



*A Quick
Start*
GUIDE

FAMILY MINISTRIES

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of Seventh-day Adventists

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elcome to an exciting year of a ministry that will take us all to Heaven. You have been selected for a responsibility that will require a **steadfast personal faith; a commitment to model what you say; a sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; and an ability to look at the big picture without losing focus of the foreground.** There has been much dialogue about the approach of the millennium and now that it is here,, we find that families are more in need of help than ever before! We in Family Ministries believe that families will know that the kingdom of God is within them because their homes reflect the loveliness of Heaven.

Does this sound like an awesome task? Well, it is! First of all, you must realize that **Family Ministry** is not just a *program, a performance*; it is a **ministry, the act of serving**. This is an opportunity to effect healing with your family first, then the families of your church, and finally **all** families with whom your church body comes in contact. This is **NOT** your chance to stand up in front of the church and preach to other about what they *should* do—this is your opportunity to witness what changes have happened in your life with your relationships. If you haven't experienced anything, please consider what changes you will allow the Lord to work for you and then you will have a testimony to share! If you have multiple church responsibilities, please consider that this **ONE** office will take up a large amount of time—in prioritizing, planning, prayer, and people—involvement. You will need time to realize how your church regards its families; what your church families need; what you as **Family Ministries Coordinator** and your Advisory Committee are able to do; and how to utilize your available resources. While you are doing this, remember you must be temperate with your personal priorities with yourself and your family. You need to also realize that training, particularly the training for the Family Ministries Curriculum is a mandated part of being a **Family Ministries Coordinator**.

If all of this has not made you apprehensive or intimidated or just plain **SCARED**, then read on—here's how we'll do it...



Where Do We Begin

As we consider **Family Ministry**, it is important to remember that we all begin at the foot of the cross. When we kneel before our Creator and realize that He hangs on Calvary's cross as our Savior, we realize how valuable we are to Him. We also realize that nothing we offer in ministry can compensate for His marvelous gift. Therefore, we seek to glorify His name by sharing what He has done for us. Christ has promised, "But, I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." John 12:32 NIV. **Family Ministry** is not to prove how talented, creative or what a great star we are, but **WHOSE** we are. Through His power we have "become polished after the similitude of a palace." Psalms 144:12.

With our realization of **WHOSE** we are, then we become aware of our brothers and sisters—those in our home; those in our church family; and those in our community. That realization causes us to know we must hear and appreciate and respect their feelings—we must allow them to speak for themselves. We will accept what they say their needs are, and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit seek to meet those needs through our ministry.

"Sincerity and uprightness will not atone for a lack of kindness and courtesy." (Prophets & Kings, 137) *"A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity."* (Test. Vol. 6, pg. 84) *"If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one."* (Gospel Workers, p. 122)—emphasis supplied

Since our Creator has given all of us the gifts of creativity and imagination, we will use these gifts to plan our ministry so that it can have a healing touch in the lives of those we wish to reach. This will present a challenge—we must be reminded that we have to respect the feelings of others and provide a ministry that meets **THEIR** needs—not what we want their needs to be. In order to facilitate this, you will do surveys, interviews, **LISTEN**, and plan. Our gifts of creativity and imagination are challenged to provide our concept of meeting others' needs. We must always remember that it's not what we *think* people need, but what they *state* as their needs that we address.

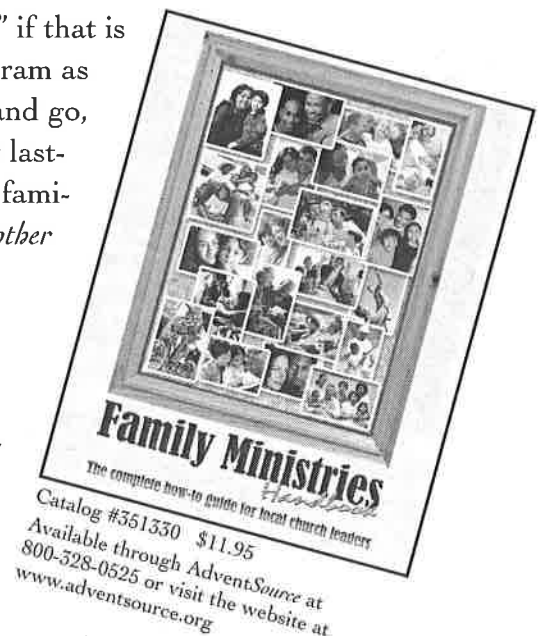
Along with plans for training for **Family Ministries Coordinators**, there is a plan for assisting churches to move to another level of service to their

families and communities. This ministry is called *Exemplary Family Ministries*. Here is a description of what you can do, along with your Pastor, to help your church become an **Exemplary** church.

Exemplary Family Ministry

Family Ministry has often been seen as a program that is used as a periodic offering in the lineup of church days and special events. It will never live up to its designation as a "ministry" if that is all that it ever becomes. The dictionary defines program as "a public presentation or performance." Programs come and go, are applauded for the moment, but seldom have any lasting or redemptive affect for the local church and its families and the respective communities. *Ministry, on the other hand, is defined as the act of serving.* Only the ministries which are Holy Spirit-sustained, and are integrated into the church plan with a focus on its families and their systemic needs can truly be redemptive. Exemplary Family Ministries responds to community families' needs with disinterested benevolence, evangelizes families while providing healing to their emotional and spiritual brokenness, and shuts the back door through effective nurturing and relational ministries to each family system. When this God-created stewardship responsibility is realized, all church mission goals and objectives will be accomplished.

The following document reveals standards and practices that a church with an Exemplary Family Ministry designation will have activated. Even though these behaviors and practices are standardized, each church will reflect its personality, operating style and culture in the way the plan is applied. These standards and practices are to be considered building blocks anchoring each church's Family Ministry. The designation "Exemplary" will be granted when these are integrated into the church's ministry plan. The effectiveness that will follow will speak to the diligence of that application through integrated ministry. Change may take place across time, and God will give the results. The designation is recognition and affirmation of the church ministry concept and follow-through.



Training and Preparation

The Pastor and the Local Church Family Ministry Coordinator will be certified, or close to completing certification, through the North American Division Family Ministry Curriculum Training and Certification Program.

During the North American Division Ministries Convention in 1998, the Family Ministries Curriculum was introduced so that Family Ministries at the local church level could be consistent and responsive to the needs of the local church community. Local Family Ministries coordinators would have the benefit of training that would provide them with a level of expertise to provide some training for their church and community.



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Planning and Administration

The Church Family Ministry Coordinator will counsel with the pastor concerning the Family Ministry plan and will be a member/advisor of the church board on family ministry issues. The Family Ministry Committee/Council

will be active in the projection and ongoing planning for the variegated church families, of which they will be representative. The church will provide resources to assist its leaders develop the gifts of Family Ministry given by the Holy Spirit.

The need for the Family Ministry Coordinator to be a member/advisor on the church board allows a church to truly become *family-friendly*. Our churches have a lot to learn that true ministry to families begins when families arrive on our church parking lots! They should not have a doubt that **family units** are an active part of our churches. Church activities are often at such a level that families are separated from the moment they enter the church door, and then they re-group when they get into the car to go home.

The Sabbath is often filled with meetings and other activities, even potlucks, that do not offer families the opportunity to share in the delights of the Sabbath as a family unit. The Sabbath should be made so interesting to our families that its weekly return will be hailed with joy. In no better way can parents exalt and honor the Sabbath than by devising means to impart proper instruction to their families and interesting them in spiritual things, giving them correct views of the character of God and what He requires of us in order to perfect Christian characters and attain to eternal life. Parents, make the Sabbath a delight, that your children may look forward to it and have a welcome in their hearts for it. {CG 536.2}

It is also important to remember that **family** does not only mean *mother, father, and 2 and one-half children*, but can also mean *single adults, grandparents with their grandchildren, single parents, divorcees, and those who have lost a spouse through death*. That will mean that ministry must be offered to all of these people who are a part of the church and community.

Needs Assessment

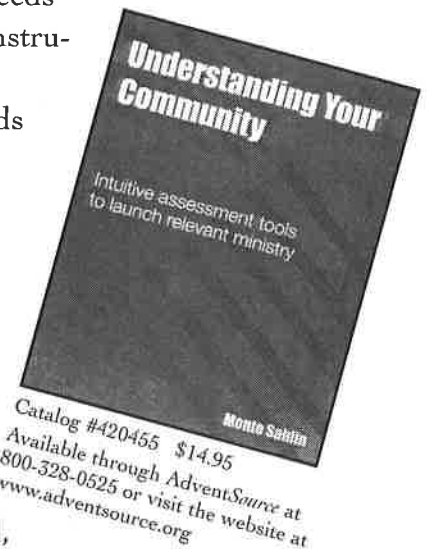
A church family Needs Assessment and a community Needs Assessment will be prepared as the guide and information instrument from which Family Ministry plans can be developed. Resources can be identified and provided to respond to needs assessed from the respective instruments.

It is important to hear the voices of those to whom we seek to offer ministry. Oftentimes, people come to Family Ministry with a personal agenda, and they impose their agenda upon others without regard to what their felt needs may be. A church family Needs Assessment allows every member to have a voice in their ministry needs and how they will be addressed. Sometimes the presenting need is not the actual need, but this is a *safe* need to verbalize. So, providing an environment that says each voice will be heard, allows for real needs to be addressed in ministry.

When we go to the community, it is important to be kind and courteous. *"A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity."* (Testimonies Vol.6, pg. 84). Instead of going to the community with what we think they need, we must learn to **listen** to what people in the community say about their needs for their families. Our efforts to serve families through ministry should reflect what they share they need.

A community Needs Assessment will

- a. find out what members of the community around the church say their family needs are.
- b. allow the church to reach out to others in their community that might be serving those same families and collaborate with them in sharing ministry for these families. *How the angels must feel as they see the end approaching, and see so many of those entrusted with the last message of mercy budding together, attending meetings for the sake of benefit to their own souls, while they have little burden and are doing little for the salvation of others.*
{Mar 115.2}



Family Covenants

Pastors and Family Ministry Coordinators will invite church family units to enter into covenant relationship with God, and the church, as partners in developing and identifying family and spiritual goals. Family ministry will reflect these goals through the ministry opportunities planned and brought to fruition through the Holy Spirit and church leadership.

In all of the relationships that God has with man, He speaks of covenants. In today's society, we often seek to have contracts and the intent and purpose are totally different. Families that are preparing for the Kingdom will have a covenant relationship because that is the model that God intended for us to show on this earth. The covenant relationship may be a bit more difficult to attain, but the long-lasting pleasure and the eternal value make it worth the effort.

To His children today the Lord declares, "Be strong, . . . and work: for I am with you." The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way, that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished, they would not stumble along complainingly. Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them. They would acknowledge Him as their wisdom and efficiency, and He would bring to pass that which He desires to work out through them. {PK 576.1}

Evaluation

An excellent Family Ministry will provide for annual evaluation by its church families. As good stewards, we must make certain that what we say we are going to do, we will do. The Scriptures remind us "*Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?*" (Luke 14:28, NIV). The planning well is the first step in having an excellent evaluation. Remembering that we are involved in **ministry**, not **programming** will allow us to develop offerings that address the needs that church and community families share in their surveys.

You should evaluate your ministry because an evaluation helps you accomplish the following:

- ◆ Find out what is and is not working in your ministry
- ◆ Show your church board and community what your ministry does and how it benefits the participants

6

- ◆ Improve the work of your family ministry committee by identifying weaknesses as well as strengths
- ◆ Add to the existing knowledge of family ministry coordinators about what does and does not work at local church levels with different types of participants.

The other part of your evaluation will be the turning in reports to the Family Ministries Directors of the conference.



Modeling Family Ministry

Modeling is by far the most difficult component of this assignment. First of all, let me ease your anxieties—no one expects perfection! We are still *walking with feet not wings*. The concept only means that you are willing to practice, then witness those precepts you espouse. You must be willing to be transparent—that means you will be working on some issues in your own life with the Lord. The old maxim states “I’d rather **SEE** a sermon than hear one any day.” As you plan **Family Ministry**, think how can I and my family benefit as well as those to whom I seek to minister. If you feel that you have already attained and everything is for *them*, then this ministry is **NOT** for you. No matter at what stage of development your family life stands, you should still be growing. Quite a challenge, isn’t it? Always keep in mind that your family does **not** have to be one that has a Mom, Dad, and 2.5 children, it just has to have Christ as the Head of the home.

It seems unnecessary to speak about steadfast personal faith—however, this component cannot be assumed. A steadfast personal faith is **NOT** knowing all the proof texts; being able to quote Spirit of Prophecy; or having been a church member for 20, 25, or even 50 years. A steadfast personal faith means that Christ is your friend. He is Someone with whom you are in intimate relationship. He is your Lover—you read His love letter, the Bible, everyday, and wish to do **NOTHING** that would hurt or dishonor Him. It’s not just what you know, but knowing **WHOSE** you are!

Your plans for ministry will then be responsible in the stewardship of **time**—plan ministry programs that bring families and fellowship groups together; the stewardship of **treasure**—plan ministry programs that use funds wisely and responsibly, better a series of well thought-out, appropriate programs than one **BIG SPLASH** program. The stewardship of **talent**—

plan ministry programs that use the gifts of many, not a few—in other words, **NETWORK**. The stewardship of **influence**—plan ministry programs that touch hurting lives within and without your church community and also involve resources from the community.

This is only a skeleton of what it means to be **Family Ministries Coordinator** for your church family. You must be open to the Lord's *still small voice*, and be willing to take the risk of going against those seven famous words, "We've never done it this way before." However, I've never read in the Bible where the glory of the Lord was manifested in anyone just marking time, or worse yet—just standing still! So, look around you, and "*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...*" Eccl. 9:10, NIV. We're preparing for the Lord's return - it will be soon! Let's go as families.



Practical Applications

The goals of the church are to minister in the areas of nurture, outreach and fellowship. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to develop a **MINISTRY ACTION PLAN**. This will enable you and your committee to determine where you are going—not just **THIS** year, but in the future.

There are many types of ministries that affect families and their lives. When you are looking for areas, consider some of these:

12 - Step Recovery Programs*

Parenting Classes

Marriage Strengthening Programs

Communication

Finance Management*

Teen Parents

Elderly Support Programs

Big Brother/Big Sister

Mentoring

Parent-Teen Relationships

Loss Recovery Support Group

Womens' Support Group*

Alzheimer Support Group

Literacy Programs

Grandparents Acting as Parents Support Group

(* These programs can be worked in conjunction with the **Health Ministries** or **Stewardship** Departments of your church.)

You are not expected to provide any or all of these programs by yourself. In fact, if you are developing an excellent Family Ministries, you will be collaborating with others in your community who may operate or provide some of the areas of ministry that you would like to provide. You may find in your area that there are other needs that must be addressed. You will not know what those needs are if you don't **ask**. Church members often have needs, and you should address those needs; however, don't forget the community in which your church is located. Find out from your church neighbors what needs that they have that you might minister to. This, too, is a part of excellent Family Ministries. Please be certain that you have individuals who are appropriately trained to facilitate any of these programs. There is liability for both you and the church if you allow any of these programs to be run by a person who is not qualified. More importantly, innocent people who already have needs, could be hurt for life. Remember, when you have these programs, share it with the Family Ministries Directors. The training that you will receive in the Family Ministries Curriculum does **not** make you a therapist or a licensed counselor; it does not make you an *expert* in any area. This training only gives you an overview of how families can be ministered to, and allows to know how to more effectively develop a Family Ministries at your church.

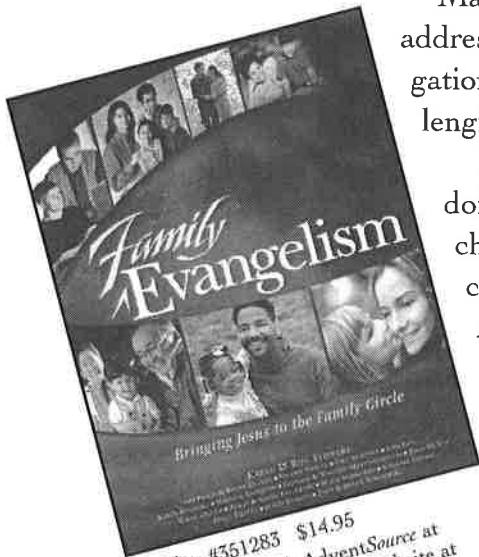
Each church has the opportunity to request the assistance and programming of the conference Family Ministries Directors at no cost to your church.

As you plan your programs, keep in mind that our main goal is to strengthen families. Check your church calendar—are there meetings that fragment families and fellowship time? Begin by speaking with your Pastor and other leaders who determine programming. Seek to develop a church calendar that allows activity for family groups, rather than family members coming and going at separate times. This won't be easy, but it is necessary. Remember that this is **Family Ministries**, so families may be *couples, single adults, grandparents with their grandchildren, or single parents*. That means that you cannot create an environment that only addresses the needs of one seg-

ment of the church. Make certain that your **Family Ministries Advisory Council** represents all the components of family in your church. Each church is different so each Family Ministries Advisory Council will look differently. If all the people represent one interest—start all over again!

Make certain that the events that **YOU** plan during the year address the needs of all types of families represented in your congregation. Remember this is a ministry, and ministry is always challenging.

If you think about the fact that you are creating ministry, not doing programming, you will realize that things will continue to change during the year. People will have one need met and discover that they now have others! Please plan to meet with your Advisory Council at least quarterly to make certain that you are aware of what is happening and you can address needs as you **listen** to those around you. Remember this is truly a ministry and as long as people live and breath—there will be change!



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Significant Family Dates

February	Black History Month Christian Home & Marriage Week World Marriage Day Valentine's Day
March	Women's History Month Social Worker's Month
April	Child Abuse Prevention Month Adventist Youth Week of Prayer
May	Older American's Month Skin Cancer Awareness Month Mother's Day Graduations
June	Father's Day Children's Day Juneteenth
July	Independence Day Adventist Family Conference — Andrews University
August	Back to School
September	Children's Good Manners Month Labor Day Family Togetherness Week JOY Sabbath
October	Breast Cancer Awareness Month AIDS Awareness Month Harvest Pastor Appreciation Day
November	Diabetes Awareness Month Native American Heritage Month Thanksgiving
December	Christmas Kwanzaa

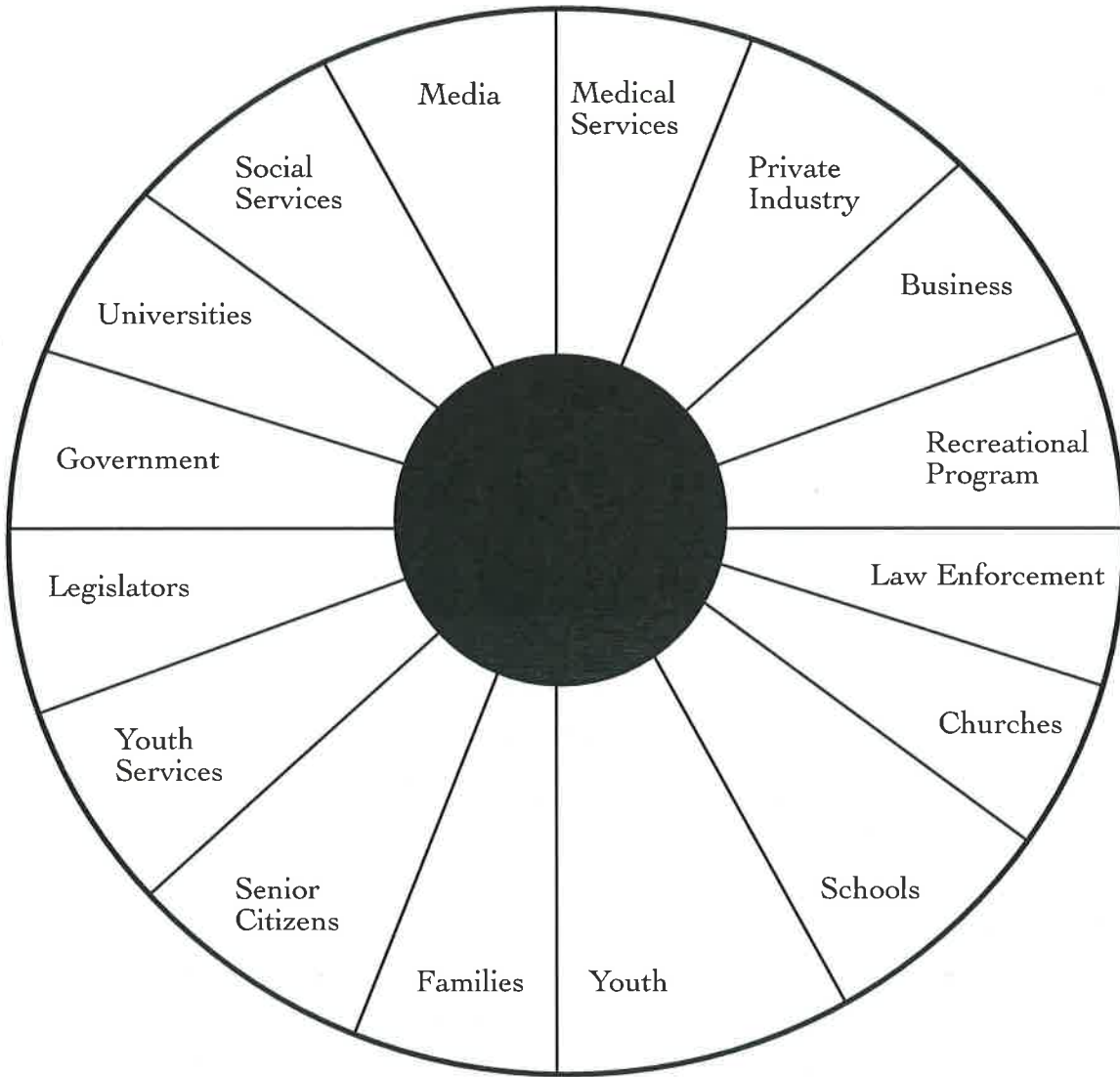
There are other dates that might be observed for families in your church and community. This is another opportunity to reach out and develop alliances as you celebrate things that are of interest in your larger community.



Inventory of Collaborating Groups

Group (write in names of coalition members)	Recruit Coalition Members	Obtain Mailing Lists from other organizations	Get letters of endorsement	Access Newsletter	Request Data	Collaborate on Intervention	Recruit Volunteers
Agricultural Extension Service							
Businesses							
Charitable Organizations							
Civic Groups							
County Medical Society							
Health Agencies including Voluntary agencies							
Health Councils							
Labor Unions							
Local Medical Facilities							
Mental Health Services							
Professional Associations							
Religious Organizations							
Schools: primary, secondary, higher							
Senior Citizens Groups							
Service Clubs: Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Junior League							
Social Services Agencies							
Veterans' Societies							
Others							

Community Wheel



SOURCE: The Southwest Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

Guidance for Family Profile Form

1. **NAME**— Fill in the name of the person who is interviewed with *Last Name First* and then Given name. Do not forget to note title (Mr., Mrs., Miss)
2. **Address**— Give Street Address with Apartment number - if applicable.
3. **City Information**— very necessary **and do not forget the zip code.**
4. **Phone Number**— Give phone number **with area code** (if ten digit dialing is required). If there is no phone in the residence, please get a **contact number** where messages can be taken.
5. The name of the person who is making the contact.
6. Date the initial contact is made.
7. In the area of family information, please note the following:

Name, First and Last (if different) from the individual on the first line

Age— in not sure, approximate age will be helpful

Gender— Male/Female

Relationship— to person named on top line

8. **Comment Area**— Note anything that might be helpful about the family for someone else who might visit. *Please note: dogs, especially vicious ones, condition of home, etc.*

A Ministry Action Proposal

For _____ Subject: _____

1. A Description of proposed plan and how it relates to the Churches basic purpose. _____

2. Why this Ministry is needed. _____

3. The costs to the Church (in detail). _____

4. What this will mean to the church in opportunities and costs over the next 2, 3, and 5 years. _____

5. Alternatives. _____

6. Estimated Expenditures per month (Cash Flow)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total

Suggested Reading

Celebrate the Seasons! Phyllis Stanley & Miltinnie Yih, m Navpress, Colorado Springs, CO; 1986, ISBN 0-89109-116-5.

Family Friendly Church. North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *AdventSource*, Lincoln, NE, 2001; ISBN 1-57756-084-1. *AdventSource* also carries the video and participants guide.

Family Ministry—A Comprehensive Guide. Diana R. Garland, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL; 1999, ISBN 0-8308-1585-6

Family Ministries Curriculum and CD. Department of Family Ministries, North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *AdventSource*, Lincoln, NE, 1999, 2003; ISBN 1-57756-061-2.

Family Ministries Handbook. The Family Ministries Planbook—published annually. It has a year's worth of ministry programs as well as resources and sample forms to use. *AdventSource* also carries copies of the previous year's plan book.

Peace and Healing: Making Homes Abuse-Free. Ron and Karen Flowers with Audray Johnson, Elaine & Willie Oliver. *AdventSource*, Lincoln, NE, 1996; ISBN 1-57756-007-8. *AdventSource* also carried the quick reference guide.

The Family-Powered Church. Pamela J. Erwin, Group Publishing, 2000, Loveland, CO; ISBN 0-7644-2093-3.

Additional Resources

AdventSource—www.adventsource.org 1-800-328-0525

They have a catalog that has a complete Family Ministries section. In it you can order previous years Plan Books, the Family Ministry Curriculum for Local Church Leaders, and the Family-Friendly Church Project, which takes you on a step-by-step plan to make your church friendly to all families.



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