

What is the Faith@Home Ministry Strategy?

The Faith@Home ministry strategy is based upon Deuteronomy 6:4-9. For years, the spiritual nurture of youth and children has been primarily church-centered and family supported. In other words, parents act as if it is the job of the children's ministry and youth ministry to teach their child or youth about God. However, this approach does not conform to what God commands in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Faith@Home ministry strategy seeks to follow God's command that the spiritual nurture of children and youth be family-centered and church supported.

How does this strategy work?

Simply put, the Faith@Home ministry strategy seeks to "teach people to love God, who will then teach other people to love God—especially in the home." A primary focus of this strategy is the spiritual development of the parent or guardian of a child. Since the amount of time a Sunday School teacher has with a child is tiny in comparison with the time a parent or guardian has with a child, the strategy is right to focus on helping the parent or guardian grow in faith. Church events and activities are programmed with this focus in mind. All events and activities should help parents/guardians in their spiritual development.

Another focus of this strategy is intentional parent/guardian training. As children and youth reach certain milestones in their lives, parents face new challenges. This strategy seeks to train parents for the next milestone in the life of their child before the child actually reaches the milestone. Knowing what lies ahead and having training before you encounter it allows parents to plan for this next stage of life. During our Family Sundays, we offer Milestone Seminars for different stages of the journey of a child.

A final focus of this strategy is helping parents to lead spiritually in the home. Although we could focus on helping a child navigate through the morass of immorality in our time, this focus would be short-sighted. The Faith@Home strategy seeks to teach parents to love God and to equip them to train their children to love God. The strategy assumes that if a child loves God, he will have high morals. Through weekly Faith Talks (times of prayer and Bible reading), capturing God Sightings (times when you can point children toward the work of God in their midst), and family worship times, parents can begin to teach their children to love God.

How do Milestones work?

Churches typically celebrate three times in the life of a child: birth (baby dedication), faith commitment (baptism), and high school graduation (Senior celebration). Generally, these times are just celebrations without parent training. We understand that there are more than three milestones in a child's journey. Consequently, the Faith@Home strategy helps parents to anticipate these milestones so that they can prepare for them. Below is an explanation of each milestone in the journey, along with the process involved.

Baby Blessings

- Target Audience
 - Homes with newborns (0-2 yrs.) and expectant parents
- Purpose
 - Marking the milestone when parents first present their baby to God

- Process
 - Parents attend the Milestone Seminar (offered on certain Family Sundays)
 - After the seminar, the parents begin working on the **core competency** for this milestone
 - **Parent/guardian as primary faith trainer**
 - Parents/child participate in the All-Church Celebration (Parent/Child Dedication)
 - The church will make sure that parents are aware of the date of the All-Church Celebration
 - Parents are not required to participate in this celebration. However, in order to participate, parents must attend the Milestone Seminar.
 - Parents and extended family conduct their own At-Home Celebration
 - See seminar materials for more information on ideas for this celebration
 - This celebration is optional for the family
 - Parents begin age-appropriate Faith Talks and God Sightings
 - Parents begin anticipating the need to attend the parent seminar for the next Milestone

First Bible

- Target Audience
 - Homes with children age 2-4 yrs.
- Purpose
 - Marking the milestone when children receive their own copy of God's Word
- Process
 - Parents attend the Milestone Seminar when the child reaches age 2 (offered on certain Family Sundays)
 - After the seminar, the parents begin working on the **core competency** for this milestone
 - **Sowing God's Word**
 - Parents/child participate in the All-Church Celebration (First Bible Presentation)
 - The church will make sure that parents are aware of the date of the All-Church Celebration
 - Parents are not required to participate in this celebration. However, in order to participate, parents must attend the Milestone Seminar.
 - Parents and extended family conduct their own At-Home Celebration
 - See seminar materials for more information and ideas for this celebration
 - This celebration is optional for the family
 - Parents continue to lead age-appropriate Faith Talks and to capture God Sightings
 - Parents begin anticipating the need to attend the parent seminar for the next Milestone

Faith Commitment

- Target Audience
 - Homes with children age 4+ who are not Christians
- Purpose
 - Marking the milestone when a child chooses Christ as Savior
- Process

- Parents attend Milestone Seminar when the child reaches age 4 (offered on certain Family Sundays)
- After the seminar parents begin teaching their child the **core competencies** for this milestone
 - **Who is Jesus?**
 - **What is truth?**
 - **What is sin?**
 - **What is salvation?**
 - **Why do I need to be baptized?**
 - Parents/guardians teach these competencies as a foundation for leading their own children toward faith
 - The Faith Talks are a great time to teach these competencies
- Parents continue to lead Faith Talks, to capture God Sightings, and to teach the core competencies
- Parents use discernment and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to determine when the child is ready to accept Christ as Savior
 - The milestone seminar materials provide information on how a parent can begin to tell if the child is ready for salvation
- After receiving salvation, the child is ready to be baptized
 - Schedule this with the church
 - On the date of the baptism, we will also have the All-Church Celebration for your family
 - Parents are not required to participate in this celebration. However, in order to participate, parents must attend the Milestone Seminar.
- Parents and extended family conduct their own At-Home Celebration
 - See seminar materials for more information and ideas for this celebration
 - This celebration is optional for the family
- Parents begin anticipating the need to attend the parent seminar for the next Milestone
 - In the meantime, parents continue leading Faith Talks, capturing God Sightings, and teaching the core competencies

Preteen Passage

- Target Audience
 - Homes with children at age 9
- Purpose
 - Marking the milestone when a preteen passes from childhood to adolescence
- Process
 - Parents attend Milestone Seminar when the child reaches age 9 (offered on certain Family Sundays)
 - After the seminar, the parents begin teaching the child the **core competencies** for this milestone
 - **Identity**
 - **Spiritual Growth**
 - **Spiritual Disciplines**
 - Faith Talks are a perfect time to begin teaching these competencies

- Attending the Milestone Seminar when the child reaches age 9 allows parents to teach these competencies before the child reaches the 5th grade; however, parents should continue to utilize Faith Talks to teach these competencies on the journey to the next Milestone
- When the child reaches 5th grade, the family is ready to participate in the All-Church Celebration
 - The church will make sure that parents are aware of the date of the All-Church Celebration
 - Parents are not required to participate in this celebration. However, in order to participate, parents must attend the Milestone Seminar.
- Parents and extended family conduct their own At-Home Celebration
 - See seminar materials for more information and ideas for this celebration
 - This celebration is optional for the family
- Parents begin anticipating the need to attend the parent seminar for the next Milestone
 - In the meantime, parents continue leading Faith Talks, capturing God Sightings, and teaching the core competencies

Commitment to Purity

- Target audience
 - Homes with children in 6th grade and above
- Purpose
 - Marking the milestone when a teenager commits to purity for life
- Process
 - Parents attend the Milestone Seminar when the child reaches the 6th grade (offered on certain Family Sundays)
 - After the seminar, the parents begin teaching the child the **core competencies** for this milestone
 - **Biblical purity**
 - **Healthy friendships**
 - **Identity in Christ**
 - **Biblical Sex**
 - Faith Talks are a perfect time to begin teaching these competencies
 - Attending the Milestone Seminar when the child reaches 6th grade allows parents to teach these competencies before the child reaches the 7th grade; however, parents should continue to utilize Faith Talks to teach these competencies on the journey to the next Milestone
 - When the child reaches 7th grade, the family is ready to participate in the All-Church Celebration
 - The church will make sure that parents are aware of the date of the All-Church Celebration
 - Parents are not required to participate in this celebration. However, in order to participate, parents must attend the Milestone Seminar.
 - Parents and extended family conduct their own At-Home Celebration
 - See seminar materials for more information and ideas for this celebration
 - This celebration is optional for the family

- Parents begin anticipating the need to attend the parent seminar for the next Milestone
 - In the meantime, parents continue leading Faith Talks, capturing God Sightings, and teaching the core competencies

Passage to Adulthood

- Target audience
 - Homes with 9th and 10th graders
- Purpose
 - Marking the milestone when a teenager passes from adolescence to adulthood
- Process
 - Parents attend the milestone seminar when the child reaches the 9th or 10th grade (offered on certain Family Sundays)
 - After the seminar, the parents begin teaching the child the **core competencies** for this milestone
 - **Roles of men/women**
 - **Spiritual gifts/service**
 - Faith Talks are a perfect time to begin teaching these competencies
 - Attending the Milestone Seminar when the child reaches 9th grade allows parents to teach these competencies before the child reaches the 10th grade; however, parents should continue to utilize Faith Talks to teach these competencies on the journey to the next Milestone
 - During the summer before the child's 10th grade year, the family is ready to participate in the All-Church Celebration
 - The church will make sure that parents are aware of the date of the All-Church Celebration
 - Parents are not required to participate in this celebration. However, in order to participate, parents must attend the Milestone Seminar.
 - Parents and extended family conduct their own At-Home Celebration
 - See seminar materials for more information and ideas for this celebration
 - This celebration is optional for the family
 - Parents begin anticipating the need to attend the parent seminar for the next Milestone
 - In the meantime, parents continue leading Faith Talks, capturing God Sightings, and teaching the core competencies

High School Graduation

- Target audience
 - Homes with 11th and 12th graders
- Purpose
 - Marking the milestone when a teenager launches from high school
- Process
 - Parents attend the milestone seminar when the child reaches the 11th or 12th grade (offered on certain Family Sundays)
 - After the seminar, the parents begin teaching the child the **core competencies** for this milestone
 - **Defending my faith**

- **God’s plan for my life**
- **Dating**
- **Marriage**
- **Life skills**
 - Faith Talks are a perfect time to begin teaching these competencies
 - Attending the Milestone Seminar when the child reaches 11thth grade allows parents to teach these competencies before the child graduates; however, parents should continue to teach these competencies as the graduates journey to their next stage of life
- On Senior Sunday, which occurs each May prior to baccalaureate and graduation, the family is ready to participate in the All-Church Celebration
 - The church will make sure that parents are aware of the date of the All-Church Celebration
 - Parents are not required to participate in this celebration. However, in order to participate, parents must attend the Milestone Seminar.
- Parents and extended family conduct their own At-Home Celebration
 - See seminar materials for more information and ideas for this celebration
 - This celebration is optional for the family
- Parents continue leading Faith Talks, capturing God Sightings, and teaching the core competencies

Is the Faith@Home Strategy telling me how to parent? And doesn’t it leave out kids whose parents aren’t churchgoers?

No, that is not our intent. Perhaps these final thoughts will address these questions.

The Life Milestones Strategy aims to:

- Keep the biblical model for the spiritual growth of the family on our minds (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 describes a model that is family-centered and church-supported **NOT** church-centered and family-supported)
 - Love God—teach others to love God—especially in the home
- Provide support, encouragement, accountability, and resources for families as they journey through various stages of life with their children
- Provide a strategy for following the biblical model described above
 - There are other strategies that churches and parents utilize in following the biblical model of Deuteronomy 6:4-9

The Life Milestones Strategy does **NOT** aim to:

- Point out anyone’s parental shortcomings
- Tell you how to parent your own children
- Transform you into the perfect family
 - Your children will still mess up. They will still embarrass and frustrate you. They will still require you to devote large quantities of time to them. This is not a “set it and forget it” strategy.

- Make an idol out of the home and family
 - Isaiah 42:8: “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.”
- Exclude children/youth whose families are not engaged with our church
- Make us so inwardly-focused on our families that we forget or neglect the outward focus of the Great Commission
 - Follow the Great Commission as a family!