

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY® PRESENTS

# The Family Project™

A Divine Reflection



**MAKING THE MOST OF *THE FAMILY PROJECT*™**

*A Guide for Churches from Focus on the Family®*

*Making the Most of The Family Project*

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## WHERE DOES *THE FAMILY PROJECT* FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Want your congregation to understand why God’s design for the family matters? *The Family Project* is a 12-session video curriculum that does just that.

To provide the greatest opportunity for you to meet your church’s needs, *The Family Project* offers materials that are flexible and adaptable to a variety of schedules and settings. You may prefer to go through the curriculum with a small group or as a whole congregation. Individuals and couples can work through it at home. Whatever your needs, environment, limitations, or budget, aim to customize the course for your setting and audience.

### QUICK-START GUIDE: CHOOSE YOUR FORMAT

<b>At Home</b>	<b>Small Group Program</b>
<p><i>Benefits</i></p> <p>Allows for greater intimacy in conversation and discussion topics.</p> <p>Sessions can be viewed and discussed according to each person’s or couple’s schedule.</p>	<p><i>Benefits</i></p> <p>Provides a framework of lessons and resources to encourage small group interaction and personal growth.</p> <p>Group members gain wisdom and insight from interaction with others.</p>
<b>Church Campaign (Inreach)</b>	<b>Church Campaign (Outreach)</b>
<p><i>Benefits</i></p> <p>Helps unify the church body as members work toward a common goal.</p> <p>Communicates the church’s priority for understanding and protecting the family.</p>	<p><i>Benefits</i></p> <p>Draws members from your local community into your church.</p> <p>Comes alongside families in crisis throughout your community.</p> <p>Presents the gospel to nonbelievers.</p>

## USING *THE FAMILY PROJECT* AT HOME

### *Ideal Format for Individuals and Couples*

#### **Benefits**

- Allows for greater intimacy in conversation and discussion topics.
- Sessions can be viewed and discussed according to each person's or couple's schedule.

It's easy for individuals or couples to work through *The Family Project* one session at a time—in their own homes, at their own pace. Busy lives and work schedules may not always allow people to participate in a group or church event; but by watching the DVDs and following up with the Participant's Guides, they can still learn and grow.

## USING *THE FAMILY PROJECT* WITH SMALL GROUPS

### *Ideal Format for Groups of up to Ten Participants*

#### **Benefits**

- Provides a framework of lessons and resources to encourage small group interaction and personal growth.
- Couples gain wisdom and insight from interaction with other couples.

#### SMALL GROUP PLANNING

##### *Five Months Out*

- Meet with church leaders to cast a vision for *The Family Project*. Leadership that has genuinely bought into a campaign can generate tremendous excitement throughout the church. Show PowerPoint® slides or video clips to help cast the vision.
- Recruit a prayer team to pray for the campaign.

##### *Four Months Out*

- Determine dates for *The Family Project*. Check the church calendar for any conflicts.
- Assemble the leadership team, which may include a coordinator, publicity manager, and registration manager.
- Roll out initial program information, letting the congregation know if new small groups will be formed and that registration will begin soon.
- Kick off the publicity campaign.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

##### *Three Months Out*

- Recruit small group leaders. They should be effective communicators who can foster discussion and honesty in a group setting.
- Order Participant's Guides for the church or small group members to purchase.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

## *Two Months Out*

- Set up registration tables during services and display posters or other publicity materials. If possible, have a promotional video clip looping (playing over and over) at the table to give people an idea of the content. Include questions regarding preferences for location, day, and time on the registration form. The answers will be helpful as you assign people to small groups.
- Set up training sessions for small group leaders. Ask one or more experienced leaders in your church to help train volunteers. As needed, print out copies of the digital Leader's Guide from the DVD.
- Assign couples to groups using location, time, and other preferences listed on the registration forms.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

## *One Month Out*

- Send information to participants. Include meeting location, times, and start date. Inform group members of materials needed and avenues to purchase the materials. Add a promotional web banner to your church's website if you haven't already.

## *Two Weeks Out*

- Have leaders contact group members and introduce themselves. Welcome the members to the group and follow up on any details that need to be communicated.

## POSSIBLE SCHEDULE FOR CHURCHWIDE SMALL GROUP PROGRAM

1. Bring everyone together for a kickoff event to start the series. All small groups could meet together for an evening of fellowship. If you have promotional video or a favorite clip from the DVD itself, play it. Provide food and some introductory "get to know you" activities—preferably some that are nonthreatening but encourage interaction among group members.
2. Meet as separate small groups for the length of the course, with each group working through the same sessions. You may want to meet as a large group mid-course.
3. Come together a week after the end of the series to discuss what the groups have learned and to introduce your next series if you have one planned. Make this a "completion celebration." Give people the opportunity to share stories of how *The Family Project* has affected their lives and their loved ones.

## USING THE FAMILY PROJECT IN A CHURCH CAMPAIGN (INREACH AND OUTREACH)

*Ideal Format for Large Groups (Elective Sunday School Classes, Life-stage Groups, etc.)*

### **Benefits**

#### *Inreach*

- Helps unify the church body as members work toward a common goal.
- Communicates the church's priority for understanding and protecting the family.

#### *Outreach*

- Draws members from your local community into your church.
- Comes alongside families in crisis throughout your community.
- Presents God's design for the family.
- Presents the gospel to nonbelievers.

## PLANNING A CHURCH CAMPAIGN

### *Five to Six Months Out*

- Meet with church and lay leadership to cast a vision for *The Family Project*. Leadership that's invested in a campaign can generate great excitement throughout the congregation. Show PowerPoint® slides or video clips to help cast the vision.
- Recruit a prayer team to pray for the campaign on a regular basis.

### *Four Months Out*

- Recruit the church campaign leadership team. Choose it carefully. Leaders must be committed to the success of the event and have the skill set needed to fulfill the tasks in their areas. This could also be a great opportunity to begin training new leaders in the church. Pair experienced leaders with others who are looking to grow in their leadership skills, and use this as a mentoring situation.

Who do you need to make this campaign happen? The following individuals are ideal, but if you can't get this many people involved, consider doubling up on or rearranging tasks.



## **Campaign Coordinator**

### *Responsibilities*

- Oversee planning and implementation of the campaign, including scheduling of classrooms, publicity, program content, registration, and budget.
- Recruit members for the leadership team who will take initiative, follow through with their duties, and recruit and lead their own sub-teams.
- Work with team members to help them accomplish goals.
- Act as a liaison between the campaign team and church leaders.

## **Program Coordinator**

### *Responsibilities*

- Recruit a large-group facilitator who'll introduce and wrap up the DVD sessions.
- Recruit small group discussion leaders.
- Organize and oversee AV/tech support.
- Recruit other program participants, such as worship team members, prayer team members, etc.
- Gather all print and other materials needed (curriculum, handouts, etc.).

## **Publicity Coordinator**

### *Responsibilities*

- Oversee publicity efforts for the campaign.
- Work with a designer to create or customize printed publicity materials such as posters and invitations (see the DVD for digital resources).
- Work with church leadership to publicize *The Family Project* in church services through announcements, bulletin inserts, etc.
- Oversee distribution of publicity materials.

## **Registration Coordinator (unless using existing classes or groups)**

### *Responsibilities*

- Organize and implement the registration process.

- Recruit a team to run registration tables for several weeks.
- Track registrants and payments for Participant's Guides.

### **Small Group Discussion Leaders**

#### *Responsibilities*

- Attend training.
- Prepare for small group times using digital Leader's Guides and other materials.
- Create an atmosphere conducive to open conversation.
- Facilitate discussions in the small group setting.

### **Hospitality Coordinator**

#### *Responsibilities*

- Oversee room setup, child care, refreshments, and greeters as needed.

### **Three Months Out**

#### *Inreach Campaign*

- Create a publicity plan for the campaign. See *The Family Project* DVD for digital resources you can use.
- Determine the campaign budget. Include costs for publicity (printing and postage), materials, refreshments, Participant's Guides, etc.
- Order Participant's Guides for the church or group members to purchase.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

#### *Outreach Campaign*

- Create a publicity plan for the campaign; direct mail, invitations, posters, and banners are effective avenues for reaching out to the community. You'll find many of these on *The Family Project* DVD.
- Choose a target audience for outreach, whether a geographic area or a segment of the population. Be intentional in your distribution location. Considerations to keep in mind: proximity to church, cultural diversity of neighborhoods, etc.

- Determine the campaign budget. Include costs for publicity (printing and postage), materials, refreshments, Participant's Guides, etc.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

### *Two Months Out*

- Set up training sessions for group leaders. Ask one or more experienced leaders in your church to help train volunteers. As needed, print out copies of the digital Leader's Guide from the DVD.
- Take files for posters and other promotional items to the printer. Determine the target area in which you'll use them and set your print numbers accordingly.
- Begin implementing the publicity campaign.
- Start announcements from the pulpit. Educate the congregation on the campaign and help them catch the vision along with the leadership. Encourage people to think about friends and neighbors they'd like to invite.
- Send e-mail invitations.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

### *One Month Out*

#### *Inreach Campaign*

- Continue to mention the campaign from the pulpit. Using the Sermon Notes found on *The Family Project* DVD, plan a sermon or sermon series to help launch the course. Adapt the Sermon Notes to fit your style and purposes.
- Use promotional skits, video clips, PowerPoint slides, and testimonials in services. Take time to watch *The Family Project* DVD sessions and show samples to the congregation.
- Display banners and posters at church. Be strategic in their placement, concentrating on areas with the most traffic from your target group.
- Add a promotional web banner to your church's website if you haven't already.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

#### *Outreach Campaign*

- If you're using a sermon or sermon series to promote the campaign, consider publicizing it through your church's website and/or radio or TV ads. Adapting the Sermon Notes found on *The Family Project DVD*, plan messages that draw nonbelievers or fringe believers in, and title them to have broad appeal.
- Use promotional skits, video clips, and testimonials in services whose sermons you've publicized.
- Recruit volunteers to distribute invitations and door hangers. Find congregants who have a passion for meeting and inviting new people to church and recruit them to help in this area. Actual distribution should begin about three weeks before the course starts.
- Display banners and posters in the community and at church, being strategic in their placement.
- Add a promotional web banner to your church's website if you haven't already.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

### *Three Weeks Out*

#### *Inreach Campaign*

- Send e-mail invitations to congregants. Be sure to include your times, location, and event dates.
- Place bulletin inserts, beginning now. See the DVD for digital resources.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

#### *Outreach Campaign*

- Continue implementing the publicity campaign. If you're using a direct mail approach, deliver information now.
- Distribute door hangers and invitations in the community. Concentrate on neighborhoods the leadership team has pinpointed.
- Continue to pray for the campaign.

### *One Week Out*

#### *Inreach Campaign*

- Send e-mail reminders to your congregation.

- Make a campaign reminder announcement from the pulpit.

### *Outreach Campaign*

- Remind the congregation to invite friends and loved ones they'd like to involve in the campaign.
- Reinforce invitations with phone calls if possible.

### FOLLOWING UP: AFTER AN INREACH CAMPAIGN

Plan ongoing opportunities for people to process and apply what they've learned through *The Family Project*. These may take the form of social events, reminders from the pulpit on specific topics that were covered, formation of small groups for anyone interested in furthering relationships with others from the campaign, or additional ideas your church may have. There are many ways to keep participants connected and to extend the influence of *The Family Project*. Be creative and enjoy watching God work!

### FOLLOWING UP: AFTER AN OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Within a month after the event, send follow-up letters to people who attended the campaign and are not members or regular attenders of your church. Thank them for coming and give them an idea of what your church has to offer. If possible, have someone call and ask if they would like a visit from a pastor or lay leader of the church. If they have children, introduce them to your children's ministry through brochures or handouts, or have your children's ministries leader contact them. The most important part of the follow-up process is to let people know your church cares and wants to walk alongside them. The follow-up process is about the people; they'll respond when genuine concern for their well-being is expressed, and God will use your church to affect their lives in powerful ways.

## TEN TIPS FOR GROUP LEADERS

1. If your group is like most, you'll often run out of time before you run out of discussion questions and activities. What to do? Simply choose the exercises and questions in *The Family Project Leader's Guide* that you think will be most helpful to your group and concentrate on those. Try starting with the bare essentials—watching and discussing the DVD and demonstrating one of its principles through an application activity. Then add steps as your schedule allows.
2. Invite discussion, but don't be surprised if some group members are reluctant to share personal information. If people want to reflect silently on a probing question, encourage them to do so. Silence doesn't necessarily mean you're "bombing"; it can indicate participants are thinking. Small groups should be a safe place to discuss different opinions.
3. *The Family Project* applies to single and married people, parents and those without children. Couples will benefit most if both spouses attend your sessions. In some cases, though, schedules or interest levels may require some to attend alone. If that's true in your group, be sure to help these individuals feel welcomed and supported. You may need to adapt some activities accordingly. Instead of having spouses discuss a question, for example, you may want to form subgroups of three to five—or simply skip questions that would be too personal for individuals to discuss with anyone other than a mate. The same is true of singles and single parents, who especially need to find a warm welcome when you're using a family-oriented series.
4. Don't allow laughter at anyone's expense. If some of the discussion questions seem likely to cause embarrassment, feel free to omit them; if they would be more appropriately answered silently or in private, encourage group members to do so later.
5. Instead of pressing group members to reveal information they're not comfortable sharing, tell an occasional story about yourself if you like. Propose the following guidelines to participants: Before raising a question or referring to an experience, make sure it won't embarrass anyone, family member or otherwise; if in doubt, privately ask the person's permission beforehand; maintain confidentiality.
6. Let participants know that if they're struggling with issues raised by *The Family Project*, help is available. Provide contact information for local Christian counselors, especially any who are connected with your church. If your church staff doesn't know of a therapist, Focus on the Family has a referral network of Christian counselors. For information, call 1-800-A-FAMILY and ask for the Counseling Department.

7. If possible, each group member should have a Participant's Guide. Otherwise, not everyone will be able to write individual responses to opinion questions. It's a good idea to have a few extra copies of the Participant's Guide on hand, so that visitors (and those who forgot their books) can take part.

8. If you don't have an answer to every question, join the club! It's okay to say, "I don't know." Ask group members to share wisdom from their experience. Refer people to books or websites you've found helpful.

9. Have a good time! Understanding God's design for the family may be serious business, but most of your group members probably would appreciate a light touch as they learn. Let your group be a place where people can laugh together and gain perspective on their challenges.

10. Pray for your group members during the week. Urge them to pray for each other. Ask God to help each person and family reflect God's design.

Ready to have a lasting, positive impact on the individuals and families in your church and community?

May God bless you as you lead *The Family Project*!