys eating and drinking healthfully. Let your meal be simple and typical of what your family regularly enjoys.
- Invite others to join you in a family outing or recreational activity that is typical of the wholesome times your family spends together.
- Lighten the load on your family and spread the joy of fellowship by joining with one or more other Adventist families or single individuals when inviting others for a meal, for worship, or for an outing.

Reaching Out to the World

- Learn the names and locations of missionaries from your Conference or Mission. Pray daily as a family for these missionaries.
- Obtain addresses and write/email regular letters of encouragement to foreign missionaries. Adventist Frontier Missions www.afmonline.org.
- Take special interest in the projects of the 13th Sabbath Mission offering. Learn more from libraries, magazines, internet, etc. about the country, the people and needs of the area where one of these specific projects is located. Pray for this project and plan as a family to support your prayers with a sacrificial offering on 13th Sabbath.
- Discover from your pastor or church leadership where there are areas unentered by Seventh-day Adventist missions in your country or some other country. Learn all you can about this area and its people. Pray that doors for entrance to this people will be opened.
- Short terms of service are available for adults and young people in a growing number of areas in the world. The doors to service in these areas are open through the General Conference, through educational institutions and youth department. Inquire of your pastor or church leadership about the possibilities for family members to experience some mission service.
- As the Adventist message circles the globe, more and more workers are needed in foreign fields in a wide variety of professions and occupations. Consult with your pastor or church leadership, pray about and consider as a family whether some of your family members might serve the Lord in full-time mission service for ADRA.
- Pick a street in your town where there are no Adventists living and consider this your “unentered” area in which to make missionary visits, distribute literature, etc. to win individuals for Christ.
- Make a study as a family of one of the main world religions, outside Christianity, that is in your town. Discuss creative ways Adventists might reach these groups with the good news about Jesus. What about their religious beliefs might make them open or closed to such good news?
- Talk as a family about what Adventists share in common with other Christians. Discuss how it is that God has many children not yet of this fold. How can Adventists be blessed by other Christians? How can we share some of our special insights to bless them?
- Plan for mission service as a family if the opportunity arises.
- Should it be necessary to relocate as a family, pray about and consider moving to a section of the city, country or region where Seventh-day Adventists are few or non-existent so as to provide a witness there.

- As children are growing in the family, discuss the blessings and importance of missionary service either at home or abroad and the possibility of settling themselves as adults in parts of the country that need the witnessing presence of Seventh-day Adventists.

Key to Abbreviations of E G White Book Titles

CG	Child Guidance
ChS	Christian Service
CT	Counsels to parents, Teachers, and Students
6T	Testimonies, vol 6
9T	Testimonies, vol 9

These ideas are adapted from a General Conference Family Ministries booklet.

RESOURCES

- General Conference annual planbooks:

Passing on the Torch
Families Reaching Families
Families of Faith
Family Evangelism
Building Relationships for Now and Eternity

Available on disc from the BUC Family Ministries department.

- *Your family: a centre for evangelism.*
 Free to download from the Family Ministries department page under “Follow the Bible’s ideas for Family Evangelism” – www.adventist.org.uk
- BUC Family Ministries Manual, “Caring For All God’s Family”
 BUC Children’s Ministries Manual, “Tell a Child, Tell the World”. Both available from the BUC and free to download from those departments’ pages. www.adventist.org.uk
- My Place in Space – www.childrensministries.gc.adventist.org. Find under Resources.
- Kids in Discipleship information pack on the Children’s Ministries department page, www.adventist.org.uk
- General Conference Family Ministries website – <http://family.adventist.org>
- www.adventistmission.org
- www.adra.org.uk