Faith Shaper

Church Implementation Guide

www.children.adventist.org.au/faith-shaper

SHAPING LIFELONG FAITH

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Children's Ministries Faith Shaper
A Department of Children's Ministries publication

Available from:
Children's Ministries SPD
Locked Bag 2014
Wahroonga NSW 2076
Australia

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Acknowledgements: South Pacific Division department of Children's Ministries wish to express their thanks to Amanda Bews and Brendon Pratt for the writing of this guide to support the Faith Shaper booklet.

Cover Design: Rebekah Rankin

Design & Page Layout:
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Faith Shaper

Pastors, Elders & Church Board Members.

Background:

Welcome to the Faith Shaper Church Implementation guide. Faith Shaper is designed to begin a conversation in your church that addresses what it takes to create effective discipleship environments for our children and youth.

Faith Shaper is a response to a variety of research that highlights the challenge we face in growing young people in faith. Sadly we don't need to see research to know we have a problem engaging our young people in faith – if your church is like most, you could probably see in your mind the faces of young people who have disengaged from church. It's time to be intentional about shaping a better, more integrative, faith inspiring environment.

This guide is designed to be worked through with your board/leadership team. Perhaps you can work through one section each board meeting or maybe you might organize a faith-shaping focus afternoon, weekend or retreat. Whichever way you choose to use this guide remember that this is not a program to get done but a journey that shapes an ongoing environment that really does impact lives for eternity.

A key focus area in the Faith Shaping strategy is being intentional about disciple-making environments for life-long faith. It is during childhood that worldviews are shaped, values formed and most decisions for Christ are made. No one program, event, ministry or even school can do it alone. The emphasis of Faith Shaper is to join the dots between home, school and church. While spiritual growth is the Holy Spirit's work, we can create environments conducive to the Spirit's leading.

The Faith Shaper strategy is not new but rather an encompassing focus that brings together various studies on discipleship and outlines an intentional pathway. It looks at church life through the lens of children's faith development but in so doing will lift the health of the church in all areas. Faith Shaper addresses the imbalance that has developed where people think 'church' and 'school' have the responsibility for spiritual growth or that children need to be simply looked after in the crèche.

Growing out of extensive research, the South Pacific Division Children's Ministries Department and Australian Children's Ministries Directors, in collaboration with various entities, have outlined the 7

Essential Experiences that increase the likelihood of young people growing in and remaining connected to deep, active, lifelong faith.

Faith Shaper is not a program. It doesn't sit with one department or age related ministry. It is not something to complete and move on from. 'Faith Shaper' is a set of experiences that needs to colour how all ministry areas work. We are asking that everyone – church, home and school, prayerfully explore the seven experiences and collaboratively put in place a strategy that moves toward a more conducive environment for spiritual growth.

We believe that we CAN reverse the flow. Read the research, have the conversations, pray, dream and explore how your congregation or ministry can be a more effective faith shaping environment. We challenge you to join the conversation and work out your next step.

The Goal:

Our goal as a church is to partner with home and school to see God raise up generations of children and young people who love God with all their hearts, soul and strength. We hope that our children and young people will:

- Love others as a way of life (Service and Mission) Mark 10:45.
- Grow in a home environment that models active faith (Homes Empowered) Deut 6:6-9.
- Experience a loving, authentic faith community (Authentic Relationships) 1 Thess 5:11.
- Participate in healthy church community (Participation) Matthew 21:15-16.
- Be embraced by intergenerational community (Intergenerational Connections) Deut 29:10-12.
- Build and be informed by life-long memories (Noteworthy Memory Events) Joshua 4:19-22
- Love to grow closer to God through personal spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible study (God Encounters) John 10:3-5.
- Our higher calling – and God's ultimate desire – is for our students to connect, in a real way, with Him. We fight to compete for the attention of our students in a modern world that pulls at the materialistic, mind dulling, self-loving human nature in all of us. How then, can we truly nurture in our students a meaningful encounter with God? (From the 'Encounter' Bible Curriculum Overview).

The Research:

Current statistics overwhelmingly tell us that the present generation of young people are walking away from church and or their faith in early adolescent years. "50,000 young people a year are leaving the Christian faith and deciding that they have no religion." (Philip Hughes, *Christian Research Australia*)

David Goodwin in his thesis 'Lost in Transition' states: "There is no doubt that pre and early adolescence is a time when many children drop out of church. What makes the situation worse is that many children, who do stay in church during their high school years . . . are possibly only there because parents insist they attend church, or their social life is linked with the church youth group." (Goodwin, 7).

“Despite all our incredible children’s, youth and young adult programs, we have not been able to stop this mass exodus from our churches. We have not just lost one generation, we are losing several.” David Sawler, *Goodbye Generation* (USA).

“Students didn’t begin doubting in college, they simply departed by college. If you look around in your church today, two-thirds of those who are sitting among us have already left in their hearts.” Ken Ham & Britt Beamer, *Already Gone* (Aus & USA).

“If the church is haemorrhaging young people, we have to ask ourselves if it’s because we address the issue of discipleship too late. Is the spiritual education we provide for our young people neither consistent enough or rigorous enough to provide them with the means to have a strong and stable faith in a time when there are many challenges to the authenticity and relevance of our beliefs?” Jason Gardner, *Mend the Gap* (UK).

"Faith trajectories are often set in early adolescence. Sadly, most youth ministries are long on fun and fluff and short on listening and thoughtful engagement. The former produces a million paper boats; the latter produces a handful of seaworthy ships.” Kara Powell & Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith* (USA).

- A variety of denominations and parachurch groups have started addressing the challenge. You can see what they’ve come up with at www.here2stay.org.au. They’ve synthesised a wide range of research to highlight essential experiences that create healthy discipleship environments for children. This research, along with material that specifically addresses the Adventist community, informs the Faith Shaper strategy.
- We, as Adventists, face the same challenge. Most church leadership teams could quite quickly come up with a list of names of young adults who have disengaged from church and faith. We can’t just sit back and hope things will change. Faith Shaper is about being intentional and strategically moving toward shaping discipleship environments that grow lifelong faith.

How to Use This Guide:

Before The Meeting:

- Have team members read the Faith Shaper booklet. You can download it at children.adventist.org.au/faith-shaper or request copies from your Director of Children’s Ministries
- Pray for the children and youth in your church family.
- Become familiar with the research (visit here2stay.org.au) or read one of the books quoted from – see Appendix 5.
- Distribute articles on what it takes to grow children in faith. You will find some in the material for session 1 in Appendix 2 and 3 (*Pass Your Faith; Why Jerry and Not Jane*).
- Have team members answer the 35 questions (Faith Shaper Assessment Tool in Appendix 1) to get a starting point for generating conversations.
- Think about your meeting environment. You might hold the meeting in a children’s Sabbath school room to change the feel of the meeting.

During The Meeting:

- Allow approximately 40-50 mins for each session. This might sound like a lot however it could be some of the best time your church leadership team has spent evaluating long term ministry effectiveness.
- Encourage discussion and creative thinking. Create an environment where ideas can be freely expressed.
- Look for opportunities where ministries can work together.
- Use the questions as a guide however adapt them for your setting and challenges.
- Put in place clear action steps so that leaders do not walk away thinking this issue is for someone else to solve. Every leader needs to know that they play a vital part in the faith shaper strategy.
- If you are doing this process all in one weekend then maybe you will go through each experience before putting in place an action plan. The steps for an action plan that works through all seven experiences at the same time is provided in the back of this guide.
- If you are implementing the process over a series of 8 meetings you will need to take each experience and work through the planning section for that experience provided at the end of each session. Keep in mind that you do not need to follow the experiences in order – they are not sequential but all 7 are important. Perhaps you can move through the experiences in order of weakest to strongest based on your answers to the diagnostic tool used in session 1.

Remember this is a journey to be on, not a program to get done.

Following the Meeting:

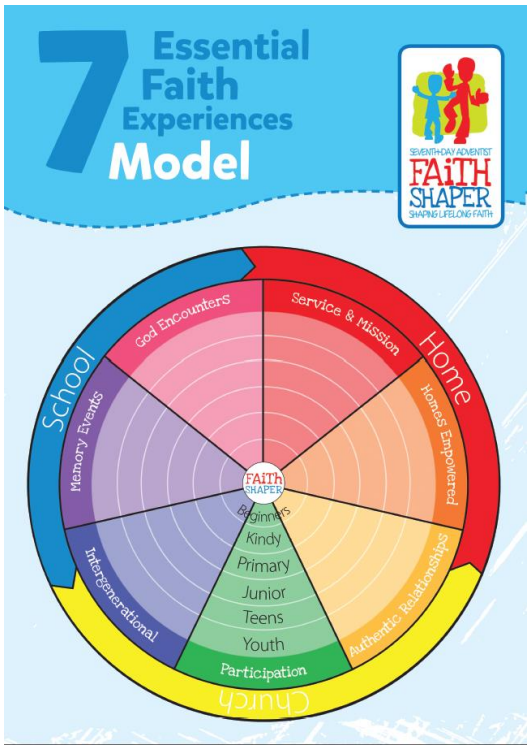
- Ensure roles are effectively understood and delegated.
- Communicate the Faith Shaper Essentials to all church members. Sermon outline notes are available on the Faith Shaper website and app.
- Regularly re-cast the vision in Church bulletins, family devotions and take home sheets.
- Ensure regular implementation and evaluation conversations continue along the journey.

This Takes Everyone:

- While this resource was developed by the Children's Ministry Department of the South Pacific Division and Australian Union, it is not simply something for your children's team to sort out. Reality is, it takes a whole church family, working with the home and where possible the school, to effectively shape faith.
- All ministries and areas of church life need to prayerfully think through what they are doing to shape more effective faith development in the home. All ministry areas need to collaboratively be part of a plan that can more effectively shape lifelong faith.
- It's about synergy and how ministries work together to develop plans that work across ministries and departments. The overall strategy will include conference departments, pastors and local church leadership teams, teachers and parents combining ideas and resources to stimulate positive faith development.

The Tool:

- Faith shaper is about intentional steps at each stage of a child's development. What is needed for a Beginner to feel involved and loved is obviously very different than what is needed for a twelve year old. Faith Shaper looks at each age group and thinks through how we are doing for that age. Leaving a stage out is like having to make a jump in the stepping stones that is simply too far.
- The experiences and stages are represented on a circle. This is a reminder that all the experiences are related and growth in one area will reflect into others. You can't effectively mentor a child in service without impacting their sense of belonging and growing an authentic relationship.
- What a child needs to know about God and how they can relate to the seven experiences at various stages is also different. Faith Shaper recognises that lifelong faith starts at birth however at any point we can engage a person in the experiences and lift the likelihood of that person growing and remaining in faith.



The Next Step for Your Church?

- Once you have identified where your church is on the Faith Shaper scale you may feel daunted. How are we possibly going to do all of this? The kids aren't complaining - won't they be fine? Can't we sort this out when they're bigger and can reason with them better? Shouldn't the teen volunteer, Pathfinder leader or school Chaplain be able to sort this out? Faith Shaper works best when we all work together on taking the next step.
- Don't be discouraged. One step toward the goal makes for a better environment for discipleship than what we have right now. Imagine moving across a pond one stepping stone at a time. This guide will help you work through what the next step is for your environment.
- Every church will have a different next step. Seek God's leading as you work through the following factors and choose simple, manageable steps that move your congregation toward increased effectiveness. Also keep in mind that every congregation has a next step. There will never be a time you can sit back and say 'we now have the perfect environment'. However there will be points along the way where you can pause, celebrate and thank God for His leading.
- Don't change everything overnight, keep moving one step at a time. In most cases you will not need to add more programs. Programs are not the answer in Faith Shaper. It's more about relationships, doing life and ministry with a different, synergised focus.
- Each congregation, regardless of its current point, can take one positive step. It is anticipated that this one step will provide a stepping stone that then leads to more steps and moves your congregation forward on a life-changing journey.
- Next steps may include:

- Adults getting to know the names of the children in your congregation.
- Making available resources for and encouraging creative home worship times.
- Moving your worship service to be more intergenerational.
- Thinking through ways children can serve in your congregation.
- There are as many ideas as there are people and each one step can be a starting point to moving in a more positive direction.

No Guarantees:

Implementing these strategies does not guarantee children will remain connected to faith however wide research highlights that these are the strategies that dramatically lift the likelihood of children growing a healthy lifelong faith. Even in an ideal environment (Heaven and Eden) God's children chose another path. Our God is a God of choice. Children raised in the same home, church and school environments can make different choices regarding their relationship with God.

Board Session 1

Introducing Faith Shaper

This session is an introduction to the Faith Shaper process. Use it as an agenda item in a board setting to introduce the process. If you are leading a Faith Shaper weekend it will provide an introductory overview.

- Add faith-shaper as an agenda item to your board/leadership team meeting
- Hand out the Faith Shaper booklet (downloadable at children.adventist.org.au/faith-shaper or from a Director of Children's Ministries).
- Download the Faith Shaper PowerPoint presentation which provides useful supporting material (children.adventist.org.au/faith-shaper).
- Have a photo available of your current children's Sabbath School. Ask which seven out of ten are we happy to lose here? Of course we don't want to lose any. What are we doing to make sure this generation does not follow the trends of previous generations?
- Explain how it's time to address the big issues of young people disconnecting from active faith. Highlight the importance to the mission of the church.
- Give an overview of the process and explain how this is an issue for all areas of church life to be prayerfully working through.
- Explain how over the next seven meetings we will be making space to work through the seven essential experiences of Faith Shaper (unless of course you are doing a weekend or day Faith Shaper focus).
- Highlight some of the research and have a time of prayer for your leadership team as they embark on the Faith Shaper journey.
- Ask your leadership team to make this a matter of urgent prayer.

One Generation from Extinction.

Did you know that a child's worldview is already shaped by the time they are seven? That means by the time our children finish Primary Sabbath School they have already formed the framework for what they believe and how they think about the world. When it comes to shaping faith, there is no such thing as just babysitting. From Beginners right through to teens the picture a young person has of God is being moulded. What happens in the home, school, Sabbath School and around this church is very important in helping to shape a life-long connection with God.

Did you know that by the time children are 12-13 years, many have already decided whether they will stay connected to the church or not. While they often leave when older it is at this point they are thinking about these things.

How you pass on your faith to the next generation is vital. This church is only ever one generation

from extinction. Whether you are a parent with extra special responsibility, a Sabbath School leader or

someone who takes the time to care about children, each adult in this church has a very important part to play in passing on faith to the next generation.

To go against secular culture, children need to be part of a church family where they really belong and are loved and supported. They need a community wherein they can explore their relationship with God and talk about it with people who care. Children need a place where they can serve, be involved and explore faith. The relationships we get early in life are really important to how we see God and the world.

For children to really know 'God is love' they must experience human love. To really understand God's forgiveness they must experience forgiveness from humans. The responsibility for making this church a place where children and young people belong and where faith is modelled belongs to all of us. We all need to show that we really care about each other and that we put other people before ourselves.

Thank you for taking the time to care about children and young people and letting them know that this church family is a place where they belong. (Read Appendix 3 and 3)

Discussion Questions:

These questions are intended to generate some discussion around the place of children in the church family along with opening up discussion on the vital role of the home. You may not need to use all of these questions however they will generate conversations that are key to setting an over-all environment that is conducive to the implementation of Faith Shaper.

- Why do you think that, if our children follow the current trend of the Christian church in Australia, 7 out of 10 will have disconnected from faith by the time they are 25?
- What factors do you think stop families eating meals together?
- How do you think your church views children? Are they a nuisance that need to be kept quiet? A group we need to entertain, a tool to attract parents, the future of the church or humans shaped after God's heart who are growing to being His disciples?
- Who do you think is responsible for the faith development of a child?
- Why do you think many parents are more interested in their child's 'success' than they are their spiritual growth?

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

Ephesians 4:15-16

Have you completed the assessment tool in Appendix 1?
Have you Read the article in Appendix 2 and 3?

Board Session 2

Service and Mission

Worship Focus:

- During your worship time discuss the feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:13-21) and how it was a child who gave what he had.The disciple Andrew did not see much when a little boy showed him he had five loaves and two fish. However for Jesus what the little boy had was enough to be used by Him to accomplish His purpose.
- Jesus turned his ordinary into extraordinary. Children can serve and with God's blessing make a huge impact.
- The Bible is full of examples of children who served:
    - Samuel served in the temple (1 Samuel 2:18).
    - The little servant girl in the story of Naaman, wasn't afraid to tell Naaman's wife about God's power (2 Kings 5:2-4).
    - Daniel was young – probably in his early teens when he decided to stand for God (Daniel 1:8).
    - Josiah the king of Judah served God when he was eight (2 Kings 22:1-2).
- Serving makes children part of the church and gives them a sense of belonging.
- When children serve it also has a great influence on other children. They realise that this church is for children and not just a place their parents bring them to.

- God has plans for the next generation and He trusts you to empower them.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for the children of your congregation, by name if possible.
- Pray for their Sabbath School teachers and the impact they make.
- Pray for God to reveal the needs in your community that families in your congregation can impact.

Key Ideas:

When parent and child/teen together perform service activities, the child/teen sees the parent's capability, faith and values in action. The cross-generational bond takes place not only in the service event, but also in the retelling of the event through the years… Most significantly, service is not merely a once a month outing…Service is the day-in and day-out lifestyle we lead that manifests the

faith in us and involves our children in the faith. Parents and families can engage in this key every day. (Anderson and Hill, 2003, 151-152).

1. Encourage children and families to build friendships with people living near them.

- In our time=money culture, consumerism destroys community. Making time to serve and share with people works against the dominant consumer culture by highlighting the value of people.
- Neighbourhood connectedness helps children be able to live their faith in a variety of settings.
- Faith grows as we serve and share with people in our sphere of influence.
- Building relationships with people living nearby gives opportunity to serve and share in natural 'lifestyle' ways.
- There are lots of ways to share God's love. However, one of the best ways is getting to know the people around us and when the time is right letting them know what a difference God has made for us. We all need to do this however it is a powerful experience for a child to see his/her family serving and sharing with another.
- Encourage children to bring their best friends to be part of the Church community.

2. Provide opportunities and resources for families to serve others together – home; neighbourhood; church; world.

- Both children and adults are more likely to have a growing, strong faith when their family serves others together (Roberto, 26)
- Home is the perfect place to instil the value of serving.
- Serving God is important for all of us to do. How you serve shows children what God is like. Letting children help you serve helps them to experience God.
- Children need to participate in the activities of our church if they are to develop a sense of belonging to that church family.
- Practices noted as particularly important for faith development are:
    - Caring for nature with the family,
    - Daily chores and routines of family life and
    - Caring with the family for persons in need (John Roberto, 2007).

3. Provide opportunities for children to respond with compassion and generosity.

"Even a child is known by his deeds, whether what he does is pure and right."

Proverbs 20:11

- Our children are aware of the brokenness in the world which surrounds them. They have hopes and fears about the future.
- Children need to be engaged in a cause. This can be local or global.
- The *Effective Christian Education Study* (Benson and Eklin, 1990) found families that effectively express faith do the following things:
    - Often talk about religious faith;

    - Often have family devotions, prayer, or Bible reading at home; and
    - Often have family projects to help other people.
- Youth in families where faith is often expressed by a parent in word and deed are three times more likely to participate in family projects to help others and twice as likely to spend time helping other people than youth from families that did not express faith (*Effective Christian Education Study*).
- Religious practices in the home virtually double the probability of a congregation's youth entering into the life and mission of Christ's church (*Effective Christian Education Study*).
- When children can serve with their families the benefits increase. You do not need to go overseas to involve children in a mission project. There are needs all around us.

4. Provide resources and opportunities for children to share their faith story.

- When any person has to give an account of the hope that is within them this causes their faith to grow deeper. This is true for children as well.
- Every person in the church, from children to the members who have been here a very long time, are called by God to be evangelists. What might be possible with your children if they were given the opportunity?

5. Provide outreach opportunities with and for children.

- Create opportunities for children to invite friends to an engaging event.
- Create environments where the big story of the Bible is given and children can investigate the claims.

Discussion Questions:

- Is a child growing up in our congregation going to observe a serving culture?
- The GraceLink Sabbath School program includes an emphasis on service. Where else in the life of our church is the value of service highlighted?
- How does our church provide opportunities and resources (e.g. invitation cards) that help children invite their friends to a church event?
- How does our church provide training in friendship evangelism and is it also provided for children?
- What would it look like in our church to mentor a child in an area of service?
- What ideas do you have to engage families in service?
- How can the ministry area you lead or serve in engage children in serving?
- Are there ministry areas that can work together to create serving environments? How might you/we be able to work with a nearby Adventist school?

Action Steps:

- Redesign existing projects for children, teens and adults into whole-family service projects.
- Helping pack/deliver food parcels (great to do as a family). Even if your church is not running a food ministry a nearby church or group will be and would probably appreciate the help. Maybe your church can build up links and supply volunteers to community organisations.

- Helping with letterboxing.
- Being part of the welcoming team e.g. handing our bulletins. Is it possible to have whole families on welcoming together?
- Helping the deacons with offering collection and other duties – once again engaging a whole family would be great.
- Being involved, as a family, in leading congregational prayer or singing
- Visiting Aged Care facilities to give a concert or do activities.
- Encourage kids to bring their friends from school to an event like a VBS.
- Inspiring families to be involved in remote or overseas mission.
- Build connections between children in 'sister churches' e.g. in sister conferences or through projects like Mission Mongolia.
- Encourage families to engage with opportunities in their communities, working with initiatives that are taking place e.g. Community Christmas lunch for those in need.
- Connect 'mentor families' to other families that have had little experience in service.
- Search for possibilities on adventsitmission.org
- Work as families with Habitat for Humanity home building.
- Helping with yard work for a senior citizen.
- Making cards and visiting children's hospital.
- Help with graffiti or rubbish clean up.
- Beginners level – reinforce the concept of sharing and giving to others through songs and activities.
- Expand current service activities to specifically involve families.
- Look for partnerships with ADRA.
- Tell the stories of people caring for others.

Our Plan:

Step 1:

- Write your ministries into the left column of this table – keep in mind not every ministry has to fill every experience however this will help identify areas for synergy and where a ministry can be refocused for greater faith shaping effectiveness.
- In column two write what already happens in that ministry area to address the experience.
- In column three identify the age group (Beginners, Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, Teens or Youth) that is being impacted by that particular initiative.

How Ministries Currently Engage in the Faith Shaping Environments		
Ministry Area	**Service & Mission**	**Life Stage Being impacted**
e.g. Personal Ministries		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30

		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Primary 6-9 □ Teens 13-15	□ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Primary 6-9 □ Teens 13-15	□ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Youth 16-30
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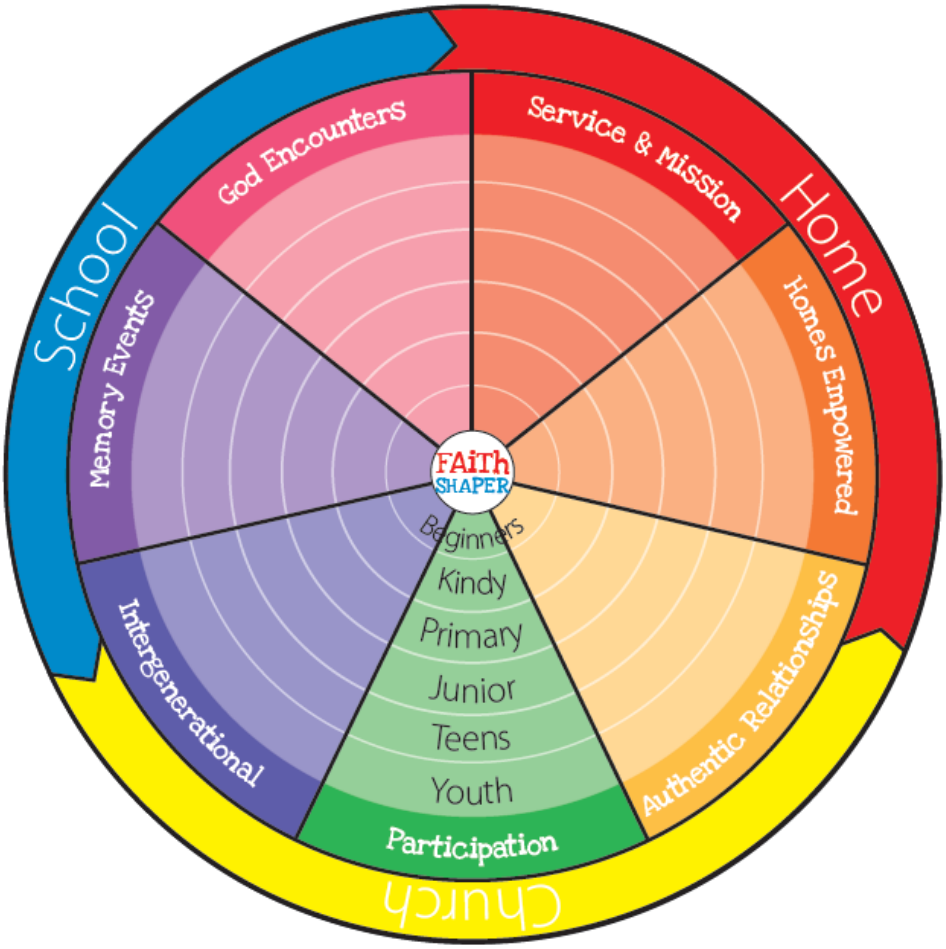
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Primary 6-9 □ Teens 13-15	□ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Primary 6-9 □ Teens 13-15	□ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Youth 16-30

Step 2:

- With reference to the Faith Shaping Model below identify which age group/s might be missing out in regard to this experience. Each age group is a stepping stone in the process.



Step 3:

- Growing out of your discussion and ideas generated, work through how you will fill in the missing stepping stones or enhance areas that may be weak. Look for synergies between ministries. Most times the answer is not a new ministry but a refocusing of the energy that is already being put in and collaboration between ministry areas.

Step 4:

- Outline your initiatives for this area of ministry and where possible, make realistic times lines and goals (grid provided).
- Don't try and solve it all overnight. Remember one positive step makes for a better environment than what you had previously.

Step 5:

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?

Step 6: (Quarterly)

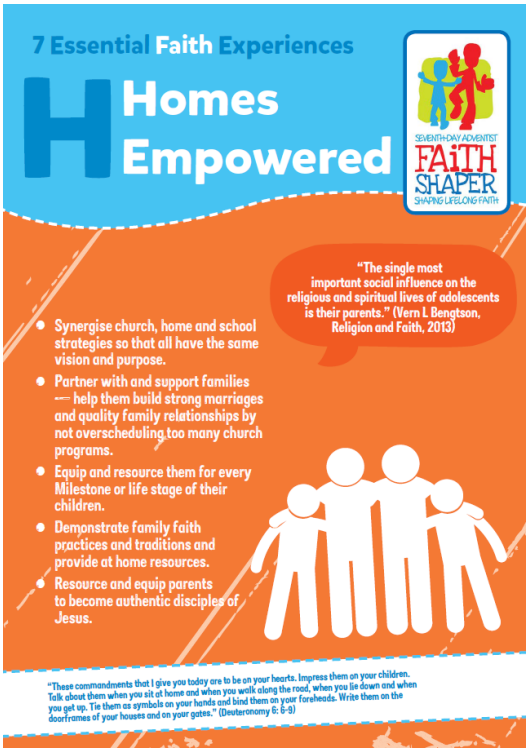
- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.

Our Service & Mission Strategy:				
Ministry Area	**Strategy/Initiative**	**Time (if applicable)**	**Goal**	**Evaluation Outcome**

Board Session 3

Homes Empowered

It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life…Parents, remember your home is a training school, in which your children are to be prepared for the home above (Ellen White, *Child Guidance,* 1).



We know that family time and shared family activities such as the daily meal, have suffered because of work demands, busy schedules and a rise in individual activities. We are sadly aware of the decline in family religious practice at home and participation in the life of the congregation. Busy schedules often push religious activities – at home or in church – off the calendar. We also know that parents increasingly feel ill prepared for the task of sharing religious traditions with their children (John Roberto, *'Best Practices in Family Faith Formation'* Lifelong Faith, Fall/Winter, 2007, 21).

Worship Focus:

- If possible, have a watering can and a potted plant.
- Pull the plant from the soil – what will happen to the plant?
- If the plant is dying then we know it needs more water right.
- So we pour on the water, what difference will that make?
- Still dying - so get a bigger watering can and pour on more water.
- Still dying – we know that plant needs nutrients add some plant food.
- Reality is that plant will die until it is back in the soil.
- In the soil the water and nutrients are vital but out of the soil have little impact.
- The watering can is 'church' and 'school'. We are doing more than ever but are we just getting bigger watering cans?
- For the most part, home is the soil.
- Some children need the church and school to also be the soil however, ideally the soil is home.
- The real action is in what can we do in our churches and schools to partner with parents and make home the primary place of spiritual growth.

In the Valuegenesis research, Dr Barry Gane found that “There is an increasing probability that young people will develop high Christian commitment and high loyalty to the Church if they have the benefits of effective homes, effective churches and effective Adventist schools."

Prayer Points:

- Wisdom for parents as the church partners with them.
- The ministries of our church as we re-think how we can enhance, resource and support the home as the primary environment for spiritual growth.
- Our Adventist schools as they partner with parents and church.

Key Ideas:

1. Synergise church, home and school strategies so that all have the same vision.

- In the formation of character no other influences count so much as the influence of the home. The teacher’s work should supplement that of the parents, but is not to take its place. In all that concerns the well-being of the child, it should be the effort of parents and teachers to cooperate (Ellen White, *Child Guidance,* p319).
- Equipping the home to be the primary place where faith is lived and nurtured should be the goal of every ministry of the church rather than simply adding family ministry to the Children’s Ministry Director’s job description. Give ‘Home’ lenses to everyone rather than creating a new ‘silo’.
- Build upon the existing church vision but be flexible and engage school and home in the process of shaping a vision for effective faith development.
- Build into the existing church calendar and think of ways to impact the home and work with the school through existing programs and processes rather than coming up with new programs.
- A mother and father are not the only adult influences our children need for healthy faith development. Our children spend more than 1300 hours at school. Obviously this is a big factor in terms of spiritual formation. Our schools provide healthy role models and environments that promote spiritual discovery and growth. A child’s faith development is significantly enhanced if another adult, who has a relationship with the child, gives the same faith message as a parent. Our schools are an ideal place for this to happen. Our schools also promote a worldview that integrates faith into all aspects of life.
- At the same time, school cannot take the place of home. It is a watering can for the plant, not the soil. Even though we see lots of amazing stories where the Holy Spirit changes lives in the school environment, in spite of difficult home situations, the ideal is to have school complementing what happens at home.

2. The home has the greatest impact on your lives; with few exceptions, if we fail to impact the home, we will never make a lasting impact on students.

“The future of the church depends on its ability to build strong homes, for strong homes will be the future of a strong church. How does your church say “Families are welcome here?” Ben Freudenburg.

- In the past parents have seemingly abdicated the spiritual growth of their children to the church. While Sabbath Schools, Adventurers and various church programs are important, once again, the ideal is for these environments to reinforce what happens at home. Our children spend about 130 hours each year in a local church program. The spiritual growth impact, while vital, is limited. Our local church leaders are being equipped for effective faith development but they cannot, for the most part, take the place of the spiritual influence primary care givers can have.
- The ministries having the greatest success at seeing young people emerge into mature Christians, rather than contented churchgoers, are those that facilitated a parent-church partnership focused on instilling specific spiritual beliefs and practices in a child's life from a very early age. (Barna Research)

3. Partner with and support families – help them build strong marriages and quality family relationships by not overscheduling too many church programs.

- Children learn how God works from observing their parent's marriage.
- Based on Deuteronomy 6:7 there are four key times all families can leverage to build the faith of their children. Adapted to our culture these times might be:
    - **Meal Time** – When you sit at home – Focused discussion as a teacher to establish values.
    - **Drive Time** – When you walk along the road – Informal dialogue as a friend to help interpret life.
    - **Bed Time** – When you lie down – Intimate conversation as a counsellor to listen to the hearts of your children.
    - **Morning Time** – When you get up – Encouraging words as a coach.

4. Equip and resource them for every Milestone or life stage of their children.

- Recognize significant life stages and the place the home, school and church can play in each of those stages.
- Milestones are significant moments in life's journey that provide the opportunity for children and their families to experience God's love, and grow in faith.

5. Demonstrate family faith practices and traditions and provide at home resources.

- It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life…Parents, remember your home is a training school, in which your children are to be prepared for the world (Ellen G White, *Child Guidance*).
- Children spend about 1900 hours at home each year (this does not include sleep). It is in the home where most children come to understand who they are and how to interpret the world.

- Home is the soil of discipleship. While we want our children to be 'successful' and often go to great lengths to help our children with their academic achievements, what matters more than anything is that our kids have an authentic relationship with God.

- In our consumeristic society, it seems the things that matter most i.e. worship, serving, connecting, growing and sharing are mortgaged at the altar of 'success'. We can be left with homes that are beautiful buildings but do not contain spiritually fertile soil. While in an imperfect world we will have situations that are not ideal, and every family has some degree of dysfunction, together we need to do what we can to return the primary place for spiritual growth back to the home. At the same time, we need to remember that even in an ideal home faith is still a choice and sometimes our children will choose directions we would rather they didn't. What we need to do together is shape environments that lift the chances of healthy decisions being made.
- In our well-intentioned efforts to reach students for Jesus Christ we have developed ministry models failing to call parents to embrace their role as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives. The church has tacitly encouraged this parental abdication by relentlessly promoting benefits and life changes that would accompany increased participation in ministry activities. As a result, the church and families are being split spiritually along too many key fault lines.
- Every home is unique due to its season in life, the ages, children or not, marital health and special circumstances. Provide tools that families can customize to their specific needs.
- Eating together, praying, bedtime rituals and prayer, family conversations; engaging in family devotions and reading the Bible. Family rituals and traditions speak volumes about what the family values, believes and promotes, and how much the family values its faith (Roberto, 26).
- The challenge for the church is to help families more consciously and meaningfully participate in those significant rituals and traditions (Anderson and Hill, 163).
- Research has been accumulating demonstrating how eating together as a family five or more times a week is strongly linked to lower incidence of bad outcomes such as teenage drug and alcohol use, and to good qualities like emotional stability, low levels of family stress, and good parent-child/teen relationships (Roberto, 27).
- For the good of families and the whole Christian community, the church must provide opportunities to equip homes as centres of faith formation at every stage of life, and this needs to be a primary goal for congregational ministry (Roberto, 27).

6. Resource and equip homes to be holistic centres of health.

- As a church we promote the importance of holistic health through the CELEBRATIONS acronym that takes into account the emotional, physical, spiritual and social health. There are a number of resources relating to celebrations health available from your conference and children.adventist.org.au to resource your homes.
- Modelling a holistic view and practice of health at home is essential for children.
    - **Emotional** – Safe homes and safe churches. Making our churches and homes an emotionally safe place for our children is an essential part of building lifelong faith**.**
    - **Physical** – Providing parents with resources and the knowledge to make their homes centres of holistic health. Children need to be physically active and eat a balanced nutritious diet well in order to be healthy.

      Children also need boundaries in order to feel safe. These boundaries need to be realistic and enforced in a fair and friendly way.

- **Spiritual** – Spiritual health is important in building lifelong faith our children need parents to not only model spiritual health but make it relevant in their everyday lives.
- **Social** – Positive social interaction with others and authentic relationships in essential to fostering spiritual and emotional health in our children. Create opportunities such as street BBQ's, family/community/school picnics and sports days for children to socialise in a safe environment.

7. Resource and equip parents to become authentic disciples of Jesus.

- A child's primary picture of God is deeply connected to the picture they have of their father. A child's understanding of how God relates to them is shaped by their observations of their parent's marriage. A child's ability to understand God's Grace is connected to the unconditional love of mum and dad.
- By normal processes of socialization, and unless other significant forces intervene, more than what parents might say they want as religion outcomes of their children, most parents most likely will end up getting religiously of their children what they themselves are (Christian Smith 57).
- Contrary to popular misguided cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misconceptions, we believe that the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents. Grandparents and other relatives, mentors, and youth workers can be very influential as well, but normally, parents are the most important in forming their children's religious and spiritual lives… the best social predictor, although not a guarantee, of what the religious and spiritual lives of youth will look like is what the religious and spiritual lives of their parents do look like. Parents and other adults most likely "will get what they are." This recognition may be empowering to parents, or alarming, or both. But it is a fact worth taking seriously in any case (Christian Smith, 261).
- Most parents, even Christian, would default to the world's definitions of happiness and success in parenting unless we consistently placed a biblical understanding of their responsibilities on front of them.
- Because most parents in our churches were never discipled by their own parents, these parents did not naturally arrive at biblical conclusions about their responsibilities.
- Parents should be viewed as indispensable partners in the religious formation of children and youth. Incorporate family-centred learning programs or intergenerational learning programs.
- The best way to get more youth involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities (Smith, 267).
- Faith must be nourished in the rich soil of God-honouring family. The church's role is to provide water. But lifelong faith requires deep, abiding roots (Brunner and Stroope, 2010).

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Discussion Questions:

- How do we support the role of parents in this congregation?
- What do we do that trains parents for their role as primary disciple makers?
- What do we do that enhances marriages?
- At our Adventist Schools a new Bible Curriculum is being implemented, *Encounter*, that is shaped on the building blocks of healthy faith development. How can Sabbath school teachers, school teachers and parents work together to get an overall picture of what is happening and the part each person plays in shaping faith?
- What milestones do we recognise as a congregation? What could we do to be more intentional about recognising milestones?
- Do we overschedule Sabbath to the point that there is little or no time for families?
- At what points do we separate families and can this be reworked to integrate families more?
- What resources do we provide for at home faith development?

Action Steps:

- Facilitate child dedications to include an emphasis on the role of the home in shaping the child.
- Put in place Marriage enrichment opportunities e.g. Date night. Marriage month.
- Take it Home Sabbaths that focus on ideas to share in the home. May include testimonies or DVD segments of ideas that work.
- Parenting seminars that help parents grow in their role as primary spiritual leader.
- Multi-generational small groups where children worship and study the Bible with adults for at least some of the time.
- Having children serve in various roles around the church, as often as possible with their family or adult.
- Reworking children's programs so that parents are more interactive in the program (maybe a section at the start of Sabbath School that parents and children do together).
- Encourage leadership teams to rethink how their ministry area supports the home as primary spiritual environment.
- Work through a strategy for how the church will work with children who are not from a Christian home or a home where we know that the parents will not be on board with positive spiritual growth.
- Resource parents with ideas/tools for family worship and discipling their children
- Equip parents in developing a relationship with God.
- Designating a regular 'together' Sabbath where Sabbath School, worship service and afternoon programs are all together and include aspects that will particularly connect with various age groups.
- Establish a prayer network to make sure each child is prayed for daily by another person in the church apart from immediate family.
- Run classes for parents on how to grow their children spiritually.
- Resource and train parents for leading effective family worship.

Our Plan:

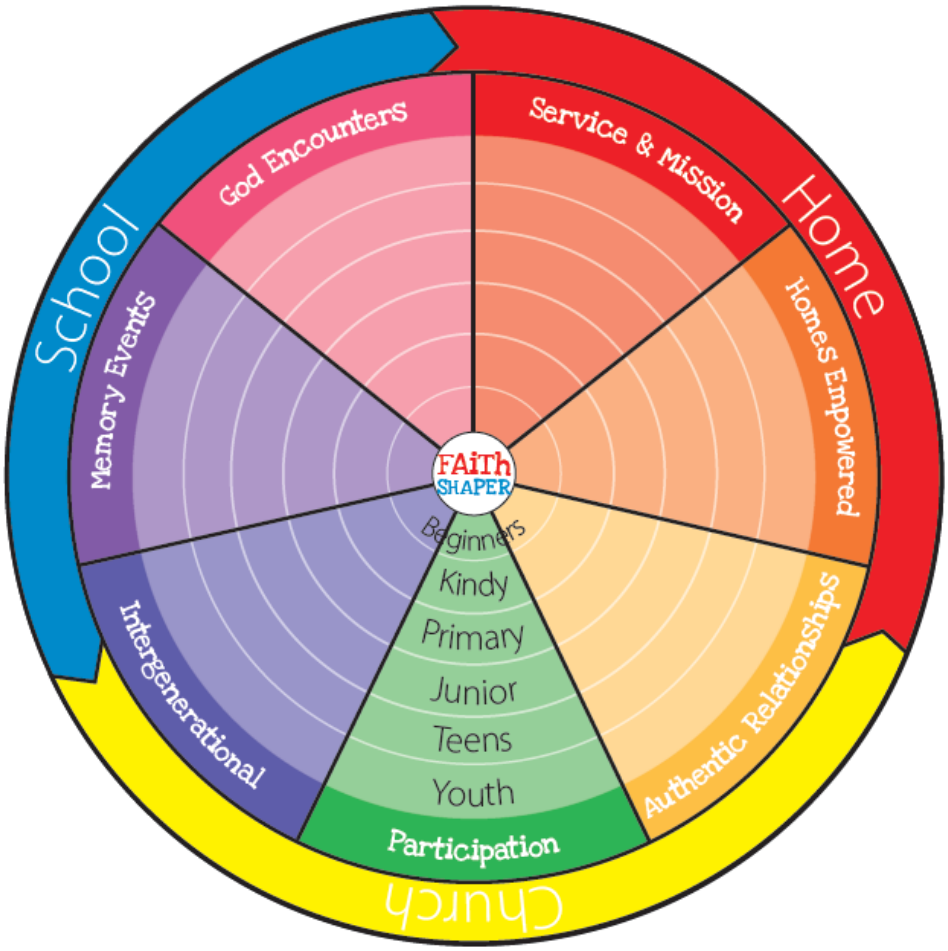
Step 1:

- Write your ministries into the left column of this table – keep in mind not every ministry has to fill every experience however this will help identify areas for synergy and where a ministry can be refocused for greater faith shaping effectiveness.
- In column two write what already happens in that ministry area to address the experience.
- In column three identify the age group (Beginners, Kindy, Primary, Junior, Teens or Youth) that is being impacted by that particular initiative.

How Ministries Currently Engage in the Faith Shaping Environments		
Ministry Area	**Homes Empowered**	**Life Stage Being impacted**
e.g. Worship committee		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30

Step 2:

- With reference to the Faith Shaping Grid below identify which age group/s might be missing out in regard to this experience. Each age group is a stepping stone in the process.



Step 3:

- From your discussion and ideas generated, work through how you will fill in the missing stepping stones or enhance areas that may be weak. Look for synergies between ministries. Most times the answer is not a new ministry but a refocusing of the energy that is already being put in and collaboration between ministry areas.

Step 4:

- Outline your initiatives for this area of ministry and where possible, make realistic times lines and goals (grid provided).
- Don't try and solve it all overnight. Remember one positive step makes for a better environment than what you had previously.

Step 5:

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?

Step 6: (Quarterly)

- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.

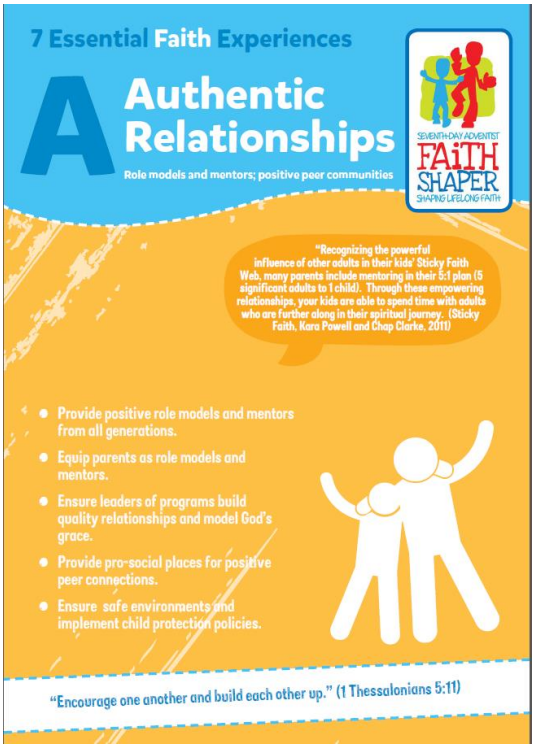
Our Homes Empowered Strategy:				
Ministry Area	**Strategy/Initiative**	**Time (if applicable)**	**Goal**	**Evaluation Outcome**

Board Session 4

Authentic Relationships

Worship Focus:

The book *Gifted Hands* (it will be available in most Adventist church libraries*) is an incredible story of how Ben Carson grew up in a wild part of town in a single parent home. He was called the dumbest kid in the fifth grade. However in telling his story he wrote about how his mum really believed in him, loved him and prayed for him. He also wrote about people in his church who looked out for him and included him. Today Ben Carson is the head of neurology at John Hopkins Hospital. I wonder where he would be right now if no one had cared?



You might never know the impact of taking the time to care about a child might have. It doesn't mean every child becomes a brain surgeon however it does lift the sense of belonging and provides a positive role model. Seeing an adult model faith is more powerful then listening to a hundred Bible stories. Children's eternal destiny is too important to leave to chance. If you don't show them what is important the world certainly will. What are you showing the children of our congregation?

* *Gifted Hands – The Ben Carson Story,* Benjamin S Carson, Zondervan 1990.

Prayer Points:

- Adults to give a positive picture of God.
- That children are safe in our church environment.
- That our church be a place where children experience healthy biblical community.

Key Ideas:

1. Provide positive role models and mentors from all generations

- When you complain about the church or gossip about other people children see that and it can chip away at their spiritual growth. However when they see you encouraging each other, praying for one another and serving one another they see how faith can work and our faith grows.
- People who take the time listening to children's questions about God and find out how they are going are especially important. Sure you might say that's the job of parents and you're right. However the church is there to help in this journey and each one of us has a responsibility for each other, especially adults for children.

- One of the major reasons why young people choose to leave the church is because their questions about life and faith have not been answered. Positive relationships with adults are vital when children are exploring strange, sometimes threatening territory.

2. Equip parents as role models and mentors.

- The particular family experiences that are most tied to greater faith maturity are the frequency with which an adolescent talked with mother and father about faith, the frequency of family devotions, and the frequency with which parents and children together were involved in efforts, formal or informal, to help other people. (Benson and Eklin, 38)
- Christian values and faith are passed on to the next generation through supportive conversations. Hearing their parents "faith stories" is one of the most important influences on the faith of children and teenagers (Roberto).

3. Ensure leaders of programs build quality relationships and model God's grace.

- Faith development is way more about relationship than it is programs.
- Children see a lot of things and their brains do a lot of thinking. Even though you may not know it, they are watching you to see if what you say is really what you think and how important God really is to you.
- For children to grow in faith they need it modelled by adults around them – that's you by the way. They need to see you trust God and serve Him.
- The way you treat each other tells children lots about how seriously you take God's commands. The way you treat children shows us them important you think they are. Children need to see people who have the fruit of the spirit, who are loving, patient, forgiving, humble and willing to serve.
- Kids need parents who will help them advance in their relationship with God. Kids need environments that promote healthy pictures of what it means to grow in faith. Parents need churches that will help them know how to be spiritual leaders and where their children can really belong to a faith community.

4. Provide pro-social places for positive peer connections.

- It is true in life that we grow to be like our friends. Therefore, the more time we spend with our friends the more we will be influenced by their values and the actions that result. While we cannot choose our children's friends we can surround them by positive environments that help each child in the choices they make about friends.
- As children grow in age the influence and importance of the peer group becomes more dominant often at the expense of parental influence. This underlines the importance of creating positive peer environments for our children.

5. Ensure children are nurtured and protected from Adverse Childhood Experiences.

- While we cannot eliminate all risk from our children's lives we can however foster and develop a church, home and school community that encourages and builds resiliency in our children. Adverse Childhood Experienced have an impact on future lifestyle diseases and holistic health.

- The ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experience) is the largest and most influential study of the relationship between childhood adversity and long term health this study researched the impact of early childhood experience on looking at three main categories of adverse childhood experience 1. Child Abuse 2.Neglect 3. Family Dysfunction. For more information on the ACE Study visit www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/ or www.acestudy.org

6. Ensure safe environments and implement child protection policies.

- Child abuse is destructive to faith development. Too many adults have stories of abuse, often within the church community, that has become a life- long barrier to faith development.
- Healthy sexuality provides a positive picture of God. Sexual abuse often destroys a child's picture of how God works.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you know the names of the children in your congregation?
- Do you think the children in your congregation sense that they are really welcome and that they really belong in the church family?
- Have you thought about what a church experience looks like from a child's perspective?
- What environments do you provide for positive peer interactions?
- Do you support parents and make their job easier?
- How well is our congregation implementing safe places policies?

Action Steps:

- Provide a place parents can interact with other parents and older parents.
- Get to know every child's name, greet them and have a conversation with them.
- Promote a whole age approach to learning with resources for each age-group included in the Church Bulletin.
- Promote tools for "God Conversations" with children including Table Talk.
- Give very simple and practical tips for how to build family times around a meal table.
- Encourage families to have at least one meal a week together.
- Minister to fathers so that the rest of the household will follow.
- Tell the stories of these conversations in the worship service.
- Emphasise talking - communication. Emphasis not just on spiritual conversations.
- Link mentor families mentoring to other families to help implement faith shaping strategies.
- Implement the safe places polices as outline by your conference safe places coordinator.
- Equip children's teachers to focus on building relationships.

"Recognizing the powerful influence of other adults in their kids 'Stick Faith Web', many parents include mentoring in their 5:1 plan (5 significant adults 1 child). Through these empowering relationships your kids are able to spend time with adults who are further along in their spiritual journey." (*Sticky Faith,* Kara Powell and Chap Clarks, 2011)

Our Plan:

Step 1:

- Write your ministries into the left column of this table – keep in mind not every ministry has to fill every experience however this will help identify areas for synergy and where a ministry can be refocused for greater faith shaping effectiveness.
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How Ministries Currently Engage in the Faith Shaping Environments		
Ministry Area	**Authentic Relationships**	**Life Stage Being impacted**
e.g. Sabbath School		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
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		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
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		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
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Step 2:

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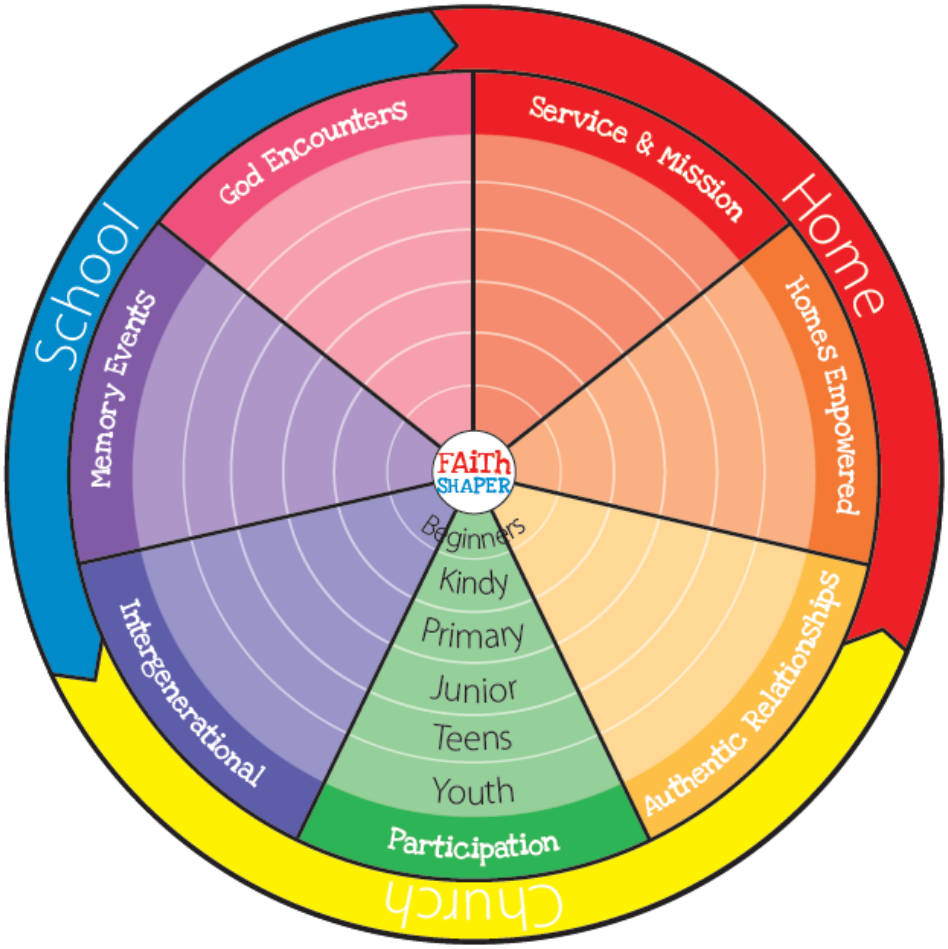

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Step 5:

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?

Step 6: (Quarterly)

- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.

Our Authentic Relationships Strategy:				
Ministry Area	**Strategy/Initiative**	**Time (if applicable)**	**Goal**	**Evaluation Outcome**

Session 5
Participation

Worship:

- If possible have a model human body (most school science labs have them). Using Paul's body analogy work through Ephesians 4.
- Discuss which parts of the body we can do without and what would happen if we didn't have that part.
- Discuss at what stage children become part of the body.
- Each of us has a part to play and if we neglect that part or do not give it our best shot we are not just robbing each other, but robbing God and the impact of our church body. Ephesians 4:11-12 says that "It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

- Every part of the body matters. What happens when a part of your body decides not to do its job? The rest of the body suffers. What if your liver decided to start living for itself saying: 'I'm tired of what I do around here – I don't want to serve in this body any more – I want a year off to be fed – I've got to do what's best for me.' What would happen? Your body would die. Today lots of churches are dying because of people who are unwilling, for various reasons, to serve. They sit on the side-lines while the body suffers.
- God created us to be good at different things, and no one is good at everything. This is how God wanted it to be so we would all need to work together if things are to work best. God made each of us to care about different things, be good at different things and be excited about different things so together we can serve in a body that shows the world what can happen when we work together. God has designed each of us to do something special in the body of Christ 'the church'.
- Too many young people leave the churches they never belonged to.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for wisdom and patience for those in our congregation who mentor our children.
- Pray that this church can be an environment where all people can feel a sense of belonging.

- Thank God for His gifts.

Key Ideas:

1. Be intentional about allowing children to be a part of the church community.

- A sense of belonging is more significant than belief and behaviour in terms of remaining connected to faith. Children who belong grow in belief and adopt the behaviour of the faith community. Children need to be seen as active and valued members.

2. Welcome children into intergenerational worship.

- Intergenerational worship sends a message the 'church' is a community for all ages.
- Works against the consumeristic 'target market' concept that divides families.
- Helps children understand that community is about 'one-another' over felt needs.

3. Ensure that they participate, use their gifts and feel that they belong.

- Help children discover how God has uniquely wired them up for what He wants.
- Create spaces for them to be involved.

4. Give children equal opportunity to contribute and have a voice.

- Children are not simply to be seen as jugs to be filled with information but rather as whole people of God who can actively contribute to the mission of God.
- Allow children to express what they think would need to happen for the church community to more effectively reflect God's love.
- Invite children to share ideas of how they can be part of the church's mission.

5. Guide and mentor them to participate in meaningful ways.

- In a church culture dominated by professionalism children miss out. While we do want to worship with excellence there is a balance where children can be involved as part of the church family. Help children to succeed.
- When children see other children being involved they know that this church community is a place for their age group too.

Discussion Questions:

- Do we provide opportunities for children to explore their gifts?
- Where do children serve in our congregation? What could we do to mentor children in more areas of service?
- Where can children serve with their families in our congregation?
- What steps could we take to move our worship service to be more intergenerational?
- In what environments do we listen to the ideas children have for achieving the mission of our church?

Action Steps:

- Facilitate Children's 'work experience' where children serve with adults in various areas of church life and report back to Sabbath School teachers about the experience.

- Actively engage children in welcoming, collecting offerings, prayers and music to show that this church is a community for children as well.
- Be intentional about creating an intergenerational worship time where children experience age appropriate worship but also see their church families engaged in worship.

Our Plan:

Step 1:

- Write your ministries into the left column of this table – keep in mind not every ministry has to fill every experience however this will help identify areas for synergy and where a ministry can be refocused for greater faith shaping effectiveness.
- In column two write what already happens in that ministry area to address the experience.
- In column three identify the age group (Beginners, Kindy, Primary, Junior, Teens or Youth) that is being impacted by that particular initiative.

How Ministries Currently Engage in the Faith Shaping Environments		
Ministry Area	**Participation**	**Life Stage Being impacted**
e.g. Worship		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
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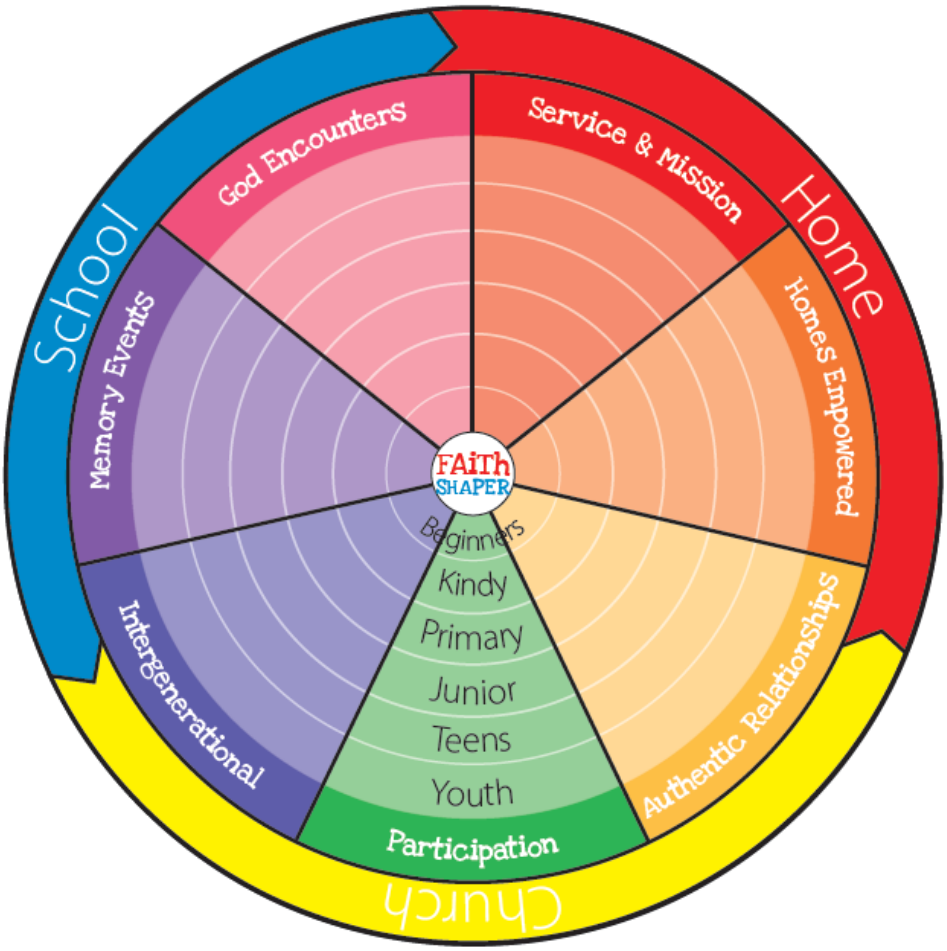
Step 2:

- With reference to the Faith Shaping Grid identify which age group/s might be missing out in regard to this experience. Each age group is a stepping stone in the process.



Step 3:

- From your discussion and ideas generated work through how you will fill in the missing stepping stones or enhance areas that may be weak. Look for synergies between ministries. Most times the answer is not a new ministry but a refocusing of the energy that is already being put in and collaboration between ministry areas.

Step 4:

- Outline your initiatives for this area of ministry and where possible, make realistic times lines and goals (grid provided).
- Don't try and solve it all overnight. Remember one positive step makes for a better environment than what you had previously.

Step 5:

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?

Step 6: (Quarterly)

- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.

Our Participation Strategy:				
Ministry Area	**Strategy/Initiative**	**Time (if applicable)**	**Goal**	**Evaluation Outcome**

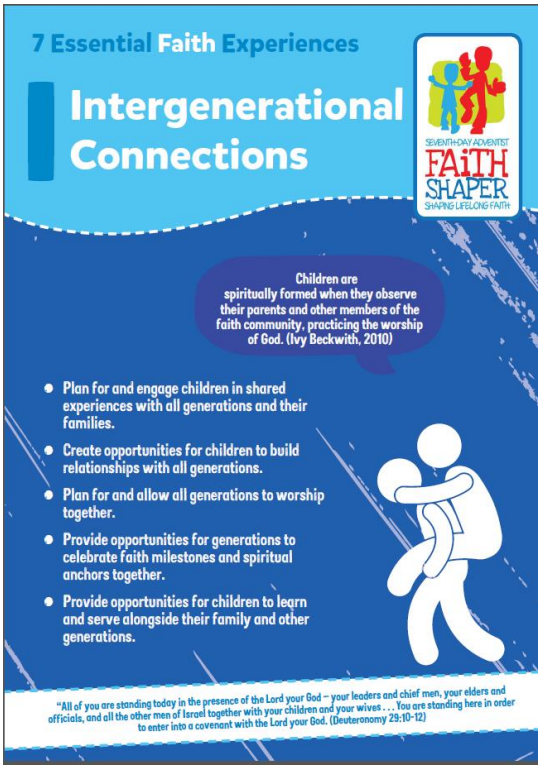
Board Session 6

Intergenerational Connections

"We will not hide them from our children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. He . . . commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born and they in turn would tell their children. "Psalm 78:1-4

Worship Focus:

- Have each board member reflect on people who have been significant in shaping their faith. Maybe a Sabbath School leader, Pathfinder counsellor, school teacher or adult mentor. Let them tell the stories and then discuss who might be those people for the children in our church.



Prayer Points:

- Pray that we be a body.
- Pray for our adults and the influence they have on the next generation.

Key Ideas:

"All of you are standing today in the presence of the LORD your God—your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, together with your children and your wives, and the foreigners living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath…" Deuteronomy 29:10-12

1. Plan for and engage children in shared experiences with all generations and their families.

- We have isolated the generations within our churches from each other, and from the wisdom of those who have gone before them.
- There is an urgent need to develop new ideas for ministry that create community, allow for mentoring, and generate fellowship across both the real and the fabricated generational lines.
- The church should seek to help the child firmly sense that he is loved by the people at church. The child sees the church as a group of people who love God and love one another.
- "Unfortunately, in many churches today, almost all activities for children are with their peers and the few adults who lead the programs. When they graduate . . .they go off with their peers

to find a spirituality that suits them, leaving behind the congregation to which they never belonged" (May, Posterski, Stonehouse, Cannell, *Children Matter*).

2. Create opportunities for children to build relationships with all generations.

- To value intergenerational worship we must first value community.
- Children need adults who reinforce the messages from home.

3. Plan for and allow all generations to worship together.

- Faith doesn't grow in a vacuum. It happens through doing life together.
- Begin with a faith community which invites children to belong and which demonstrates how Christians behave. In such a community children grow to understand and embrace its beliefs and adopt the Christ-like behaviours they have seen demonstrated - Lausanne Paper – Children and Evangelism.

4. Provide opportunities for generations to celebrate faith milestones and spiritual anchors together.

- Spiritual anchors become reference points in a fast changing world.
- Celebrating the milestones in community increases the sense of belonging.

5. Provide opportunities for children to learn and serve alongside their family and other generations.

- Consumerism has driven a shift in emphasis from the needs of the community to the primacy of the individual. We need to move back to the 'one another's' of community.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think many church communities are keen to split out the age groups to their own programs? Advantages? Disadvantages?
- When do all the generations in our church family get together?
- What environments in your church allow older people to connect with children in a safe way?
- What milestones does your church celebrate and how can you do this in an intergenerational way?
- Do you have opportunities in church life where families can serve together?

Action Steps:

- Honour people reaching significant birthdays. Include opportunities to hear from them as to the difference following Jesus has made and continues make in their lives.
- Equip older members to be mentors, carers in the church (keep in mind Safe Place guidelines).
- Connect through all age teaching. Children given the task to ask an older person about _____ (the lesson for today).
- Have interactive moments within the service – children go to adults; adults go to parents.
- Provide activity bags for toddlers.
- Adult support for single parent families.

- Rethink the value of the cognitive, word laden 45 minute sermon (Keep sermon length shorter: 20-30mins.
- Rethink seating arrangements.
- Rethink order and content of service.
- Involve children in serving in the worship service.
- Greeters, Announcements, In praise team, In worship band, Scripture reading, Prayer, Shaking hands at the end of the worship service.
- Plan memorable experiences that help them understand an abstract concept – object lessons.
- Tell stories to illustrate points.
- At the beginning of the sermon ask the children to write or illustrate their definition for a key word.
- Have families involved in a part of the service.
- Use sermon handouts and children's bulletins.
- Be visual – use objects and video clips to hold attention and connect with different learning styles.
- Include sounds, smells and movement to engage.
- Use illustrations about children and their world.
- Ask children to share a brief message in the sermon.
- Family preparation helps. Prepare children for the concepts of the sermon.

Our Plan:

Step 1:

- Write your ministries into the left column of this table – keep in mind not every ministry has to fill every experience however this will help identify areas for synergy and where a ministry can be refocused for greater faith shaping effectiveness.
- In column two write what already happens in that ministry area to address the experience.
- In column three identify the age group (Beginners, Kindy, Primary, Junior, Teens or Youth) that is being impacted by that particular initiative.

How Ministries Currently Engage in the Faith Shaping Environments		
Ministry Area	**Intergenerational Connections**	**Life Stage Being impacted**
e.g. Deacons		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
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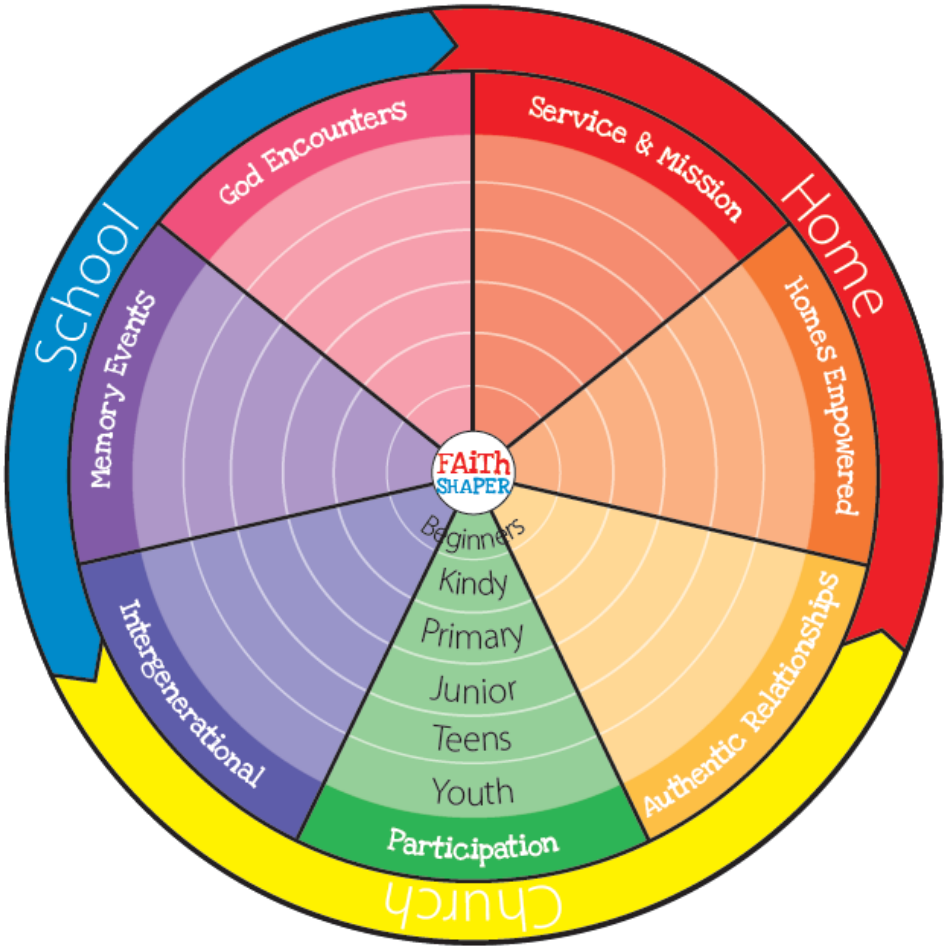

Step 3:

- From your discussion and ideas generated work through how you will fill in the missing stepping stones or enhance areas that may be weak. Look for synergies between ministries. Most times the answer is not a new ministry but a refocusing of the energy that is already being put in and collaboration between ministry areas.

Step 4:

- Outline your initiatives for this area of ministry and where possible, make realistic times lines and goals (grid provided).
- Don't try and solve it all overnight. Remember one positive step makes for a better environment than what you had previously.

Step 5:

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?

Step 6: (Quarterly)

- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.

Our intergenerational Connections Strategy:				
Ministry Area	**Strategy/Initiative**	**Time (if applicable)**	**Goal**	**Evaluation Outcome**

Board Session 7

Noteworthy Memory Events

Worship Focus:

- Have a tray of various objects including a toy, kitchen utensil and various house hold items.
- Initially have the tray covered in a cloth.
- Remove the cloth and let your leadership team look at the objects for ten seconds.
- Check who could remember what.
- Talk about the importance of being able to remember.
- What makes some events more memorable than others?
- Share memories that your leadership team have from the church they grew up in. If they did not grow up as part of a church family what other significant memories do they have?
- What memories will our children have of our church? When our children think back, what memories will stand out?

Prayer Points:

- That we remember God.
- That we be a church family that creates positive memories.

Key Ideas:

1. Resource and equip homes to create special daily, weekly and yearly rituals and traditions.

- Traditions and spiritual memories are very important in growing faith. A tradition might be what we do at family worship time, at meal times, at bedtime or on family nights. Some spiritual memories might be how we make Sabbath special or celebrate Christmas. Families and church families need to think about traditions and spiritual memories as this is a very important way to pass on our faith from one generation to the next.
- Unfortunately many homes have lost the art of creating family traditions. The church can model, mentor and resource families to create traditions. A resource like *'Table Talk'* is great for creating meal time traditions (available from an Adventist Book Centre or SPD children's ministries web page).
- Family devotions as a child is the best predictor of adult attendance (Robert Wuthnow, 1996).

2. **Be intentional about creating memory events for children and families at church such as Milestone celebrations, kids rallies, concerts and family camps.**
    - A peak experience is a vital complement to the regular activities within the faith community. The experience may be a camp, rally, concert or service event. In these contexts, the faith of the child is being inspired by the 'wow' factor of a bigger or special event.
    - Many cultures are rich in significant events to acknowledge the rights of passage of the developing young person within their community. Within Western culture our children move through various life stages, each of which brings its opportunities and challenges. How do we, as a community of faith, best help a young person to navigate through each of these?
    - Anticipate, honour and celebrate with children 'transitions' and 'rites of passage'.
3. **Support children as they participate in Conference wide memory events such as Camps.**
    - Children get to meet other children with a vibrant faith.
    - Children get the feeling of being part of something big which validates their faith choices.
4. **Provide events that allow children to respond to God's call on their lives.**
    - Many Christians can remember a time and place where they may have felt particularly close to Jesus – at an event, or a particular episode in their life. It is for us to create the spaces where our children can encounter Jesus.
    - Memory events give impetus to making faith affirming decisions and setting positive directions.
5. **Provide events that allow children to be inspired by people with vibrant faith.**
    - Memory events often include vibrant speakers who affirm and give new expressions to a child's/young person's faith experience.
    - Memory events include adults who are delivering the same world view as that presented in the home. This validates what is happening at home.

Discussion Questions:

- How well does our congregation engage with the wider church's facilitation of memory events e.g. camps and rallies?
- How do we resource homes to create their own special daily, weekly and yearly traditions?
- How do we celebrate the milestones of a child/young person's life?
- Do we create significant events that form lifelong memories and ask for a response to God's call?

Action Steps:

- Facilitate camps that intentionally connect children to the wonders of nature.
- Promote and arrange access to conference wide events including rallies and camps.
- Plan for follow up opportunities after the peak experience.
- Invite guest speakers/ teams to visit your church and specifically use the guest/s with the children including having children interview them.

- Celebrate special services e.g. seasons of the year.
- Commemorate special people and events through history so that children can identify with the heroes of the faith.
- Acknowledge significant life events including, first day of school, new school, high school, driver's licence.
- Encouraging young people to share their story and what God has and is doing in and through them.

Our Plan:

Step 1:

- Write your ministries into the left column of this table – keep in mind not every ministry has to fill every experience however this will help identify areas for synergy and where a ministry can be refocused for greater faith shaping effectiveness.
- In column two write what already happens in that ministry area to address the experience.
- In column three identify the age group (Beginners, Kindy, Primary, Junior, Teens or Youth) that is being impacted by that particular initiative.

How Ministries Currently Engage in the Faith Shaping Environments		
Ministry Area	**Noteworthy Memory Events**	**Life Stage Being impacted**
e.g. Youth Ministries		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
		□ Beginner 0-2 □ Kindergarten 3-5 □ Primary 6-9 □ Juniors 10-12 □ Teens 13-15 □ Youth 16-30
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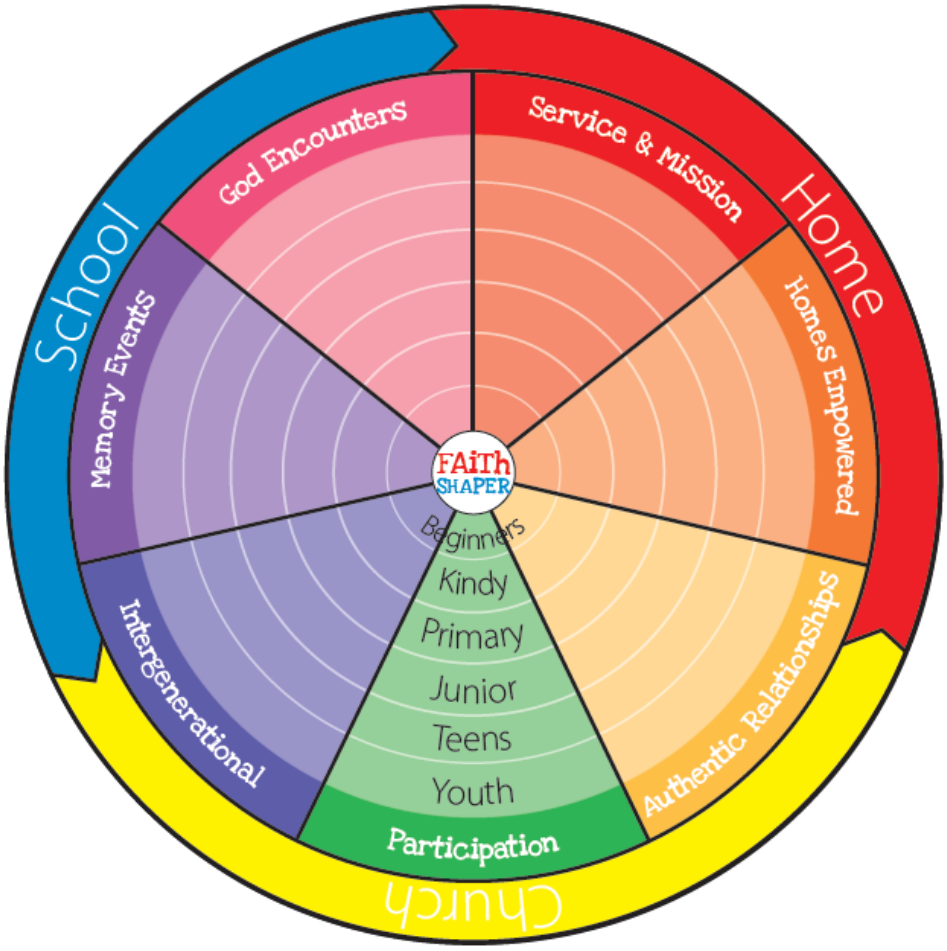
Step 2:

- With reference to the Faith Shaping Grid identify which age group/s might be missing out in regard to this experience. Each age group is a stepping stone in the process.



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Step 5:

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?

Step 6: (Quarterly)

- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.

Our Noteworthy Memory Events Strategy:				
Ministry Area	**Strategy/Initiative**	**Time (if applicable)**	**Goal**	**Evaluation Outcome**

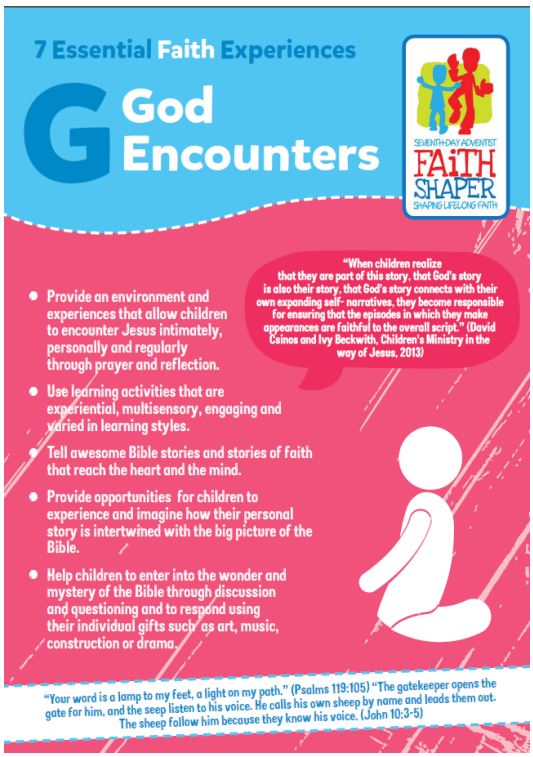
Board Session 8

God Encounters

"At every opportunity let the story of Jesus' love be repeated to the children"
(Ellen White, *Child Guidance,* p.552)

Worship Focus:

- You are wired up in a unique way for connection with God. When we have an idea of how we are wired we can choose habits that are our natural fit and perhaps other habits that we know will stretch us.
- The main pathways are:
    - **Intellectual** – connect through learning.
    - **Relational** – connect through people and hearing stories.
    - **Serving** – connect through being involved and using their gifts.
    - **Worship** – connect through engaging in worship experiences.
    - **Contemplative** – connect through solitude and quietness.
    - **Creation** – connect through observing God's creating power.



- Most people connect with God best through at least one or two of these main pathways and there is usually at least one pathway that is very unnatural for us.
- Have team members briefly describe how they connect with God.

Prayer Points:

- The role we play as mentors in our congregation.
- The connection with God we model to our children.

Key Ideas:

1. Provide an environment and experiences that allow children to encounter Jesus intimately, personally and regularly through prayer and reflection.

- In an entertainment driven, visually stimulated, "I'm bored" generation there is a tendency to fill our program time with lots of activity, noise and busyness so as to maintain attention and hopefully communicate something of value. While we need to be aware of the 'times and the seasons' and use all we can to be effective communicators, there is a danger that we fill our spaces so full there is no time for our children to "be still and know that I am God."
- Encourage children to respond and connect to God in their unique way.

- Help children understand that God wants to build a relationship with them that is unique to them.
- Help children explore their spiritual pathways and establish their rhythm of heart building habits that will include reflective time, engagement in the Bible and private worship. Help children explore journaling and other devotional practices – guide them as they 'train in Godliness'.
- Guide children to experience God's power in the natural world. This will come naturally to some children and not so much others.
- Prayer provides a vital, growing connection to God. Help children develop the practice of prayer.
- Children need help from adults in shaping their devotional lives. It starts with parents and other adults reading, talking with and praying for children. However, as they get older they can be involved more and more until they have shaped their own devotional life.

2. Use learning activities that are experiential, multisensory, engaging and varied in learning styles.

- Be creative in sharing the Bible story and think about how it can be experienced in creative ways.
- Take into account that we have different learning styles so think though how you can engage children with different styles.
- There are challenges in striving to do this in the context of managing behaviour and large group sizes. But let's not lose the vision as leaders in helping our children to explore and experience Bible stories.

3. Tell awesome Bible stories and stories of faith that reach the heart and the mind.

- Despite strong interest in religion and even active participation in vibrant churches, millions of students in our ministries were unable to articulate even the most basic tenets of Christian faith (2005 report from sociologist Christian Smith).
- Young people are emerging from our children's ministries and youth programs with the belief that religion is all about doing better and becoming happier; for the most part they perceive God as a distant and benign Creator whose purpose is largely to help us feel better about ourselves.
- Despite all the investments and supposed advances in age-organized ministries over the past thirty years, churched children and youth are growing up less likely than ever before to have a biblical perspective on life.
- During our childhood lifelong habits are being formed. What heart building habits are our children being shaped in?

4. Provide opportunities for children to experience and imagine how their personal story is intertwined with the big picture of the Bible.

- Every part of the Bible – each event, book, character, command, prophecy and passage – must be understood in the context of one storyline. In many cases the approach to faith formation has been built around a series of disconnected Bible stories and memory verses.

Children need to know the big story of the Bible. As they enter this story it is important that they discover not only the content but also that they are a part of this story – God's story. It is our privilege to help children find their place in God's big story.

- As we 'earth' each story in its place, time and space we are giving validity to the story and helping children to see that God's story is the true big story of our world.
- For New Testament Jews, parents took very seriously the need for their children to memorise Scripture. This was also helped in the temple where children were taught to love scripture. By the time a child was twelve they had memorised Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The leaders thought it was very important that children knew the story of how God had worked in the lives of His children. Sadly along the way some of the focus was lost and people knew lots of scripture but did not think through what it meant for their lives. Jesus had a lot to say about this and how it is important not just to know the Bible but let it change our hearts.
- It's still very important today that we know how God has worked in our history and how He wants to work in and through us right now. This is a responsibility for parents, Sabbath School leaders and everyone who has influence on children – that is all of us by the way. If this church does not take this responsibility seriously who will?

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." Psalm 119:105

5. Help children to enter into the wonder and mystery of the Bible through discussion and questioning and to respond using their individual gifts such as art, music construction or drama.

"From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15

- Ask deep thinking questions that help children understand and apply the Bible.
- Enable children to respond to the Bible creatively. This allows children to put the story in to a new context which produces heart change.

Discussion Questions:

- How are we helping children develop a personal relationship with God? What models are we providing?
- How do children get to hear, experience and respond to the big story of the Bible in our congregation?
- When and how do children get to hear about how we connect with God?
- How do we resource parents to guide their children in developing heart building habits?

Action Steps:

- Provide opportunities at the end of a teaching session for children to 'reflect and respond' to what they have learned.
- Provide opportunities for children to retell the story though art, music and drama.

- Provide ‘quiet places’/ ‘safe spaces’.
- Ask questions and respond to answers
- Creating Space – often we step in too quickly with a response, answer or question.
- Develop a church culture where questions of all sorts are encouraged and encountered.
- Circle Time – encourage children to share a ‘good thing’ and a ‘bad thing’ from their week. Then pray about it around the circle.
- Model different types of ‘prayer’ for children to develop a repertoire of prayers to use in their spiritual journey- “Thinking Prayers”; “Asking Prayers”; “Thanking Prayers”
- Establish a “Prayer Wall” in the children’s area and encourage them to write on it. Blackboard Wall…Have children finish the sentence “I wish God would….”; “Why doesn’t God….”
- Great opportunities arise ‘as we go along’ – so on daylong hikes, walks often allow for incidental encounter opportunities.
- Have adults sharing with children their encounters with Jesus – telling the stories.
- Explore what it is to encounter God in the normal, mundane everyday moments.
- Create spaces for children to experience silence and the awe of God.
- A timeline (including Biblical characters and events as well as important events in the World) on a wall in the Church may help children to understand their part of the ‘journey’. Each child putting their name on the timeline is powerful.
- Teaching strategies – Whenever you look at a story, put it on a dot on the timeline. Link stories.
- Parallel the characters of the Bible and their stories with everyday life. For example, the way Job dealt with ‘trials and troubles’.

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Ministry Area	**God Encounters**	**Life Stage Being impacted**
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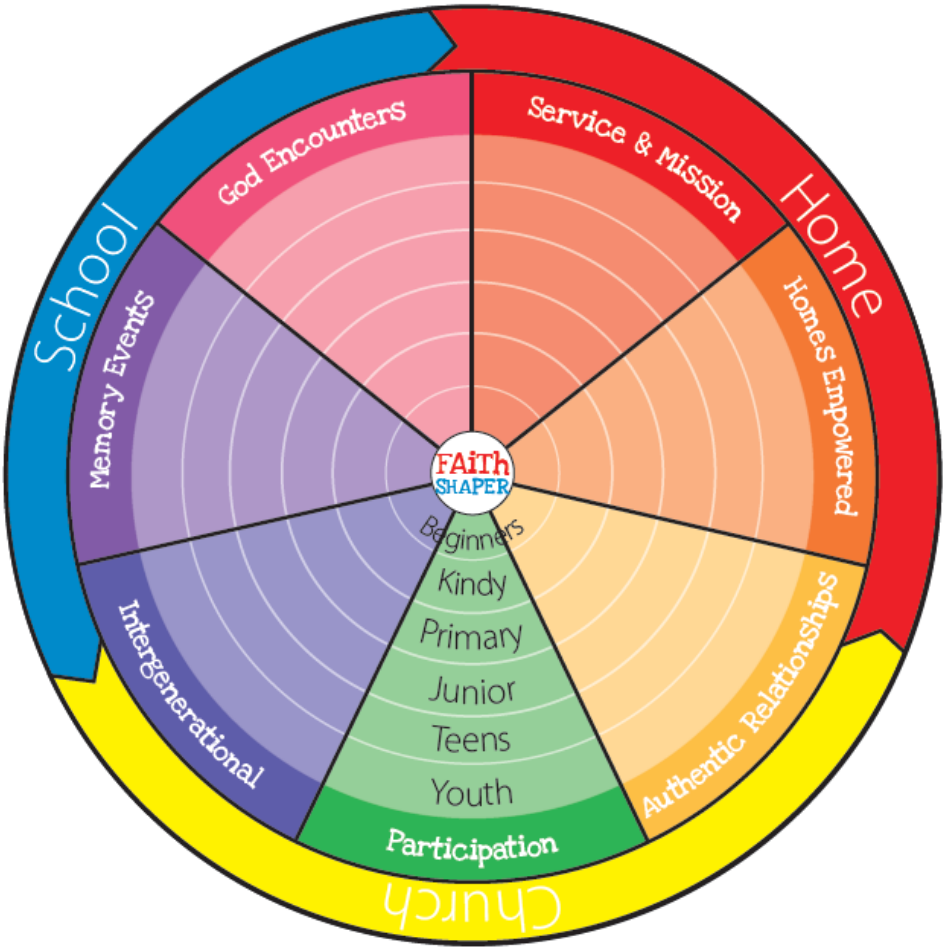

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Step 4:

- Outline your initiatives for this area of ministry and where possible, make realistic times lines and goals (grid provided).
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Step 5:

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?

Step 6: (Quarterly)

- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.

Our God Encounters Strategy:				
Ministry Area	**Strategy/Initiative**	**Time (if applicable)**	**Goal**	**Evaluation Outcome**

Developing Your Faith Shaping Plan

Step 1: Construct the current matrix (form attached or do this exercise on a whiteboard or data-projector)

- Write in your ministry areas on the left side column.
- Under each essential experience write in note form how a particular ministry facilitates that experience in the life of the church - Not every ministry will cover all areas.
- This will give you a reasonable idea of what is currently happening.
- It will highlight what experiences currently get attention and which experiences currently miss out and may need extra attention.
- With this grid and with reference to the scores you gave yourself in session 1 identify which areas are your weakest and will need extra attention.

Strongest to Weakest Faith Experiences:

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____

4. _____

   _____

5. _____

   _____

6. _____

   _____

7. _____

   _____

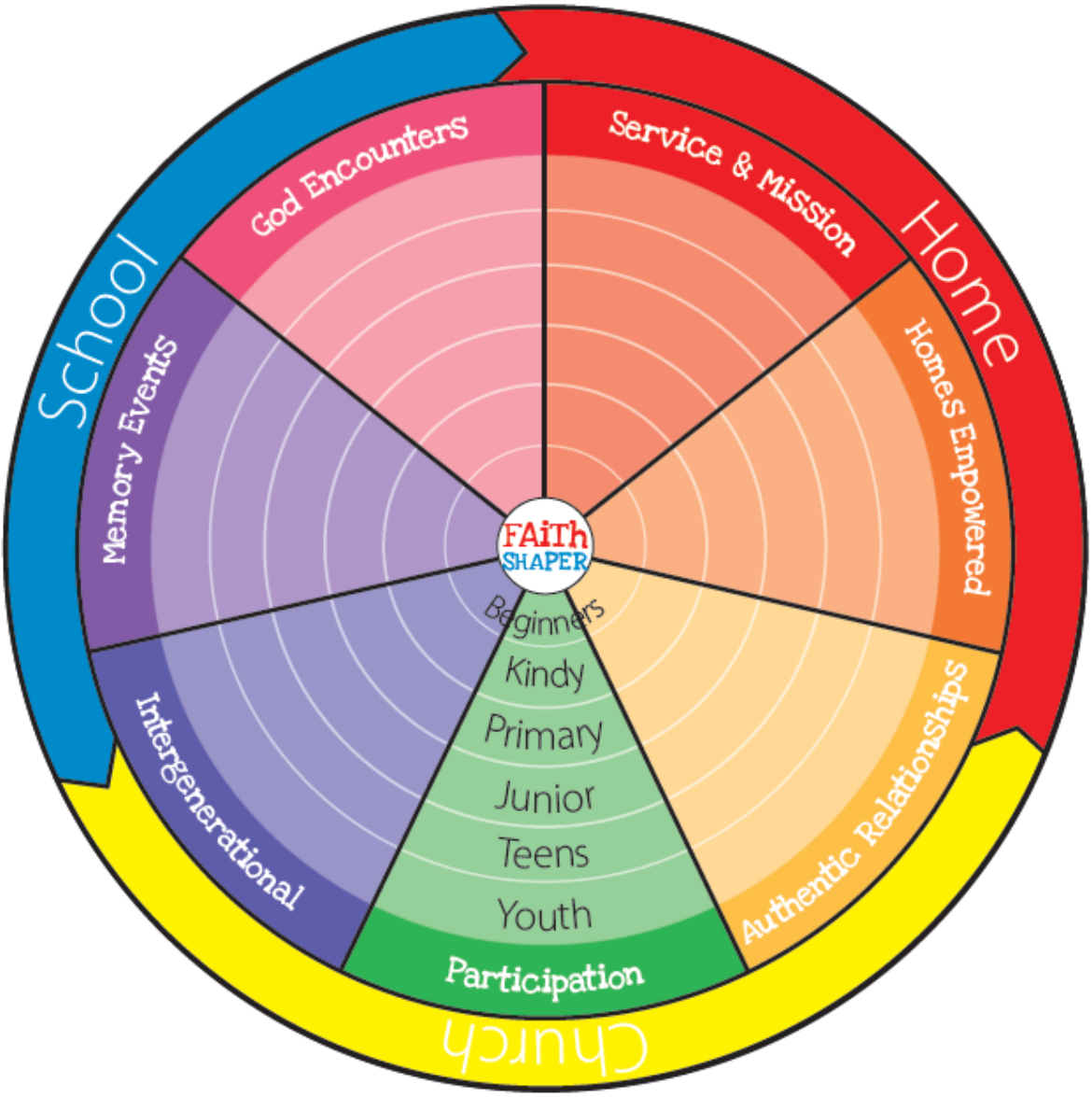
8. _____

   _____

How Ministries Currently Engage in the Faith Shaping Environments:							
Ministry Area	Service & Mission	Homes Empowered	Authentic Relationships	Participation	Intergenerational Connections	Noteworthy Memory Events	God Encounters

Step 2:

Transfer your answers from the grid in Step 1 but now with reference to age groups. e.g. where do the service and mission experiences identified in Step 1lie in relation to age groups. This will give you an idea of what stepping stones might be missing for a particular essential experience.



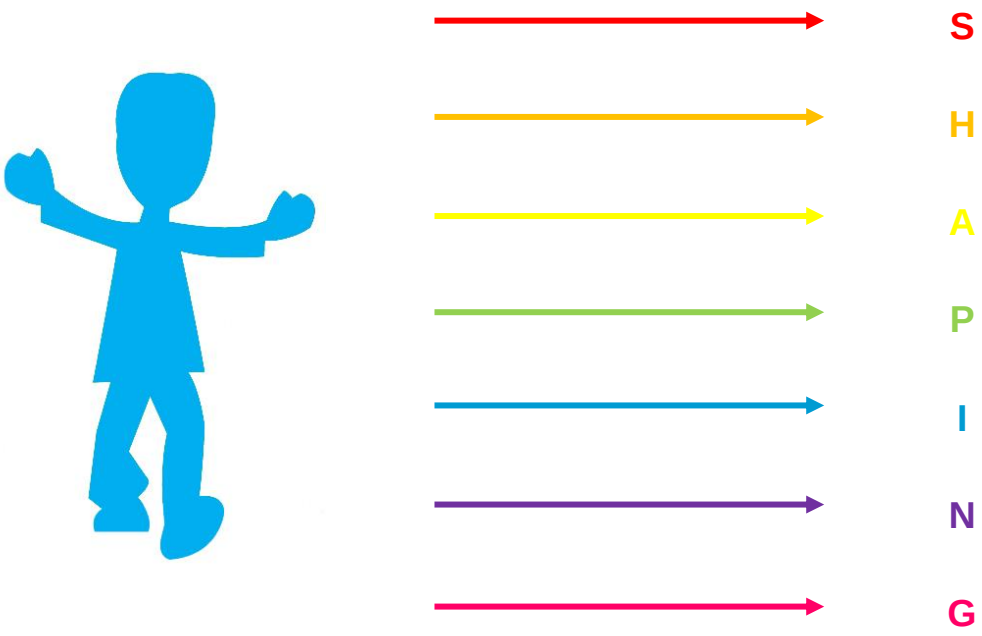
Step 3:

Use the information gained in Steps 1 and 2 to guide what programs, processes will be reworked to enhance Faith Shaper experiences.

Remember that the answer is not found in more programs. More church activities can actually negate faith development. We need to pray and think through what we already do and refocus what we have with faith development in mind. In some cases we might need to add a program however for the most part it's about putting in place ideas that encourage people in their connection with God.

Exercise:

On a large white board draw a stick man on the far left side. Then draw five lines going across the board labelled with the seven essential experiences. If this child grew up in your church how would he/she progress in the seven experiences?



From the above exercise, where are the gaps?

Take a look at what you currently do as a church family. How can the time and energy you already spend be redirected into the faith essentials that you are particularly focusing on at this point?
Ideas:

_____

_____

_____

_____

How can you go about having the leaders of your ministries work together in focusing on the essential? What opportunities for symbiosis exist between ministry areas?
For example, your youth might serve the children in a way that enhances community, youth participation and an opportunity for children to invite friends. Your Pathfinder club might develop serving opportunities that the whole church can help with along with providing another opportunity to get friends involved. The opportunities are endless when you get ministries to talk through how they can help each other in the seven essential experiences.

Ideas:_____

_____

_____

What can your church family do to shape lifelong faith?

Dream ~ Explore ~ Discover

What does God want to do in and through the congregation you serve.

Step 5: The Communication Question

- How will we communicate these initiatives with the church? Outline a communication strategy for this experience and how it will be worked on?
- Sermon outlines for each experience are available on the website: www.children.adventist.org.au/faith-shaper
- What might need to be in your bulletin to communicate Faith Shaper concepts?
- What will be on your church prayer list to highlight the importance of Faith –Shaper to church life?
- What sort of displays, static and electronic might be useful as a faith shaper reminder?

Step 6: Evaluation (at least quarterly)

- Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives and readjust as necessary.
- How is this ministry developing the faith shaping experience/s?
- Do any ministries need to be tweaked or even replaced?
- Are there any ministries that do not develop any faith shaping experiences?
- Are there any faith shaper experiences that no primary ministry develops?

Appendix 1

Faith Shaper - Assessment Tool

This short tool is designed to provide a starting pointing for your discussions. It combines the opinions of your leadership team into one measurement that will be useful in establishing where your leadership team currently sees the church in terms of Faith Shaping effectiveness.

- Answer the following statements as they apply to your church:

  5 = This is exactly us
  4 = Very much describes us
  3 = Often
  2 = To some extent
  1 = Hardly
  0 = Not at all

- When your leadership team have each added their total's average them to determine a Home Grown score for your congregation.

Faith Shaper – Assessment:

1.	Families are encouraged and resourced to build relationships and be involved in their local community.	0 1 2 3 4 5
2.	Our church programming encourages families to spend time together.	0 1 2 3 4 5
3.	Adult church members take an interest in the spiritual growth of our children and are willing mentors.	0 1 2 3 4 5
4.	Our church is intentional about involving children and young people and see them as a vital part of our church community.	0 1 2 3 4 5
5.	Our church creates environments for generations to interact.	0 1 2 3 4 5
6.	Our church provides resources to help families establish daily, weekly and yearly family rituals and traditions.	0 1 2 3 4 5
7.	Our church provides environments and experiences which allow children to encounter Jesus intimately, personally and regularly through prayer and reflection.	0 1 2 3 4 5
8.	Opportunities and resources are provided for families to serve together in our church and the wider community.	0 1 2 3 4 5

9.	We are supportive in building strong marriages and families.	0 1 2 3 4 5
10.	Our church offers support and advice for mentoring children and youth.	0 1 2 3 4 5
11.	Our worship service and/or other programs are intergenerational and children are encouraged to be a part of the church community.	0 1 2 3 4 5
12.	Close relationships are built across the generations.	0 1 2 3 4 5
13.	We intentionally create memory events for children and families at our church such as rallies, concerts and family camps	0 1 2 3 4 5
14.	We are intentional about engaging children in the Bible using a variety of strategies in order to engage different learning styles.	0 1 2 3 4 5
15.	The children in our church are encouraged to be compassionate and generous.	0 1 2 3 4 5
16.	We are equipped and resourced for each milestone and life stage as we raise our children.	0 1 2 3 4 5
17.	The leaders in our church model God's grace in their relationships.	0 1 2 3 4 5
18.	Children are encouraged to use their gifts and participate in church life.	0 1 2 3 4 5
19.	Children are encouraged to be active in the life of the church.	0 1 2 3 4 5
20.	Children are encouraged and resourced to connect with God and follow his leading in their lives.	0 1 2 3 4 5
21.	Bible stories are presented in a relevant and meaningful way so as to reach the hearts and minds of our children.	0 1 2 3 4 5
22.	Our children are willing and able to share their faith story.	0 1 2 3 4 5
23.	Resources are promoted, demonstrated and available that encourage parents as they shape faith in the home.	0 1 2 3 4 5
24.	Social occasions are scheduled to build positive peer connections.	0 1 2 3 4 5
25.	Our children are able to share their thoughts and contribute to church life.	0 1 2 3 4 5

26.	Our church celebrates faith milestones together (Baby dedication, Child Commitment Ceremony).	0 1 2 3 4 5
27.	Events are planned which allow children and their families to be inspired by people with a vibrant faith - eg week of prayer and special worship programs.	0 1 2 3 4 5
28.	Children can explain what it means to follow Jesus.	0 1 2 3 4 5
29.	Child oriented outreach opportunities are available for children to invite friends to.	0 1 2 3 4 5
30.	Our family is growing in a relationship with Jesus because we are supported by our church.	0 1 2 3 4 5
31.	Our church fully implements the Safe Places policy and has a Safe Place coordinator	0 1 2 3 4 5
32.	Our children are guided and mentored to participate in church life in meaningful ways.	0 1 2 3 4 5
33.	The children in our church serve alongside their families and other adults.	0 1 2 3 4 5
34.	We support our children and young people as they participate in Conference and Union wide programmes such as camps and rallies.	0 1 2 3 4 5
35.	Our children are given the opportunity to experience the Bible creatively through a variety of artistic expressions.	0 1 2 3 4 5

Scoring the Faith Shaper – Assessment:

Enter your scores in the Table below for each of the five growth areas. Add down the columns and record your total in the second last row. Then average out the scores of your team and record them in the bottom row.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
8	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.
22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.
29.	30.	31.	32.	33.	34.	35.
S	**H**	**A**	**P**	**I**	**N**	**G**
Our Total						
Team Average						

Interpreting your Faith Shaper – Assessment Scores:

For each faith S H A P I N G area use the scale below as a guide to interpret your faith shaper scores:

0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25
Just Beginning	**Needs More Intentionality**	**On the way**	**Happening**	**Very Well Developed**

Remember these scores are simply a guide for starting a discussion within your leadership team. Look at, celebrate and strengthen the areas where your church is currently succeeding and carefully determine the weaker areas so your church an further develop them in order to make Faith Shaper more effective within your church.

Appendix 2

Pass On Your Faith

(Julie Weslake - Reprinted from GraceLink Newsletter – Quarter 2, 2006).

Children are waiting for us to connect them to Jesus and help them form a loving serving relationship with Him. God has entrusted us with this awesome task. He planned that this would happen in an intergenerational way - that one generation would pass their faith on to the next generation. As generations work together it has been found that children need:

Friendship and Community:

Faith does not develop in a vacuum. Understanding faith, exploring faith and questioning faith are things to be done with others – people older than us, the same age as us and younger than us. We need to make sure that "church becomes a significant community of faith" (John Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith*?). Children must feel that they belong and are surrounded by people who genuinely care for them and offer them friendship and support.
To really know 'God is love', children must experience human love. Human forgiveness is a prerequisite to really understanding divine forgiveness (Glen Cupit, *Less Observed Sources of Spirituality in Children.*).

Authentic Spiritual Role Models:

Children need to see faith modelled by the adults around them. They need to see people who trust God, who give their lives in service to Him, who have highs and lows in their faith journey and who model grace. "Modelling is powerful teaching for children – more powerful for faith development than listening to a hundred Bible stories or watching a month's worth of videos." (Ivy Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry*.)
Children need mentors who will walk their faith journey with them – people who will encourage them, teach them to apply Biblical principles and stories to their own lives and show them to make good spiritual decisions.

Involvement in Ministry and Service Activities:

For faith to develop children need to serve and be allowed to participate in the activities and rituals of the church. They need opportunities to put faith into action through ministering in worship or Sabbath School and in serving others. David McClintock found that the "families who had specifically had a service focus at home had kept all their children in the church and were all active Christians in their community."
Our teaching needs to include activities where children are involved and can experience the stories of the Bible, through the use of all their senses – imaginative play and physical activity. Teaching needs to involve them by asking questions of how the Bible story makes them feel, what the story means to them and how they will change and grow because of it.

Traditions and Spiritual Memories:

Having traditions in the home and church helps children feel that they belong to something bigger than themselves and gives them a sense of belonging. A strong faith, stability and

identity are established through the routine and regular spiritual events that you have with children. Traditions and spiritual memories may be times of family worship, meal times, family nights, bedtime prayers and traditions around Sabbath, worship, birthdays, Easter, or Christmas.

Heart Habits of Bible Study and Prayer:

Ellen G. White writes that “children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences and strong to retain the lessons learnt” (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*). Childhood is the time when lifelong habits are being formed. They need more than having the Bible read to them and prayers prayed for them. They need guidelines on how to study the Bible and how to pray and then support to help them have their own regular time of devotion. Pass on how you have managed to build a personal relationship with God and encourage children to make their own commitment to a lifelong, growing relationship.

Appendix 3

Why Jerry and Not Jane?

(Summarised from research by David McClintock – Director of Education TPUM).

If you could enhance the passing on of your faith to your children, would you?

A qualitative Adventist study conducted in Australia explored the experience of faith transmission across generations. It noted conditions that appeared to lead to successful faith transmission and conditions that may lead to the rejection of personal and corporate faith. There appeared to be ten areas where the respondents' faith transmission could be enhanced.

1. **Strong family faith traditions and good relationships** within the family provoked positive memories and were great vehicles of ensuring maximum faith transmission. One person, who was no longer a Christian, reflected on the very positive memories he still retained from the Friday night "sing around the piano" and the special family time that Sabbath and family worships meant. The importance of developing positive family relationships with listening and understanding rather than an autocratic parenting model were also helpful.
2. **Warm, supportive families, schools and churches** were also helpful to nurture our children. As one respondent said, "The time I was struggling with my faith, when I most needed to talk issues through, my family and pastor appeared to withdraw." From a parent's perspective of the tension with that process, a parent stated their child's withdrawal from corporate Adventist affiliation being "like a death in the family". In reflection on church schools it was the relationships with teachers that were remembered, rather than the academic content of classes. Again with churches, it was the caring, supportive pastor and church family that won out – not the worship style or sermon content.
3. **Families, schools and churches need to avoid the exclusivism** that is often associated with Adventism. Acknowledge there are genuine Christians, who are not Adventists, otherwise we run the risk of our youth throwing the baby out with the bathwater and ditching everything. In fact one person who was working with a Baptist tradesman, who was a sincere Christian, stated, "if Dad was wrong about only Adventists being Christians, then I figured he was wrong about Adventism and so I threw that out as well."
4. **We need to avoid confusing Church, faith and God as synonymous.** Many of the divergent children had confused salvation by church with salvation in Christ. This blurring then led to their dramatic shift in their faith paradigm. For most of the younger generation in the study, "faith" referred to their personal relationship with God, and corporate faith was simply how it was expressed. However for the parents in the study – a generation on – "faith" was used interchangeably for both personal and corporate faith.
5. **Meaningful devotional life** should be modelled at home, encouraged by teachers, and become an aspect of our church life. It would be valuable for our pastors to take seminars and present ideas on different personal devotional strategies that people could use. The most powerful reflections of some respondents was coming out from their bedrooms in the morning

and seeing their parents – either mother or father – doing their own Bible reading in the kitchen or lounge room.

6. **A very significant factor in adolescent faith development** and the retention of our children/youth is **significant faith mentors** in the church who genuinely take an interest in them. This could include the hospitable hosts who invite the lonely university students' home for Sabbath lunch, to the people who quietly take some adolescents under their wing and live their Christianity. The people who take the church youth out on a Sunday for a water-ski, encourage the musically inclined to become involved in the worship band or take an interest in their Sabbath/Sunday School and social activities perform a very valuable role for the faith transmission of our children and youth.
7. **Service opportunities** are an important aspect of enhancing faith. Memory events such as STORMCO, Soup Kitchens, Fly-n-builds and other ideas, fulfil a really important faith building role. In fact the families who had specifically had a service focus at home had kept all their children in the church and were all active Christians in their community.
8. **Open, supportive communication** within the family, the school and the church were important as well as nurturing effective decision making skills appropriate to their personal development. Parents and teachers who took the time to listen and dialogue had far better chance of passing on their faith than the dogmatic, autocratic person. It appeared that unless parents took the "risk" in a safe family environment to allow their children appropriate choice, then the children would exercise their new found freedom without restraint once removed from the home environment.
9. **Social and intellectual nurture** were very important. Some people are more intellectually wired and need to be given the freedom to question and have legitimate discussion on their concerns and issues. If ignored or simply told, "That is the answer, accept it!" then they ultimately moved away from corporate faith and sometimes personal faith. Others are more stimulated by social interaction and they need home, church and the school to be supportive and nurturing. If these social needs were not met and they were uninvolved, rejected or left out, then they too would move away from corporate faith and possibly personal faith. This means though, that parents, school and church need to be aware of the individual needs and try and match those needs as best we can.
10. Finally it would appear that we need to be much more **sensitive to personality style and personal** development to respond appropriately. Thus it would be valuable for the church to run work-shops for parents on personality styles and the different ways to react to the different styles. Often as parents we confuse treating our children exactly the same with the ideal of being consistent. Consistency will be attained when we, like Christ, love individually and unconditionally but treat each person as an individual rather than as part of an assembly line.

Thus our families, schools and churches need to demonstrate God's love, acceptance and willingness to listen. We need to be inclusive and value individuality rather than feel threatened by it. We need to use Gardner's multiple intelligences research so that we tap into the various ways that people naturally learn. We must be honest and encourage people to communicate openly. There is scope for recognising effective faith mentors and service opportunities and maximise these. Ultimately, faith

could be likened to a toothbrush, everyone needs one, but it works best if you have your own. Our goal is to permeate our children and youth with the God-factor, for Deuteronomy 6:4-9) to become a completely natural way of life.

The factors noted in the above two articles, and in other research projects, are summarised in the 7 Essential Experiences of Faith Shaper.

Appendix 4

Faith Shaper and Natural Church Development:

Perhaps your church is working through NCD and your board discussion around strategy focuses on the eight church health factors. Faith Shaper is not something new or something to be done instead of NCD. Faith Shaper works best in a healthy church and will enhance NCD factors.

1. **Empowering Leadership -** Is the ministry of the leaders focusing on equipping other Christians to serve?
    - Working through the essential experiences raised in Faith Shaper will mean empowering all ministry leaders to play there part in this process and ideally this would then model collaboration for future ministry implementation.
2. **Gift Oriented Ministry -** Are the tasks in the church distributed according to the criterion of the spiritual gifts of individual Christians?
    - Increasing participation, along with gift awareness, among children, youth and families will follow through to create a healthier environment overall in terms of participation.
3. **Passionate Spirituality -** Is the spiritual life of the members characterized by prayer and enthusiasm?
    - The focus on God Encounters, including the need to disciple parents, will reflect into the overall environment of passionate spirituality.
4. **Functional Structures -** Are the forms, regulations and institutions of the church designed according to the criterion of what is the most useful for the development of the church?
    - The conversations on synergy that Faith Shaper generates, especially in regard to synergising church, home and school will lead to increased functionality.
5. **Inspiring Worship Services -** Is attending the worship service an inspiring experience for church members?
    - While intergenerational worship has its challenges the intentionality it takes to bring the whole community into worship together will directly impact the Inspiring worship factor.
6. **Holistic Small Groups - Are small groups integrated into the life of the church in a holistic way?**
    - By working through what it means to have family focused small groups; groups that serve along with environments that are child focused small groups will move to be more holistic.
7. **Need Oriented Evangelism -** Are the forms and contents of the evangelistic activities related to the needs of those we are trying to impact?
    - Faith shaper includes the need for adults to model and involve children in sharing faith. It is centred on relationships, including those in the community. Working through Faith Shaper will lift the evangelistic temperature of the church.
8. **Loving Relationships -** Are the relationships of the members of our congregation characterized by a high degree of love and affection?

- Faith Shaper is all about authentic relationships and genuine community. You will not be able to make Faith Shaper work without a significant lift in these factors.
- The faith shaper process gives impetus to move forward on the NCD healthy church factors. A church that is effectively shaping faith will be a healthy, vibrant community.

Faith Shaper and the Biotic Principles:

The Faith-Shaper journey requires intentionality and synergy. The Faith Shaper process uses the NCD biotic principles.

1. **Interdependence -** How do changes in one area impact other areas both positive and negative?
    - All areas will need to move toward a positive, interdependent, faith shaping environment.
2. **Multiplication -** Are ministries planned in such a way that multiplication is achieved rather than only addition?
3. **Energy Transformation -** How can the church use its combined energy in the best way to move forward?
    - How can the energy already put into children be best synergized for maximum faith-shaping outcomes.
4. **Multi-usage -** How can energy put into the life of the church be used in multiple ways for the greatest impact?
    - For example the energy put into Pathfinders can achieve spiritual growth for our teenagers along with being a fantastic family outreach.
5. **Symbiosis -** How well do our ministry areas work for the benefit of one-another?
    - Faith Shaper requires church, home and school to all be on board. The ministries within a congregation need to all work through how they work together to achieve lifelong faith development.
6. **Functionality -** Is the plan producing fruit for the kingdom, or is it missing its purpose?
    - Regular evaluation, pray and rethinking will be needed to ensure Faith Shaper is a process and not simply the next program.

Appendix 5
Resources/Bibliography:

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CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION

SHAPING LIFELONG FAITH