



# ***Quick Response Toolkit*** ***Ministry At Home***

*WEA Family Challenge*



# Quick Response Toolkit

## Ministry At Home

WEA Family Challenge



### A Welcome Note

The main aim of this toolkit is to provide you with relevant information that might be helpful to you in preparing a plan to minister to the families under your care.

Included in this Toolkit you will find relevant information to implement the 'Ministry At Home' (MAH) plan effectively. Resources include:

- How to Build a Leadership Team
- Family Self-Care Resources
- Family Faith-Building Resources

These are unusual times we live in. The coronavirus pandemic has brought enormous changes to every part of society, but especially to the ministry of the local church.

With so many people in quarantine, many parts of the existing church ministry infrastructure are no longer functioning as usual. With our families confined to homes due to lockdown, new effective ways of discipleship are urgently needed.

One clear reality of this new ministry environment is the central role that the home plays in disciple-making. Are our homes ready for the task? Many families are under high degrees of stress due to the circumstances they face. How will they pay the bills? Will they still have a job? Where will they get food? What if they get sick? How will they care for each other? How will they provide for their children? How will they take care of aging parents? What do they do when all the traditional support structures in a community are taken away?

How can the Church equip homes for this unique moment? If homes are indeed meant to be the primary location for the development of faith in the next generation, what does that look like now? These are the kinds of big questions every church leader is wrestling with right now.

It is in this moment that we see a tremendous window of opportunity for the Church to continue their connection with families, to minister to their many different needs, and to equip them to carry out the disciple-making task, especially for the next generation.

The main aim of this toolkit is to provide you with relevant information that might be helpful to you in preparing a plan to minister to the families under your care.

We know that families are in need in a myriad of ways during this crisis. There are certain needs that require a quick response from the church. Because of this, we have worked hard to get this toolkit in your hands in the shortest time possible.

Included in this Toolkit you will find relevant information you might need to implement the 'Ministry At Home' plan (see Section II (D) below) effectively. We are planning to update this toolkit regularly to incorporate other ideas and resources in the coming weeks.

We join you in prayer as you boldly step forward to take this difficult call to the families during this crisis and experience our Emmanuel – God is with us!

## **Introduction**

Families need training in order to live a godly life. By themselves, they do not automatically pursue God Almighty with passion, and become effective in faith formation of the next generation. Someone has to systemize and orchestrate the discipleship activities of the families in the local church.

The local church is called by God to that; to equip (disciple) families with the needed knowledge, attitudes, and skills in carrying out these activities - to equip the saints (Ephesians 4:12).

This crisis is a historic moment in the life of the church. Leaders can seize this chance to teach the congregation God's design for church and home to work together. This is rooted in the biblical understanding that God created the family as the primary "institution" to pass on faith to the next generation, not the church. Parents, not the church, are ultimately responsible for the spiritual training of children. Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Genesis 18:18-19, Deuteronomy 11:18-20, and Ephesians 6:4.

For our part, the church has the opportunity now to equip our families intentionally and systematically on the 'whys', the 'whats', and the 'hows' of ministry at home.

Besides meeting certain immediate needs of your families (the purpose of this toolkit), we hope that by equipping families to build homes that are shaping godly lives, you will be laying a foundation upon which the church shall continue to cultivate the family discipleship culture as an integral part of the corporate discipleship structure in the future.

With that said, let us turn to the two main tasks at hand to prepare your church to minister to the families in need during this crisis. We refer to this as 'Ministry At Home (MAH)' initiative:

- How to Build a Leadership Team
- Family Self-Care Resources

# ■ **Building the Capacity to Minister**

## INTRODUCTION

In this preparatory phase, we suggest the following tasks.

- Organisation of the MAH leadership team.
- Assessment of family needs.
- Preparation of the MAH plan.

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Formation

It is difficult to shoulder the burden of family ministry alone, unless the church happens to be very small. This is especially so if your leadership team is fairly new to this ministry.

We suggest you form a team dedicated to the MAH initiative with the overall focus on developing the family discipleship cultures at church and at home.

### Team Training

**Sense of urgency.** In order to build momentum among team members, a strategic first step would be assessing the current state of ministries at the church. Specifically, the team should analyse both the short-term and long-term effectiveness of the current ministries for equipping families for ministry at home.

This will build the right intensity among the team members in driving the initiative forward.

**Beliefs and values.** The activities we are involved with as a church are a reflection of what we believe and what we value. For instance, we believe strongly and value highly the gatherings of believers such as weekly worship services. This leads us to invest heavily in these gatherings with our resources.

A belief is a conviction that we have about something that we hold dearly to. When we act on this belief, it becomes our value.

MAH is a critical initiative for the church to undertake not just because it can greatly enhance our ministry to the church members when they are confined at home during the lockdown. It is based on the belief that discipleship of the home, or family discipleship, is a mandate of God.

There are certain beliefs and values that church leaders must embrace (with sufficient conviction) in order for them to lead their people successfully in the MAH initiative. These are as follows.

- God assigns different and significant roles for both the church and home to play in His kingdom-building.
- Strong partnership between church and home is a must for the initiative to succeed.

- Parents are the primary trainers of faith for their children and the church is responsible to equip them to do that.
- MAH is an important step towards establishing the culture of making disciples at home (family discipleship) as an integral part of the corporate discipleship structure. It is not just a convenient programme to meet the needs of the hour.
- Because the introduction of MAH could be something that is uncommon in the prevailing church life, especially those who have not been giving much attention currently to family discipleship so far, we need to plan for a process to bring this ministry to the people.

(Note: Please refer to Appendix 1 for more details on the above beliefs and values.)

In order to help your ministry team take these first steps, we have prepared three booklets to support you. These simple resources will help guide your team in crucial conversations surrounding the **'whys'** (<http://tiny.cc/Why-Booklet>), the **'whats'** (<http://tiny.cc/What-Booklet>), and the **'hows'** (<http://tiny.cc/How-Booklet>) of family discipleship.

'It starts with me'. Modelling what MAH looks like in leaders' own homes is a powerful way to start leading the congregation forward in this. A good reference resource on being a model of discipleship is found at <https://www.tvcreources.net/resource-library/guides/family-discipleship-guide>.

As you and your leaders are trained to carry out the MAH activities, share your experiences with one another to build confidence and commitment to the plan as you prepare to rally the congregation for this.

### Long-term Considerations

We strongly believe that this window that the church has in building more expansive ministry to the congregation in their daily living while confined to their homes will lead to opening up of another chapter for the church to intensify their family discipleship ministry after the lockdown period is over.

Even though your immediate focus is on the equipping needed for the MAH plan of the lockdown period, do seriously consider preparing how to build further momentum in ministry to the home in the post-lockdown future. This can take place shortly after you roll out of the MAH plan.

## FAMILY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Naturally, the MAH plan you want to prepare needs to be effective in meeting immediate needs of the congregation you are ministering to.

The first step to do is to find out what those needs are. You may already know what these are. The second step is to prioritise them, considering your available resources at your disposal. Third is for the leadership team to formulate a plan.

We are outlining below the pressing needs of the families that we have identified, based on our research and interviews with parents during lockdown. These are by no means exhaustive.

- Management of stress and anxiety.
- Organisation of daily home life.
- Discipleship of family members.
- Relationship struggles.

We do not intend to cover all the needs under the above headings in this first version of the Toolkit. We hope to enlarge our coverage of needs in the future versions to take into considerations the needs highlighted by the church leaders who participate in the MAH initiative like you.

For this start-up Toolkit, we provide resources in the following areas.

- Management of stress and anxiety.
- Organisation of daily home life.
- Discipleship of family members.
- Relationship struggles.

## THE MAH PLAN

### Planning

As you consider some of these suggested programmes for ministering to families, take careful note of the following considerations.

- **Long-term view.** We hope that as you seize the opportunities provided by this pandemic to increase your ministry to the homes, it will serve as your launching pad for further development of a discipleship at home culture in the long run. Therefore, it very important to take a long-term view when you plan for meeting immediate needs of the families during the lockdown period.
- **Leadership training.** Besides the programmes, it is essential that the team is convinced that family discipleship is a necessary and central function of the church, not only during the lockdown period but beyond that as well.
- **Beliefs and values.** Proper priority needs to be given to how the church communicates these to the congregations and successfully secures their commitment to the plan for discipleship to take place consistently at home.
- **Culture change process.** The plan should consider the process involving the following steps.
  - Impartation of a captivating vision of the mission of the church in equipping the parents to build relationships and faith intentionally in the family.

- Clear and concise explanation of the implementation plan. This includes training the facilitators among the church members to carry out the tasks.
- Celebrate the progress of the rollout of each programme at regular intervals.

## Ready-to-Use Resources

### ● Self-care

If parents are not doing well themselves during this pandemic period, they cannot give as much to their children, especially emotionally.

Parents are a major determinant of the conditions in the home. They are likely facing a lot of stress and anxiety during this period. These have to be managed at a certain level in order for them to have the capacity to join the church in what it plans to do.

Your self-care focus has an opening for you to launch the ministry to the home. It may even lead you to ministering to other needs of the home.

The materials contained in the following videos in the 'Self-care' folder (<http://tiny.cc/Self-Care>) are useful to share with the parents on the subject matter.

'Coping with Anxiety'.

- 'Fatigue and Emotion'.
- 'Fatigue and Time Pressures'.

Appendix 2 of this toolkit outlines a self-help checklist for the parents to assess their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual conditions.

## Home Atmosphere

### ● Family Rhythm

In the haste to introduce programmes that would greatly benefit the homes we wish to minister to, we can sometimes overlook the critical step of assessing pre-existing conditions and identifying factors that might impede the plan going forward.

One key area under lockdown that you could help the family to do is establishing a healthy daily rhythm. With parents having to work from home, while children continue their school work at the same time, life at home can be very chaotic, resulting in tension and conflicts. A workable daily family schedule with clear objectives for the whole family will help everyone towards harmonious living in a stressful environment.

You may find helpful other tips on building family rhythm through the following videos at this weblink <http://tiny.cc/Family-Rhythm>.

- 'How To Create Routine For Your Family'.
- 'COVID-19 Outbreak- How to Parent in a Way that Benefits Your Whole Family'
- 'Rhythms and routines in our homes'.

This is also a great time for the family to build routines for relationship- and faith-building.

We suggest that this might be a time to create a new culture at home. For example, focusing on mealtimes, special times of the days of the week for the family to connect, having faith talks, fun activities, etc.

- **Family meal times.**

A family that eats together bonds together. Our eating time is a time of relational and Spiritual bonding. Research conducted by Harvard University, shows how family meal has transformed the lives of many homes especially children. Here is an excerpt from their website “Over the past 20 years, research has shown what parents have known for a long time: sharing a fun family meal is good for the spirit, brain and health of all family members. Recent studies link regular family meals with the kinds of behaviours that parents want for their children: higher grade-point averages, resilience, and self-esteem. Additionally, family meals are linked to lower rates of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, eating disorders, and depression.” Hence it is important to fix regular mealtimes and you can access a family mealtime conversation questions from this link [www.urbanindia.org/familydiscipleship](http://www.urbanindia.org/familydiscipleship).

Above are some practical ways that you could help the families in your church almost immediately.

- **Home Aroma**

When the family starts to catch on with the commitment to intentionally build a stronger home, you may want to consider implementing a longer-term plan for cultivating a healthy home atmosphere for the members to thrive in. The framework of Heritage Builder Global (outlined in the downloadable book, Family Fragrance, at <https://www.heritagebuildersglobal.com/family-resources>) that takes on the acrostic of AROMA could be helpful in achieving it.

- **A – Affection. Building love relationships.**
- **R – Respect. Cherishing each other’s worth.**
- **O – Order. Cultivating orderliness.**
- **M – Merriment. Creating fun time.**
- **A – Affirmation. Inspiring one another with encouragement.**

We shall explain all these in more details in the later version.

- **Family Faith-building**

There are many resources available on the web that support families who want to enhance what they are already doing with devotional times and other faith-building activities at home. Please contact us if you need these.

For those who are yet to establish a culture of consistent family faith-building, they may wish to consider the following:

To give you an idea what this alternative approach looks like, please watch this video...

<http://tiny.cc/Family-Faith-Talks>.

This fun-approach to faith-building helps those who have little experience to start this culture at home with ease.

Each family faith lesson consists of the following components.

**Step #1:** Prayer. Pray that God will give you the desire to provide fun and effective spiritual training in your home.



**Step #3:** Family Time Bible Lessons for Families Book. Read the Introduction, Teaching Tips and Family Time Format sections at the beginning of the book.

**Step #4:** Gather your family and lead a Family Time! Lead the Bent and Torn activity. Everyone, adults and children, do the activity together.

**Step #5:** Schedule time and pick a lesson for your next Family Time. You may find the Family Time Activity Book containing 20 lessons in the above folder. This ministry is committed to providing free online training. You may sign up for more free family faith activities at [www.famtime.com](http://www.famtime.com).

In addition to formal family devotions, families can consider using naturally occurring activities in their day to build Christian values. See these examples of how that could be done in a family to build faith formation:

Dishes and Discipleship Series – Seven in All YouTube Channel  
Intro Video: <https://youtu.be/brEmaEQleQ8>

These devotions were designed with the COVID crisis in mind as families are staying at home.

## ● Parenting

For this version of the Toolkit, we are suggesting the following resources.

- [Quick parenting tips during lockdown](https://covid19.worldidea.org/what-to-do-with-my-child-at-home/) (<https://covid19.worldidea.org/what-to-do-with-my-child-at-home/>).
- '12 Huge Mistakes Parents Can Avoid' video series (with discussion questions at end of each segment) of Dr. Tim Elmore. This resource is useful for small group setting. Weblinks are [Session 1](http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session1) (<http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session1>), [Session 2](http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session2) (<http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session2>), [Session 3](http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session3) (<http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session3>), and [Session 4](http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session4) (<http://tiny.cc/Elmore-Session4>).