

Fantastic Families



Devotional Guides

Week 1 - Building a Fantastic Family

Week 2 - Cultivate Commitment

Week 3 - Affection and Appreciation

Week 4 - Share Positive Communication

Week 5 - Spend Time Together

Week 6 - Affirm Spiritual Values

Week 7 - Deal with Crisis Positively

Week 8 - Review and Goal Setting

A family devotional program designed
to build strong families.

Program created by Josh Ketchum at Seven Oaks Church of Christ
Mayfield, KY – 270-247-5201 – jketchum@sevenoakschurchofchrist.com

Fantastic Families



A family devotional program designed to build strong families.

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE BEGINNING!

- The 5-8 minute videos that should be watched before each lesson are available in one DVD or off of our website (www.sevenoakschurchofchrist.com) via a link to YouTube.
- ***Realize that the video is not a professional product, but was done to accomplish a ministry.*** (You may have to adjust the volume higher than normal to hear the speakers well, since the camera and the filming situation did not allow for a microphone to be used.)
- **The devotional guides are meant to give you a tool to use. You may have to adjust them to your family context.** (Obviously some of the questions will not work as well for small children. Parents can modify and help the children in discussing the key issues behind the questions and themes. You may wish to add singing to your devotional. This would especially be recommended for families with small children. It would increase their enjoyment of the devo time.)
- Everyone can benefit from going through this series of devotionals. You may have to adjust the guides to your context, but singles to elderly married couples can benefit.
- We will be encouraging one another in this process by putting our family name on a window in the foyer for the week completed. If you

are not a member of Seven Oaks, but are doing the devotionals with us please let us know so it will encourage us. Send an email to jketchum@sevenoakschurchofchrist.com.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What if I do not have a DVD player or access to the internet?**
 - Though the series will not be as effective, we still encourage you to participate through working through the devotional guide each week.
- **Is this program limited to Seven Oaks Members?**
 - No. This program is open to all and everyone. We encourage people to share the DVDs and devotional guides. There is no copyright on this product. The videos will be on the internet for free and the DVDs can be copied.
- **Do I have to do the program on the dates given?**
 - The program can be done at whatever time frame a family chooses. We as a church at Seven Oaks are doing it on a weekly basis and doing it together during the months of September and October 2009.
- **What is the purpose of the program?**
 - The purpose of the program is to strengthen families and help families develop the habit of family devotionals.
- **Is there additional information that can be used to supplement the video and devotional guides?**
 - Yes. This series is based on the book *Fantastic Families* by Dr. Nick and Nancy Stinnett and Joe and Alice Beam. To get the most out of this program this book should also be read while the family is going through the process.
- **For what type of family is this program designed?**
 - This program, though primarily designed for the nuclear family that has children at home, is intended for everyone. From singles to elderly couples all individuals and families will benefit from these devotionals.
- **How do I work the DVD disc?**
 - The title menu will come up first upon the disc being put into the player. You should then choose: “Devotional Selection – Weeks 1-8” this can be done by hitting “play” or “enter” on DVD. Then use arrows on the remote to choose the week you want to watch. To progress to weeks 5-8 you need to hit the arrow on the lower right of the screen.

Fantastic Families – Week 1 – Sept. 6th
Family Devotional – Building a Fantastic Family

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 1 – Building a Fantastic Family

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4 Matthew 7:24-27

Talk Time

The six proven attributes of strong families is based on a landmark study completed by Dr. Nick Stinnett and his research assistants. This study involved over 14,000 families and was conducted over 25 years. It involved families from all over the world. Several books and articles have been written based on this study. The primary book that we are using is entitled *Fantastic Families* by Dr. Nick and Nancy Stinnett and Joe and Alice Beam. Reading the book is optional, and is not required for doing the devotionals. The book is an easy and informative read that gives many quotes and thoughts from the strong families researched.

The goal of the next eight weeks is for your family, whether you are a married couple, a family with children, or a single parent to set down together for a 30 minute period once a week and do a devotional together. You begin by watching the video for the weekly session and then work through the devotional guide. The key for making this a success is giving adequate time to read and discuss openly the devotional. There are two primary goals for this program: 1) To strengthen your family; 2) To allow your family to see the value in shared spiritual time together. Hopefully this will lead to your family having regular devotionals together.

- A. What observations could you make for your family from the Scriptures read?
- B. Go around the family and let everyone share at least one reason why they are thankful to be a part of this family.
- C. Discuss when each week you plan on doing this devotional and what your family hopes to gain from the series.

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request. Pray that the next 8 weeks will greatly bless your family.

Fantastic Families – Week 2 – Sept. 13th
Family Devotional – Commit to Your Family

Chapter 1 of the book *Fantastic Families* contains much more information
on this topic.

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 2 – Commit to Your Family

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

Ruth 1:15-18

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Talk Time

The book notes six characteristics for commitment.

Commitment to marriage.

Commitment to each individual.

Commitment to putting first things first.

Commitment to honesty.

Commitment to family traditions.

Commitment to the long haul.

- A. Go around the family letting everyone share ways they see and know the commitment of others by things they do or say.
- B. What are the priorities of your family? Are they being put first in your family?
- C. What are some family traditions you have developed and how do they bless your family?
- D. Go around the family letting each person share what it means to them to be committed to the family for the long haul.

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request regarding commitment.

Fantastic Families – Week 3 – Sept. 20th
Family Devotional – Appreciation and Affection

Chapter 2 of the book *Fantastic Families* contains much more information on this topic.

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 3 – Appreciation and Affection

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

Ephesians 4:25-32

Luke 17:11-19

Talk Time

The authors of the book suggest six secrets for incorporating appreciation and affection into your family.

1. Dig for diamonds (i.e. Look for the good in others.)
 2. Affirm your children verbally.
 3. Expect children to be affectionate and appreciative.
 4. Share humor and playfulness (but not sarcasm).
 5. Purposely encourage in others affection and appreciation.
 6. Accept expressions of appreciation gracefully.
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- A. Go around the family letting each person say two things they appreciate or love about each person in the family.
 - B. Experts say that content in the home should be at least 80% positive to have a healthy home. Generally it is thought that it takes at least 7 positives to make up for one negative complaint or criticism. Discuss how your family is doing and share ways that you could do better as an individual.
 - C. Let every family member share at least one action or event in the past that communicated affection and appreciation to them.

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request regarding appreciation and affection.

Fantastic Families – Week 4 – Sept. 27th

Family Devotional – Share Positive Communication

Chapter 3 of the book *Fantastic Families* contains much more information on this topic.

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 4 – Share Positive Communication

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

Proverbs 10:9-21, 25:11 James 3:1-12

Talk Time

The authors give six rules for good communication.

- A. Allow enough time (i.e. – Make time to talk to each other).
- B. Listen
- C. Check it out (Is this what I hear you saying . . .).
- D. Get inside the other person's world.
- E. Keep the monsters in late-night movies (Keep the monsters of criticizing, evaluating, and acting superior in the closet).
- F. Keep it honest.

The authors give six tactics for handling conflicts correctly.

- A. Deal with conflicts quickly.
 - B. Deal with one issue at a time.
 - C. Be specific.
 - D. Become allies (Attack the problem, rather than each other).
 - E. Ban the bombs (Do not vent wrath and anger).
 - F. Open up understanding (They try to understand one another).
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- A. Share with one another some lessons or key ideas you gained from the scripture passages.
 - B. Examine the six rules for good communication. Ask each family member to share which rule they believe they could do better at applying.
 - C. Examine the six tactics for handling conflicts correctly. Discuss as a family how you could better apply these rules to disagreements.

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request regarding communication and conflict.

Fantastic Families – Week 5 – Oct 4th
Family Devotional – Spending Time Together

Chapter 4 of the book *Fantastic Families* contains much more information on this topic.

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 5 – Spending Time Together

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Ephesians 5:15-21

Talk Time

The authors note four benefits from shared time together.

- A. It leads to good communication.
- B. It's an antidote to isolation, loneliness, and alienation.
- C. It provides a family identity.
- D. It nurtures relationships.

The authors give six suggestions of how to spend quality time together.

- A. Share meals together.
- B. Do house and yard chores together.
- C. Play together.
- D. Enjoy religious, club, and school activities together.
- E. Spend special events together (like birthdays and anniversaries)
- F. Do nothing in particular, but be together.

- A. What observations could you make for your family from the Scriptures read?
- B. Let everyone in your family share their favorite family memory? What are some common threads with these memories?
- C. Upon examining the six suggestions from the book, in which areas does your family excel now? How can you implement these suggestions into your family?
- D. Choose an activity to spend time together this week as a family.

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request regarding spending time together and other family desires.

Fantastic Families – Week 6 – Oct. 11th
Family Devotional – Affirm Spiritual Values

Chapter 5 of the book *Fantastic Families* contains much more information on this topic.

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 6 – Affirm Spiritual Values

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

Colossians 3:12-21

Matthew 22:36-40

Talk Time

The authors give six blessings of building your house on a spiritual foundation.

- A. Purpose or meaning to life
- B. Guidelines for living
- C. Freedom and peace
- D. A positive, confident outlook
- E. Support from like-minded people
- F. Access to the power of God

The authors give six ways that strong families nurtured spiritual well-being.

- A. Traditions and rituals (for example faithful worship attendance)
 - B. Religious heritage
 - C. Prayer and meditation
 - D. Everyday life (practicing what is preached!)
 - E. Studying the Word of God
 - F. Avoiding dissension within the family
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- A. What observations could you make for your family from the Scriptures read?
 - B. What blessings does your family enjoy from your spiritual foundation? (You may choose the above six listed or add to this list.)
 - C. Share ways as a family that you could do better at nurturing spiritual well-being.
 - D. Discuss ways that your family could incorporate family devotionals, Bible reading, and prayer time.

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request regarding spiritual values and well-being.

Fantastic Families – Week 7 – Oct. 18th
Family Devotional – Deal with Crisis Positively

Chapter 6 of the book *Fantastic Families* contains much more information on this topic.

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 7 – Deal with Crisis Positively

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Hebrews 12:1-11

Talk Time

Six tactics for coping with stress

- A. Keep things in perspective.
- B. Let go and let God.
- C. Focus on something bigger than self.
- D. Find humor in life.
- E. Take one step at a time.
- F. Rest, refresh, and restore.

Six strategies for surviving a crisis found in strong families.

- A. See the roses among the thorns.
- B. Pull together.
- C. Go get help.
- D. Use spiritual resources.
- E. Open channels of communication.
- F. Go with the flow.

- A. What observations could you make from the Scriptures read?
- B. Discuss as a family which tactic and which strategy need to be applied to your family stresses.
- C. What areas of the above lists do you need to grow in as a family so you will be able to thrive during a crisis?
- D. Thinking back over past crises in your family, share with one another the difference it made to have family support.

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request regarding dealing with crisis positively.

Fantastic Families – Week 8 – Oct. 25th
Family Devotional – Review and Family Goal Setting

Tube Time

Watch the Video - Week 8 – Review and Family Goal Setting

Bible Time

Read the following scriptures as a family.

Philippians 3:12-16

1 Timothy 3:1-13

Talk Time

During this *Fantastic Families* series we have discussed the following six proven attributes of strong families.

- A. Cultivate commitment
 - B. Express appreciation and affection
 - C. Share positive communication
 - D. Spend time together
 - E. Affirm spiritual values
 - F. Deal with crisis positively
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- A. After studying the six attributes of strong families discuss and let individuals answer the following questions:
 - 1. Which one is our strongest?
 - 2. Which one is our weakest?
 - 3. In which areas have we seen the most growth?
 - B. Discuss as a family some goals or aims for your family regarding the above attributes.
 - C. How are you going to continue this practice of family devotionals?
When will you do them?

Prayer Time

Pray together allowing any family member that wishes to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and request. Thank God for the growth your family has had in the past and pray for continued growth in the future.

Thanks for participating in *Fantastic Families*.

