

# Sharing our Faith@Home

A resource for parents and caregivers



*This document was created to complement a workshop run by Presbyterian Children and Families Ministry facilitators called 'Sharing our Faith@Home'. It is designed as a take home resource for parents. The information it contains is not prescriptive. Any perceived conflict between the information contained in this resource and the Presbyterian Church's Book of Order and subordinate standards is entirely unintentional.*

***"Parents are the primary faith teachers, mentors and role models for their children with the church as a reinforcement – not replacement – of the parent's duties."***

**Rich Melheim, Faith Inkubators**



***"If we want to help our children build a life with meaning, we need to give them more than just feelings on which to base their decisions and choices. To develop an ethical compass, children need to be given ideals and to be shown how to apply them to everyday situations."***

**Ian and Mary Grant 'Growing Great Families'**

# Introduction

## Dear Parents

You are your child's prime spiritual teacher. It is now widely recognised by Christian researchers, educators and practitioners that parents have the most influence on a child's faith development.

And we, your church, want to support and encourage you in this important task, without taking away your responsibility or 'doing the job for you.'

*“When a church—intentionally or not—assumes a family's responsibilities in the arena of spiritually nurturing children, it fosters an unhealthy dependence upon the church to relieve the family of its Biblical responsibility.”* **George Barna, Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions**

Holistic parenting includes physical, mental, emotional and spiritual care from birth in a lifelong process of learning. Children need your unconditional love, enthusiastic support and commitment to grow spiritually.

Parents who pray, practise and talk about faith with their children from an early age generally find that they have open and communicative relationships with their children during their teens and adult years.

This booklet is intended to encourage you in your spiritual parenting, opening up the topic with some practical ideas and resources.

We hope this resource will help spark your enthusiasm and confidence as parents to try out a variety of faith@home practices and make them part of everyday life in your family.

For more advice and resources please also contact your minister and church.

God be with you as you spiritually nurture your children.

Children and Families Ministry team,  
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ  
[www.pcfm.org.nz](http://www.pcfm.org.nz)



### **Be a Triple A parent!**

- ✓ **Available**
- ✓ **Affirming**
- ✓ **Authentic**

# COME TO CHURCH WITH YOUR CHILDREN

We encourage you to bring your children to church from birth. Church offers children and families a community of faith, love and hope to belong to.

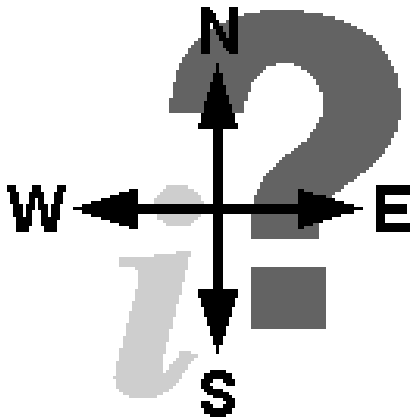
Other church members can become the child's extended family who commit to support parents in their spiritual parenting and contribute to the child's experience of God's love.

- At church children learn that God loves all types of people, young and old, happy and grumpy, abled and disabled.
- Make regular church attendance a priority: 'On Sunday we go to church, on Monday we go to school and work.' Encourage your child to love and enjoy it- to talk about what they learn and who they meet.
- Look for a church where children are welcomed, nurtured, valued and celebrated and encouraged to participate and contribute.
- Prioritise your children's participation in your church community, so together church and home can nurture the gift of faith that is growing in them.
- Read this encouraging blog:

*'Dear parents with young children in church You are doing something really, really important. I know it's not easy. I see you with your arms overflowing, and I know you came to church already tired. Parenting is tiring. Really tiring....*

<http://iamtotallythatmom.blogspot.co.nz/2013/05/dear-parents-with-young-children-in.html?m=1>

# CREATE A SPIRITUAL THIRST IN YOUR CHILD



*Everyday - in every way, you can create a spiritual thirst in your child. A thirst to know God, to enjoy His forgiveness, and to benefit from His love. You will enable your child to grow up knowing he is not alone in the universe. And your child will never lack a moral compass to guide his way.*

You do not have to be perfect to be your child's spiritual equipper. We all have self-doubt and worry we might "mess up" or not give the correct answer. But if we do our best God will do the rest. We can't always "quench the thirst" of our child's spiritual needs, but we can "create the thirst" by trying some of the following suggestions in this booklet.

**Seize any occasion to speak of God** - When you're boogey boarding together in the sea, or walking in the forest, talk about how God has blessed us.

## **Weave spiritual lessons into your daily conversations**

- Seek teachable moments when out driving or walking, when they are watching TV, quarreling with their siblings or telling you about what happened at school.

**Around your home**, place visible reminders that testify to your faith in God – Your Bible, journal, Christian books next to your bed, favourite quotes or Bible verses stuck on the fridge, Christian music, books, DVDs... etc.

## SHARE- READ-TALK-PRAY-BLESS!



### Faith Acts In The Home [FAITH5™](#)

Is a simple, easy-to-implement faith practice, perfect for incorporating into your bedtime routine for five to fifteen minutes a night. When done over time, the [FAITH5™](#) carries the power to enrich communication, deepen understanding, aid sleep, and promote mental, physical and spiritual health.

Watch Dr Rich Melheim enthusiastically unpack what each of the 5 steps is about and get started straight away! [www.faith5.org](http://www.faith5.org)

### Here are the FAITH 5 (five minutes and five steps) that can change a family

1. **Share** your *Highs & Lows* of the day (the best and worst thing that happened)
2. **Read** a Bible verse or story
3. **Talk** about how the Bible reading might relate to your *Highs & Lows*
4. **Pray** for one another's highs and lows.
5. **Bless** one another before turning the lights out each night





**The Faith Box** has been created in NZ for NZ families! [www.faith4families.org](http://www.faith4families.org) for all the information and resources

20 minute weekly family time. All the ideas in the box so you can put together a creative, fun and interactive session. Includes Biblical stories and values for life. Designed specifically for ages 5-11yrs

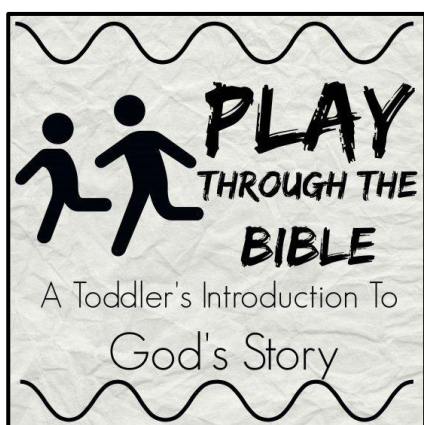
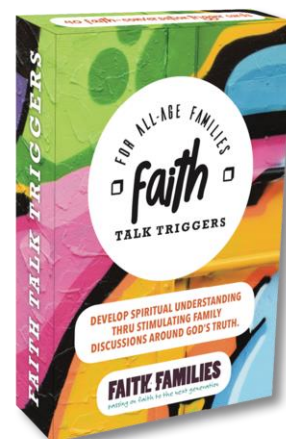
*“It gives us a time and plan to do what we have wanted to do for a very long time. Takes the stress out of thinking it up ourselves and the kids look forward to these evenings”.*

### **\*NEW\* Faith Talk Trigger Cards**

Want to have great God-centred conversations with your older kids and teenagers?

Great anytime: Dinner table, Road trips

\$15 per pack- includes 40 topics/cards



For Younger Children, you may like to try some ideas from this creative Mum. 25 Bible stories using the Rhyme Bible, activities and craft for EACH day of the week to go with it- a treasure trove of ideas for pre-schoolers.

[www.steadfastfamily.com/play-through-the-bible](http://www.steadfastfamily.com/play-through-the-bible)

## MORE SUPPORT and TRAINING

Visit our website under Leader resources for links to many other ministries that support children and families.

[www.pcfm.org.nz](http://www.pcfm.org.nz)

[www.parentingforfaith.org](http://www.parentingforfaith.org)

8 weeks parenting course + Website, stories, articles, podcasts..... FREE and applicable for all kinds of families. Based around 5 easy tools – Creating Windows, Framing, Unwinding, Chat and Catch, Surfing the Waves.



**Toolbox Parenting Courses** [www.theparentingplace.com](http://www.theparentingplace.com)  
NZ based courses, support, articles for each age group.

Lots of great articles for every age group.

# READ

***"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God 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."***

**Be a DEUTERONOMY 6 family!**

# READ

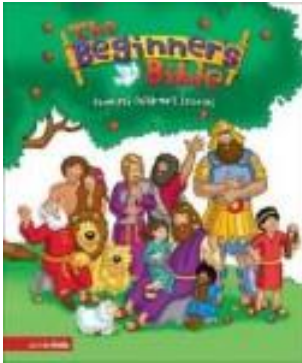
***Bible Resources can be purchased from:***

**MANNABOOKS** [www.manna.co.nz](http://www.manna.co.nz)

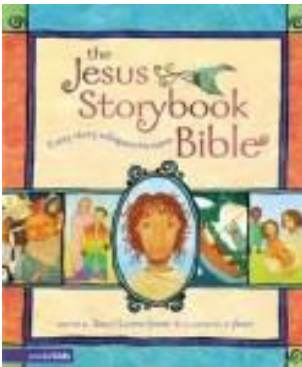
**SCRIPTURE UNION** [www.sunz.org.nz](http://www.sunz.org.nz)

Online stores like [www.bookdepository.com](http://www.bookdepository.com) or  
[www.fishpond.co.nz](http://www.fishpond.co.nz)

## **Recommended Children's Story Book Bibles:**



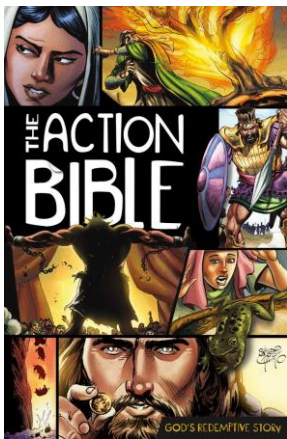
**THE BEGINNERS BIBLE** is an ideal first Bible for young children but also enjoyed as a 'read yourself' Bible for children up to about 10yrs old. 90 favourite Bible stories come to life through simple text and colourful, fun illustrations on every page.



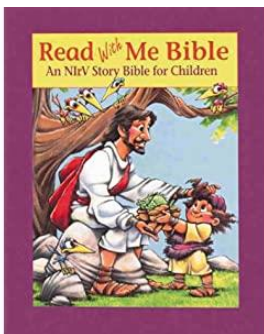
**THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE** is a brilliant, read aloud book. The stories are woven together beautifully where 'Every story whispers his name.... He is like the missing piece in the puzzle....the Child on whom everything would depend.' Also come with a curriculum and audio CDs, DVDs (some available on YouTube)



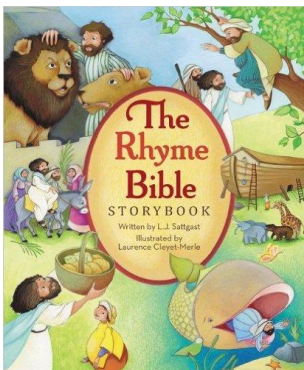
**THE BIG LITTLE BIBLE** has 30 big stories in one little book. CEV text with introduction and questions for each story. The clever illustrations by NZ artist Meesh Holswich are created with: "One line, one thread, from the beginning of the Bible until the end, it's all one story."



**THE ACTION BIBLE** has over 200 fast-paced Bible stories in chronological order in a comic book style. It appeals to a wide range of ages- to look through or to read about God the original action hero!



**READ WITH ME BIBLE** has 106 well-loved Bible stories, based on the NIV and preserving much of its wording and flavour. Every page contains fresh, colourful art as you retell the story.



## **The RHYME BIBLE STORYBOOK**

35 delightful, classic Bible stories retold in lilting verse and rollicking, read-aloud rhyme from the story of creation, to the resurrection of Jesus. (Toddlers version too)

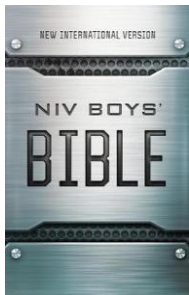
## Bible Translations and Paraphrases

These Bibles use contemporary language for reading to younger children, for older children to read themselves.

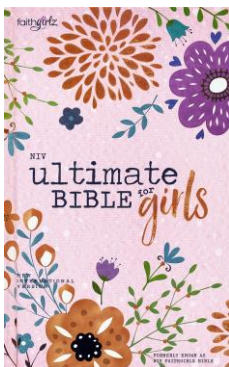


### **GOOD NEWS BIBLE and CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION**

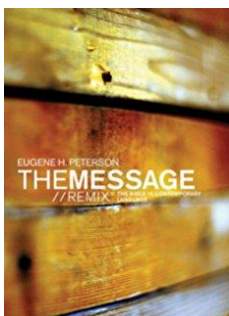
Both have versions with extras presented in an appealing way for older children as a first 'read your own' Bible



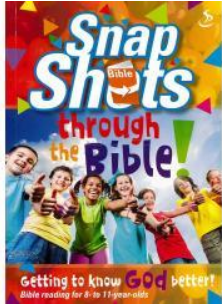
**NIV BOYS BIBLE** was created especially for boys ages 9 to 12. Fun in-text features help boys dig deep into the Word and learn about amazing people, facts, and stories of the Bible.



**Faithgirlz! Bible-NIV** is packed with exciting features that help girls 9-14yrs better understand themselves and Scripture. It teaches girls that the Bible is real, relevant, and, best of all, that the story of God and his people is also their story.



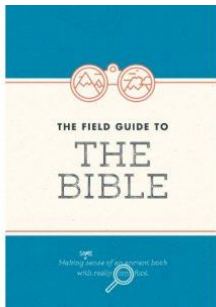
**THE MESSAGE – The Bible in Contemporary Language** by Eugene Petersen captures the essence of Bible stories and Jesus teaching with refreshingly up to date language.



## **SCRIPTURE UNION** [www.sunz.org.nz](http://www.sunz.org.nz)

has age appropriate Bible reading aids and prayer journals to help your child establish a regular habit of reading the Bible.

**MANNABOOKS** [www.manna.co.nz](http://www.manna.co.nz) has a wide range of age related and whole family devotional materials.



**THE FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIBLE** by Bible Society NZ, available at Manna

Brilliant little book suitable for young people and adults- where to start reading, how to hear God through the Bible and how the whole Bible fits together.

## **ONLINE RESOURCES**



### **WHAT'S IN THE BIBLE** DVD SERIES

Goes through the whole Bible with lots of great explanations and fun characters (from the makers of Veggie tales)

[www.whatsinthebible.com](http://www.whatsinthebible.com)

## APPS



**THE BIG LITTLE BIBLE** like the book follows the unique 'one line' art technique through 30 stories. Read together, save favourite verses.



### **BIBLE BEDTIME APPS 1 and 2**

Interact, create your own pictures to add to the text

Also YouVersion Bible App for Kids [www.bible.com/kids](http://www.bible.com/kids)



**Guardians of Ancora** is a world-class tablet game for 8- to 11-year-olds offering an amazing virtual world and an immersive interactive experience of Bible stories.

[www.guardiansofancora.com](http://www.guardiansofancora.com)



**Bible Pathway Adventures** is a free discipleship app designed to help children everywhere learn God's truth in a fun creative way.

[www.biblepathwayadventures.com](http://www.biblepathwayadventures.com)





## **SUPERBOOK Bible, Video and Games**

This FREE Kids Bible app brings the Bible to life for the entire family with a full Bible, videos, images and engaging interactive games.

[www.superbook.org.uk/superbook-apps](http://www.superbook.org.uk/superbook-apps)



**Wild Online** takes children on a journey across an interactive map that visits the life, teaching and miracles of Jesus with lots of short animated videos, characters and quizzes.

[www.wild.biblesociety.org.au](http://www.wild.biblesociety.org.au)



**The Aetherlight- Chronicles of the Resistance** is a NZ made Biblical allegory in a language kids understand- games! Players join a mysterious steampunk world seeking to restore the land and return the Great engineer to the throne. Built for 9-12 yrs. olds – fun for parents too! Family pass \$19.99 gives over 15 hrs game time [www.theaetherlight.com](http://www.theaetherlight.com)



## READ and LISTEN to STORIES

- All kinds of stories!

Talk about them.

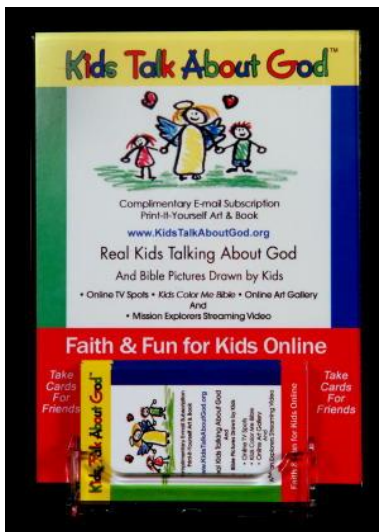
## BIBLE VERSES PRINTABLES

Learning Bible verses together can be fun and helpful as a family activity. Here are just two websites that offer free resources and ideas for their use.



**ABC printable** supply a brief Bible verse for every letter of the alphabet. Learn one a week

[www.icanteachmychild.com/abc-printable-scripture-cards/](http://www.icanteachmychild.com/abc-printable-scripture-cards/)



**Kids talk about God** supply a set of Inspirational Bible verses for children in 2 versions (Easy to Read version is good) Look up the gallery of children's art from these verses for discussion with your child and inspiration.

[www.kidstalkaboutgod.net/BibleLessons/BibleVersesForChildren](http://www.kidstalkaboutgod.net/BibleLessons/BibleVersesForChildren)

# TALK

Mark Holmen in 'Faith Begins at Home' helps parents **T.R.A.I.N** to talk faith with their children:

**T- Time** is our most precious commodity. We can be creative about where and when we 'find time' E.g. car time, Sick time, Bed time. Meal time, holiday time, one on one time.

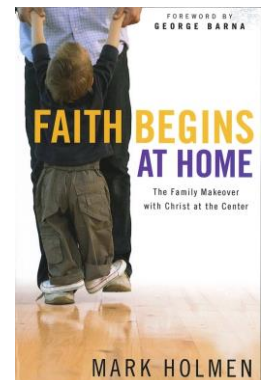
**R-Repetition.** Deuteronomy means 'repetition of the Law' Start a habit of blessing, praying, reading the Bible. Start small and do it over and over again through the years.

**A-Acceptance** of one another. Faith talk is about listening and receiving as much as talking and giving.

**I-Intentionality** – Involve Christ in all areas of your life and parenting and be prepared to talk faith in the good times and the bad.

**N- Never Ending** dialogue with your children- even when they have grown up.

*“Faith Begins At Home - The Family Makeover with Christ at the Centre” by Mark Holmen, Regal Books 2005*



**“The church’s role is to be equippers of families. What we ought to do is let children drop their parents off at church, train the parents and send them back into their mission field- their homes – to grow Christians!”**

*Dr Roland Martinson, the Youth and Family Institute*

# PRAY

Teach your children how to pray.

## **EXPLAIN:**



When we pray we talk and listen to God.



This can be done in our minds or out loud.



This can happen at home, at church, at school, anywhere.



Prayer is for saying thanks, asking for help, thinking of others, saying we're sorry.



Jesus (God) is our friend who never leaves us.

## **ROLE MODEL:**



Share your own prayers. Thank God for your child when you put him/her to bed.



Pray for the family as you set off on a journey.



Pray with your child at bedtime inviting him/her to contribute to the prayers.



Pray a blessing for your child as he/she leaves for school and teach him/her to do the same for you.



Pray for your child when he/she is feeling scared or vulnerable and teach him/her to do this for him/herself.

## ENCOURAGE:



Pray as a family.



Pray at mealtimes or sing a grace



Pray at bedtime.



Teach them the Lord's Prayer

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** (the prayer Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him how to pray)

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be your name (holy is your name)

Your Kingdom come

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our sins

As we forgive those who sin against us

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

For yours is the kingdom

The power and the glory

Forever and ever

Amen.

**AT MEALTIMES...**Make mealtimes a special family time of thanksgiving and sharing. Sing or say grace, share your highs and lows

### **Superman Grace**

Thank you Lord for giving us food (one arm up)  
Thank you Lord for giving us food (other arm up)  
For our daily bread, (one arm up)  
So our tummies are fed (other arm up)  
Thank you Lord for giving us food (circle arms around)  
Amen (both arms up for 'take off')

### **Here we are together**

Here we are together, together, together  
Oh here we are together  
And we thank God for the food  
There's .... (Point to each person as you sing their name)  
So here we are together  
And we thank God for the food.



*For these and more, see the **Graces** leaflet in your resources- collated by Kids Friendly for you!*

# BLESS

The act of blessing -- a simple, spoken prayer for God's favour to rest on someone, accompanied by a symbolic physical gesture -- is a powerful vehicle of God's grace.

Words cannot mechanically or magically produce heavenly benefits in our children's lives but when spoken daily over the years, provides an occasion for God's love and our love to be communicated simply and effectively to our children. As that love is confirmed again and again in their minds and hearts, it gradually transforms them. There are several purposes:

1/ **PRAYER OF FAITH** on behalf of the children is exercised when parents, standing in a God-ordained place of authority and responsibility, speak words of God's favour over their children.

2/ **AFFIRMS A CHILD'S WORTH and IMPORTANCE.** When we pause from our hectic schedules to bless our children, it says to them: "You are valuable; you are precious to me and to God."

3/ **ASSURANCE**- a blessing assures children that their parents and their heavenly Father love them and desire to protect and provide for them. Thus it cultivates a feeling of safety and security -- a feeling heightened by the aspect of physical touch.

4/ **A RHYTHM** - a daily blessing adds a rhythm, a sense of regularity, to our children's lives that's comforting and stabilizing. This is especially true when we use the same words to bless them each day and give the blessing at the same point in our daily schedule.

**5/ MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN US AS PARENTS.** Setting aside time to bless our children provides us with a daily reminder of how precious they are and a chance to refocus our thoughts on their welfare, especially if there has been any conflict during the day.

For all these reasons, a daily blessing can enrich your family. The investment of time is small, yet the rewards last a lifetime.

Here's how to get started:

**1. Choose a regular time and place to bless your children.** No need to be rigid, but structure and consistency can be important, especially for younger children. Bedtime is often preferred.

**2. Choose words that express clearly and succinctly the blessing you desire for your children.** Try one of the blessings in the box below, or create your own. Preface it with the child's name and end with the words, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen,"

**3. If your children are old enough to understand, explain to them why you'll be blessing them.** They'll be much more cooperative if they know something about what you're doing and why. Older children especially may at first be reluctant, but in time, they'll come to look forward to it.



**4. When you bless your children, touch them in some meaningful way.** Make the sign of the cross on their forehead or lay your hand on their hand. Parental touch is always important to children, but especially during a blessing. The scriptural examples of blessing almost always include some such physical gesture as a visible sign of the invisible grace God grants through the act.

(Ideas from 'The Power of Blessing your Family' Paul Thigpen)



### **A Blessing with Actions**

Face each other. As parent makes the sign of the ✝ on child's forehead he/she says:

**“(Name) May God bless you and keep you. May God’s light shine around you (wave your hands around child’s head and shoulders) and through you (lift up child’s arms into the air) and grant you his peace (place your hands on child’s shoulders). Amen.”**

Repeat with child blessing parent.

## **More Blessings**

**“The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace”** (Numbers 6:24-26)

Or a shorter adaption:

**The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you and give you peace.**

Or ‘I pray that the Lord will bless and protect you, that He will show you mercy and kindness. May the Lord be good to you and give you peace’ (Numbers 6:14-26 CEV)

**"May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way"** (2 Thessalonians 3:16 NAB).

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with...you forever more"* (2 Corinthians 13:13 NAB).

**God bless you and keep you  
God smile on you and gift you  
God look you full in the face  
And make you prosper**

(Numbers 6:24-26 The Message)

## Websites

There are MANY websites completely dedicated to encouraging churches and households to explore the importance of faith practices 24/7. Below are just a few that Presbyterian Children and Families Ministry think are a good place to start! Enjoy exploring!

[www.faith5.org](http://www.faith5.org) **FAITH5™ (Faith Acts in the Home)**

[www.parentingforfaith.org](http://www.parentingforfaith.org) Equipping parents to raise God-connected children and teens. Parenting course+ all FREE

[www.buildfaith.org/home-practices](http://www.buildfaith.org/home-practices) 16 home practice activities that are do-able, fun and meaningful.

[www.faithathome.com](http://www.faithathome.com) Home-centred and church-assisted resources including Mark Holman's 'Faith Begins at Home and Faith@' series

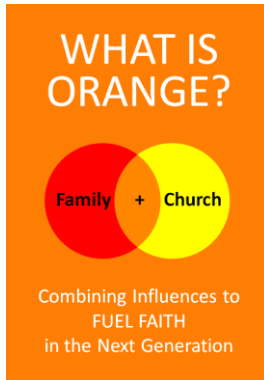
[www.parentfurther.com](http://www.parentfurther.com) Search Institute resource for families. Take quizzes, learn and improve skills.

[www.careforthefamily.org.uk](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk) – 'Because family life matters' –lots of supporting online resources.  
Recommended reading: Rob Parsons 'The 60 minute family'



**Here2stay** identifies 10 pillars of faith formation- one is Families (households) as the primary faith community for all ages.

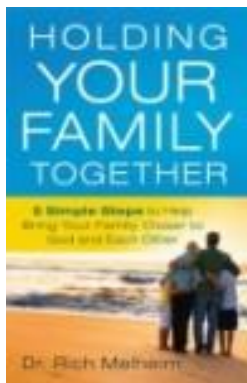
[www.here2stay.org.au](http://www.here2stay.org.au)



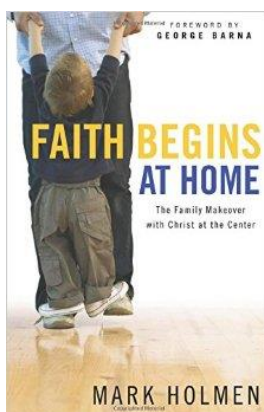
**Think Orange** for books, blogs, videos, curriculum and MORE on home and church together [www.thinkorange.com](http://www.thinkorange.com)

*What if the home and the church are both designed to work together to show a generation who God is? Two combined influences can make a greater impact than just two influences*

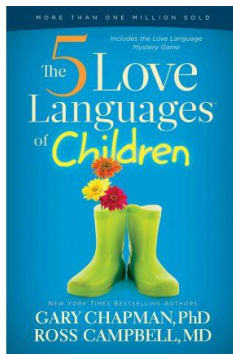
## Books



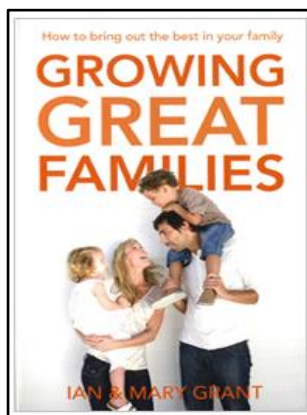
**Holding Your Family Together** by Rich Melheim of [Faith Inkubators](http://Faith Inkubators) is an easy and inspiring read that offers 5 simple steps to bringing your family closer to God and each other.



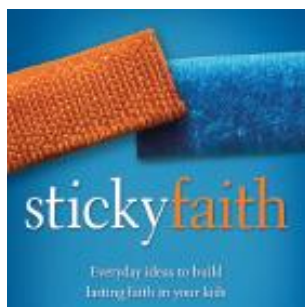
**Faith begins at Home** challenges us to do a family makeover with Christ at the centre: *"Today the reality for many families is that faith is no more than one-hour, drop-off Christianity if it is present at all. What does this mean for the faith of our children? How DOES a family put Christ at the centre of their busy lives?"*



**The Five Love Languages of Children** identifies how each child expresses and receives love through one of five different communication styles. Discover your child's primary language and learn how to respond to bring out the best in them.



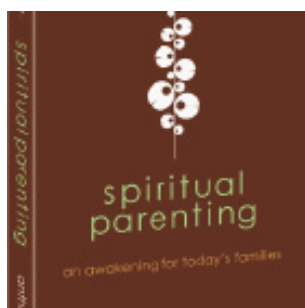
**Growing Great Families** is full of practical ideas for bringing out the best in your family from Kiwi parenting coaches Ian and Mary Grant.



### **Sticky Faith**

*Kara Powell & Chap Clark, (USA)*

*"Hear the good news: because faith development is a lifelong process for all of us, it is never too late to be more intentional in your parenting and the faith you model and discuss with your kids....."*



### **Spiritual Parenting,**

*Michelle Anthony (US) "Spiritual parenting is not perfect parenting – it's parenting from a spiritual perspective with eternity in mind."*

*"If you want a teenager who won't go to bed at midnight without first telling you about the date she's just been on, then start sharing your highs and lows when she's a toddler – it works!"*

*Rich Melheim, Faith Inkubators*

## CONTACT:

Sharing our faith@home is a Presbyterian Children and Families resource. It has been given to parents in their break out time during a family faith evening

For more information on Faith@home ideas or other workshops and resources contact:

[childrenandfamilies@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:childrenandfamilies@presbyterian.org.nz)

