

# Welcome to the FAMILY

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST



Drs. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra



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**FAMILY**  
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# INTRODUCTION

Have you ever gone to the hardware store to purchase glue and found yourself bewildered by a vast array of adhesives to choose from? There are synthetic glues, solvent glues, and some made from plants, like pine rosin. Some glue is even made of animal collagen. Then there are drying adhesives, pressure-sensitive adhesives, contact adhesives, and hot adhesives designed for glue guns. Some glue is water-based and some are super glues that set fast and hard.

Of course you need to know what material you will put the glue on. If you are working with plastic, you might use craft glue or hot glue. Wood glue works best with wood, and silicone adhesive is often used with glass. A spray adhesive can be applied to Styrofoam, plastic, and paper. Epoxy is often used with metal. Rubber cement is ideal if you need some flexibility.

What kind of glue should you use on church members? I'm not suggesting we buy an adhesive to pour onto people in our congregations who are falling apart! However, research shows that between 30 and 50 percent of new members who are baptized do not stick to the church. They fall away. Sometimes we notice only after it has been several months or even years. What happened to them? Where did they go? Why did they leave? And, most importantly, what could we have done to help them stay connected to God's family?

I have personally wrestled with this issue as a pastor and decided to prayerfully seek to improve the odds. In a Midwest church plant just a few years ago I implemented a simple program to integrate newly baptized congregants into Adventism and our local congregation. I believed that most people who are new members face basic challenges in their personal relationships. The devil works hard to discourage those who have chosen to join the Advent movement and one of the areas he attacks is relationships—including the family and church family.

My plan was quite basic. We invited the entire church, along with the new members, to attend several evening programs, once a week, over the period of a couple months. The program began with a fellowship meal and music. Then we transitioned to a time of learning. I spoke briefly on how to strengthen the devotional life. I also touched on general issues related to the church, such as church organization, stewardship, Christian education, etc. But, for the most part, I concentrated on *relational* issues. I spoke on topics like conflict resolution, improving your marriage, and parenting.

Seventeen of the 20 new members attended the sessions. A year later I discovered that all 17 newly baptized congregants who went through the series still attended church! I am convinced there is a glue to help members stick with the church. While some people may have never been properly introduced to the doctrines of the Adventist Church, most of those who slip out have not been able to form relationships with other church members or are facing challenges in their lives. We can make a difference by not only building friendships through times of fellowship, but also by giving them simple tools to work on their relationships.

At the request of pastors and churches in our North American Division, I'm pleased to share *Welcome to the Family*. It is a resource that can be picked up and used by any pastor, family ministries committee, or lay leader. You can adjust meetings and topics to fit the unique needs of your local church. However you use it, I believe you will discover that providing opportunities for

fellowship and teaching, especially among your newly baptized members, will help to glue them to the body of Christ.

I know this series can successfully help new members connect to your congregation. I have implemented these principles and watched people stick to God's church. It's a glue that works!

Claudio J. Consuegra, DMin  
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Family Ministries Director  
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

## BACKGROUND

I'd like to share some of the reasons I decided to take a different approach to stemming the loss of new church members and instead attempt retaining more of them. First of all, I don't believe, and some church research will confirm this, that people leave the church because they were not properly instructed or because they did not believe in the doctrines of the church. Instead, I believe there have been deficiencies in the relational aspects of the discipling process and as a result new members are not well assimilated into church fellowship nor assisted in resolving relationship challenges in their families, some of whom are not Seventh-day Adventist and see their loved ones' decision in conflict with their own faith and practice.

What is critically important is how we help new members assimilate into the church *within the first six months after joining*. Literature and surveys conducted among other Christian churches and the Adventist Church, as well as my own observations, indicate that many of those who leave the church do so within six months after having joined. People who establish relationships with members of the church within the first six months<sup>1</sup> tend to stay in the church, and thus those joining the church through the effort of a member of the church with whom they already have a relationship will more than likely remain in the church past those first six months.<sup>2</sup> Church researcher George Barna stresses that for it to be more effective, this assimilation process must take place within six weeks from the time they join, by connecting them with the members of the church.<sup>3</sup>

Adventist researcher Monte Sahlin comments that "the dropout problem raises serious problems with issues of responsibility, fellowship, and the effectiveness of our nurture activities."<sup>4</sup> The last two items are of special importance. Sahlin's research indicates that new members of the church need and long for fellowship in their new congregation. "There is evidence that the dropouts are people who never bonded with the core group of their congregation, never felt part of the 'inner circle.'"<sup>5</sup> Sahlin adds that "when they are asked why they left the church, about one in four will cite a lack of fellowship."<sup>6</sup> Sahlin concludes that "three out of four leave for reasons having to do with their relationships with people and groups."<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the church they join must provide the fellowship and nurture activities they need if it wants to retain these new members.

Other research has confirmed Sahlin's conclusions. Lyle Schaller's research suggests that the more friends a person has in a congregation, the less likely that person is to become inactive or leave the church.<sup>8</sup> Cress and Arn agree that the number of new Christian friends a person

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1 Jane Thayer, "Pastors' Perspectives on Assimilating New Members: Part 1. Challenges and Needs," *Ministry*, February 2010, 7.

2 James A. Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care: Helping New Members Stay on Board* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 68.

3 George Barna, *Grow Your Church from the Outside In* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2002), 153.

4 Monte Sahlin and Norman Yergen, *Why Do Adventists Quit Coming to Church?* (Lincoln, NE: Center for Creative Ministry, 1998), 2.

5 *Ibid.*, 3.

6 Sahlin and Yergen, *Why Do Adventists Quit Coming to Church?* 3.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Lyle E. Schaller, *Assimilating New Members* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1978), 75.

makes during the first six months<sup>9</sup> of his/her church life directly influences whether that person continues as an active member, or drops out.<sup>10</sup> In the table below, Arn compares 100 people who recently made a decision to follow Christ in baptism and church membership, 50 of whom are now active in their church and 50 of whom have since dropped out, and the number of friends each group made in the church during the first six months. (See table below.)

Number of New Friends in the Church	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+
Actives	0	0	0	1	2	2	8	13	12	12
Drop-outs	8	13	14	8	4	2	1	0	0	0

Source: Win Arn and Charles Arn. *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples: How Every Christian Can Be an Effective Witness Through an Enabling Church* (Monrovia, CA: Church Growth Press, 1982, 1998), 156.

Pastor and writer Rick Warren concurs with the Arn’s regarding the need of new members developing relationships with existing members if they are to remain in the church. He writes, “Christians need relationships to grow. We don’t grow in isolation from others; we develop in the context of fellowship.”<sup>11</sup>

Winseman writes that after about 18 months, a group tends to become closed, in that the members now have a history together, and because of that shared history, it becomes difficult for new members to join such a group. Churches that are serious about making newcomers feel welcome in collective experience are constantly forming new groups of new people—who can then create their own shared history.<sup>12</sup>

Warren emphasizes that “you can’t just hope people will make friends in the church; you must encourage it, plan for it, structure for it, and facilitate it.”<sup>13</sup> Henry Cloud and John Townsend add that the New Testament teaches that the Body of Christ is to be people deeply connected to each other.<sup>14</sup> Arn and Arn warn that if after six months, the new member can identify few or no close friends in the church, the chances are extremely high that the person will soon be inactive.<sup>15</sup> The “friendship factor,” writes Ronald Sider, is the most important element in whether a person remains active in a local church, or drops out. That combination of food, friendship, song, prayer, and Bible study “invites and sustains many broken people along the slow, ongoing path of personal transformation.”<sup>16</sup>

I want to underscore the importance of the emotional connection that new members need with

9 Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care*, 39.

10 Arn and Arn, *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples*, 155.

11 Richard Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 338-339.

12 Winseman, *Growing an Engaged Church*, 25

13 Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 324-325.

14 Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals About Personal Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 122-123.

15 Arn and Arn, *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples*, 155.

16 Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 26

those already in the church. Winseman writes, “Neurological research confirms that our emotional connections are far stronger than our rational connections—it is not enough to know that belonging to an organization has positive benefits; one must also feel it. And more often than not, we *feel* it before we *know* it.”<sup>17</sup> Gallup research has discovered that the two primary causes of spiritual health are spiritual commitment and congregational engagement,<sup>18</sup> and that “belonging is far more likely to lead to believing. . . . The more engaged people feel in their congregations, the more spiritually committed they become.”<sup>19</sup>

For Arn and Arn, an effective incorporation strategy will help new members build additional relationships beyond the friend/relative originally responsible for bringing the person to Christ. He adds that the evidence that the incorporation strategy is working is when you see new members continue on as active members even when the original friend or relative moves to another city or dies.<sup>20</sup>

Thayer writes that as people are led to Christ and to His church, there are times when the church members run into resistance on the part of their family members.<sup>21</sup> Flowers and Flowers write about a dilemma new converts to the Adventist Church often face as they try to adapt to their new church family, especially when certain elements in these practices conflict with the new members’ family life: “In such times, let us not be quick to pass moral judgment upon those things in diet, dress, or recreation or other family lifestyle which, if they were caused to cease, would threaten to diminish marital or family bonds.”<sup>22</sup> Garland explains that family ministry helps reshape congregational life so that its members can accomplish the goal of community life, that is, “caring for one another, ministering to others, worshiping God.”<sup>23</sup> She goes on to describe some of the programs and services through which congregations can help strengthen the faithful living of Christian families as well as encouraging them as they reach out in ministry to the communities where they live. A few examples of these “family resource programs” include sharing meals together, recreational or social activities, retreats and camps, family networks and support groups.<sup>24</sup>

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17 Winseman, *Growing an Engaged Church*, 29.

18 Winseman, *Growing an Engaged Church*, 43.

19 Ibid., 44-45.

20 Arn and Arn, *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples*, 148.

21 Thayer, “Pastors’ Perspectives on Assimilating New Members: Part 1,” 7.

22 Flowers and Flowers, “Your Family,” 211.

23 Garland, *Family Ministry*, 466.

24 Ibid., 482-502.

# HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

## OBJECTIVE

You will quickly discover when you study the topics and materials in this leader's guide that there is a strong bend toward family life issues. You would expect that from a family ministries director! But the reason for this focus comes from more than my title and work. I have personally observed the struggles of many newly baptized members experiencing the stress of common problems in their personal lives. Therefore I have geared most of the teaching toward topics relevant to relationship and family life matters.

Some people will suggest that it is wise for newly baptized members to go through another set of doctrinal lessons, a pastor's Sabbath school class, a prayer meeting series, or a series of DVDs or other types of lessons in a small group. I fully support that plan. Being doctrinally grounded is important and should not be neglected. However, this is not the focus of *Welcome to the Family*. This program focuses on relationship building and teaching in areas often not covered in a regular series of Bible studies or evangelistic meetings.

## MEETING FORMAT AND LENGTH

*Welcome to the Family* is designed to include six meetings. Since one of the main purposes of this series is to build relationships between regular members and those who are newly baptized, I recommend you not squeeze these sessions into a short period of time or double them up. Consider spreading them out over six weeks.

I conducted these meetings on Friday evenings. It was a wonderful way to welcome in the Sabbath. But these sessions could just as well be held on Sabbath afternoon following lunch. You could also meet on Sabbath evening or another weeknight in conjunction with kids programming such as Pathfinders and Adventurers. A primary goal is for members to build relationships, so make adjustments for your unique situation.

The Appendix contains all the handouts for each meeting. You will notice that some handouts provide more details, such as recipes for the meals, Health Tips, and lyrics for the songs. The Family Dynamics worksheets are provided in outline form for participants to fill in as they listen to the presentations. The comprehensive leader's notes will provide the presenter with all the information for teaching these meetings.

I've designed each meeting, from the meal to the closing, to be completed in about 90 minutes. I have not created a time for a Health Tip, but suggest that you copy it from the Appendix for each meeting and leave them on the table during the mealtime. Some may still want to highlight it, which is up to you. The same is true of the Church Dynamics section. Since there is only so much information you can fit into each session, this section can be copied and given as a handout or briefly reviewed from the front.

## WELCOME TO THE FAMILY SCHEDULE - AT A GLANCE

TIME	FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP		LEARNING AND GROWING			
	MEAL	HEALTH TIP (OPTIONAL)	MUSIC & WELCOME	SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS	FAMILY DYNAMICS	CHURCH DYNAMICS (OPTIONAL)
	45 minutes	(Handout only)	10 min.	10 min.	30 min.	15 min. (opt.)
Meeting 1	Stroganoff or Ratatouille Stir-fry	Nutrition	Singing	Prayer	Communication	Adventist Church History
Meeting 2	Oatburgers or Enchiladas	Exercise	Singing	Bible Study	Conflict Management	Church Organization
Meeting 3	Pita Bread Sandwiches or Lentil Soup	Water and Sunshine	Singing	Family Worship	Love Works	Stewardship
Meeting 4	Stuffed Baked Potatoes or Chili with Cornbread	Temperance and Fresh Air	Singing	Keeping the Sabbath	Parenting	Getting Involved in Church
Meeting 5	Burritos or Vegetable Wraps	Rest	Singing	Devotional Materials	The Healing Gift of Forgiveness	Church Resources
Meeting 6	Tofu Scramble with Potatoes or Pancakes with Muffins	Trust in God	Singing	Being a Witness	Celebrating Your Marriage	Ordinances

### USING THIS LEADER'S GUIDE

The Leader's Guide contains two different types of notes. Some parts are intended to be read only by the leader in preparation for each session. Other parts are notes you will use (or refer to) in the teaching sections. The *only* section with notes for teaching in the main part of this guide is the Family Dynamics section. All other teaching sections (Health Tips, Spiritual Dynamics, and Church Dynamics) are optional and contain handouts found in the Appendix.

In preparation for each meeting, make sure you have all the handouts copied and ready to distribute. Don't give all the handouts for all the sessions during the first meeting. People may think, "Well, I have everything so I guess I don't need to come back." Only give out handouts for each meeting as it happens. It's good to have a few extra in case you underestimate how many people come. It's also nice to save any extras for people who might have missed a meeting.

Handouts are helpful for providing information for members to connect with the information you are sharing. People like copies of recipes so they can go home and try them. Lyrics for music

allow people to sing along. Even the worksheets for the Family Dynamics section are brief with fill-in-the-blank places to help people listen and learn. Don't neglect using worksheets to guide your members.

## PREPARATION AND TEAM

There are three basic parts to each session: the meal, singing time, and teaching time. I recommend that you divide responsibilities between three groups. The number of helpers will vary depending on how many attend. Share responsibilities! One of the pitfalls in ministry is that a few people do most of the work and get burned out. Rotate meal preparations. Line up people, such as your church's teens, to serve the food. Ask the deacons or others to assist with clean up.

## INVITATIONS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

I would encourage you to invite all of your church to attend these sessions. You might actually make it a point to personally invite people who have joined your church in the last year or two to attend. You will also want to make sure long-time members know they should attend because this will be an excellent opportunity for them to strengthen their family relationships while getting to know new members. Don't present it as an optional event. Put up posters. Stick notes in the bulletin. Push it from the front. Put information on the church website and use social media. Here is a couple suggestion for announcements:

“Welcome to the family! Beginning next Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. our church will be conducting a Welcome to the Family program. There will be a delicious meal provided, a time for singing, and teaching on family and relationship issues. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Meetings will be held each Friday evening for the next six weeks.”

You could note on a poster some of the topics from week to week. You could have someone in the foyer with a sign-up sheet for helpers. Once more, I would make sure all your new members receive a *personal* invitation to attend. I was very intentional about this when I first conducted these seminars. It is important to approach your new members and let them know how these meetings are especially for them.

## PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN

It's a good idea to offer special programming for the children of attendees. Once the meal ends, send the children to another part of the church where they can experience a child evangelism program that allows them to get to know each other while learning more about Jesus. Ask your church's teens to help out—this is a great way to involve them in leadership. AdventSource provides options for children's programming, such as *Stewardship Daily Times*, the *Child Evangelism Kit*, and VBS programs including the *Investigation Station* trilogy (available from AdventSource.org and 402.486.8800). You could also plan to *Welcome to the Family* to coincide with Pathfinder and Adventurer Club meetings.

## MUSIC

Music is a gift from God. It draws members together in worship and helps grow our faith. The selections listed in this resource were chosen to provide a variety of types of music for new members to experience. It even includes songs for children and youth. You are free to modify these suggestions, but keep in mind the different age groups in your church. Choose a mix of song leaders. Involve the youth. Practice ahead of time to enhance this time of worship.



- S1 - Recipes
- S1 - Health Tip
- S1 - Song Lyrics
- S1 - Spiritual Dynamics
- S1 - Family Dynamics
- S1 - Church Dynamics

Available from the Appendix or enclosed USB

## COMMUNICATION MEETING 1



### FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

#### **MENU: CREAMY STROGANOFF OR RATATOUILLE STIR-FRY**

*[Distribute recipes from pages S1-1—S1-3 Recipes in the Appendix.]*

Though the main purpose of gathering for a meal is to provide a time for members to become acquainted and build friendships, it is also a chance for new members to enjoy simple and healthy food. Since some newly baptized members will be learning how to prepare nutritious meals, these menus give them a taste of new recipes. The meals are intended to be simple and easy to prepare so people can take the recipes home and try them out. You can choose between the two options provided for each session, or come up with your own menu. After the meal you can hand out a copy of recipes from the Appendix or enclosed CD when you are handing out a copy of the lyrics for the singing time. All recipes are meat-free and dairy-free, and reprinted from *7 Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett (Review & Herald, 2006). You can find this and many more vegetarian and vegan cookbooks at your local Adventist Book Center (AdventistBookCenter.com or 800.765.6955).

Remember to ask someone to warmly welcome everyone, briefly review the program outline, and then offer thanks to God for the delicious meal. Allow attendees to sit next to whomever they choose during the meal. After the meal, dismiss the children to their programming and use an icebreaker to divide the adults into groups of six for the session

#### **HEALTH TIP: NUTRITION**

*[Distribute handout from pages S1-1—S1-2 Health Tip in the Appendix.]*

Copy the Health Tip from the Appendix and place it on the tables beforehand for people to take with them. Each tip follows one of the eight natural laws of health outlined by Ellen White who says, “Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness [temperance], rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature’s remedial agencies and how to apply them” (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 127). Some may choose to highlight the health tip during the mealtime. Keep it brief to allow time for fellowship. You want to allow time for new and longtime members to get acquainted.



## LEARNING AND GROWING

### MUSIC: SELECTIONS

[Distribute song lyrics from pages S1-1—S1-2 Song Lyrics in the Appendix.]

All of the music for these selections is available in songbooks and hymnals sold at your local Adventist Book Center (AdventistBookCenter.com or 800.765.6955). Songs come from the following books:

*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Review & Herald, 1985).

*He Is Our Song: The Music Collection for Youth* (Review & Herald, 1988).

*Sing for Joy: Worship Songs for Primaries* (Review & Herald, 1989).

*Praise Time: A Collection of Songs for Youth* (Pacific Press, 2001).

As mentioned earlier, I have purposefully chosen a variety of music for different age groups. Try involving people of all ages in leading music. If available, use different musical instruments. Perhaps you have a keyboard or members who play the guitar. Go over the songs ahead of time. You can copy the lyrics from the Appendix to hand out or simply project them on a screen.



### SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS: A POWERFUL PRAYER LIFE

[Distribute handout from pages S1-1—S1-3 Spiritual Dynamics in the Appendix.]

The purpose of this section is to strengthen the members' devotional practices and personal walk with God. This can be briefly discussed or simply alluded to since the material is complete and available in the Appendix as a worksheet that can be copied and shared.

This first piece, "How Do I Pray?" comes from the Prayer Partner Ministry of the Placerville Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was created by John and Carrol Shewmake and can be found with other prayer resources at PrayerPartners.com.

One of the simplest and most powerful chapters in Ellen White's writings on prayer comes from her book *Steps to Christ* and is called "The Privilege of Prayer." This book is one of the best devotional resources to share with new members that will strengthen their personal walk with God like no other book.



### FAMILY DYNAMICS: COMMUNICATION

Distribute worksheet from pages S1-1—S1-3 *Family Dynamics* in the Appendix.

Remember that the worksheet for members is an abbreviated form of your notes for teaching in this section. Everything that is underlined in your notes refers to a blank to be filled in for the members listening.

## COMMUNICATION - SCRIPT FOR LEADERS

*“Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to advice” (Proverbs 12:15, NRSV).*

Mignon McLaughlin stated that, “We hear only half of what is said to us, understand only half of that, believe only half of that, and remember only half of that.”<sup>1</sup> Good communication plays a vital role in our lives. This may appear simplistic to some, but a quick reflection reveals its validity. How many marital fights, political rifts, family breakdowns, car accidents, missed football passes, failed business deals, decorating disasters, Pinterest fails, botched recipes, and box office duds occurred because of miscommunication?

Viewing our language and actions as dynamic symbols—with ever-changing meanings depending on our social contexts—it’s amazing we get through to each other at all. Everything we do is loaded with meaning that has to be interpreted. From the food we choose to serve guests at our house to the clothes we pick out to wear to church can send a myriad of messages to those around us.

Scripture spends significant time communicating about how we communicate. The Psalmist says, “The mouths of the righteous recite wisdom; their tongues discuss justice.” (37:30, CEB); and the author of Proverbs pens, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver” (25:11). The Bible even opens up with a narrative about how God communicated the world into existence (Genesis 1-2). Communication occurs everywhere, and every follower of Jesus needs to be aware of it.

When Jesus taught His disciples about communication He warned them that, “On the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak” (Matthew 12:36). Even when Jesus was tempted Himself, He resisted the devil by saying, “Jesus replied, “It’s written, *People won’t live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God*” (Matthew 4:4, CEB). Our communication with God, and our communication with each other, matters. There is a reason law enforcement organizations employ hostage negotiators; and while we may never have to negotiate the release of a prisoner from the hands of a madman, we do encounter mad men, women, and children who are held captive by feelings of frustration.

Given the reality that virtually everything we do sends messages, for better or worse, how do we become better communicators? This is a vital skill given Paul’s analogy of the church being the “Body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12). What happens when a brain no longer sends signals to spinal column? What happens when nerve endings can’t send pain signals back to the brain? A paralyzed body can’t run, hug, or provide most types of physical care. A paralyzed church can’t spread the gospel and share the love of Jesus with the world.

While the subject of communication and its applications is a topic with a never-ending theories and practices—we can, in a short space, distill some critical skills to aid in communication.

### **There are two basic avenues for communication:**

1. The first, verbal communication, is absolutely necessary in healthy relationships. You must make a commitment to communicate verbally, even if it is sometimes uncomfortable or painful. Good communication makes everyone feel valued and may keep resentment

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mignon\\_McLaughlin](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mignon_McLaughlin)

and anger from building up and erupting at a later time. People who don't talk don't know each other and won't have a way to understand one another or heal damaged relationships.

When communicating, you must understand the power of words and choose your words wisely, because they can either hurt or heal. In fact, the Bible states in Proverbs 18:21, (NIV), "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

Successful verbal communication begins by using words that are first bathed in love. Good words are honest but also caring; calming, not volatile; they are appropriate words, not curses or demeaning words. The old saying, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," is simply not true.

According to Ephesians 4:29 (NIV), only a certain type of communication should be spoken within the family. It says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

2. The second form of communication is nonverbal body language. We give each other nonverbal cues in relationships all the time. These may include posture, gestures, eye movement, or facial expressions. But we can only pick up certain clues from a person's behavior. It's impossible to know what another is thinking simply by looking at them.

For example, Rita is a deeply caring person who comes to tears easily. Her tears have been misread by people who thought she was troubled or hurt, when her tears were actually a result of great joy or compassion. We only know for sure when she chooses to tell us what her tears mean. Never rely on nonverbal communication alone to determine another person's motives, feelings, or thoughts.

### THREE COMMUNICATION STYLES

People usually communicate using one of these styles:

1. **Aggressive Communicators**. They are rude to one another. They are bossy, overbearing people. Their words are selfish, accusing, and often volatile. Physical aggression may even be a characteristic for the aggressive communicator. Often family and friends never express their opinions out of fear of retaliation.
2. **Passive Communicators**. Communication is strained and rare. Individuals may be too shy or quiet and are often fearful of confrontation. Most often, there is apathy to the point that people ignore each other or don't care to communicate with one another. A family using passive communication probably isn't connected very well. There is little warmth because they don't know each other. Communication is only attempted in crisis situations or as a last resort.
3. **Assertive Communicators**. These individuals make communication a priority. Everyone is free to express opinions and ideas. They are calm, confident, and want to understand what others are saying and meaning. They listen and respond to each other in appropriate ways. Each person strives to respect the feelings and thoughts of the others.

Effective communicators are assertive with their communication style. Be proactive in sharing what you are thinking, let people know when they are doing something that is harmful to your relationship, and make sure you are open to receiving communication from others. That brings us to our next section.

## LEARNING TO LISTEN

The most overlooked skill in communication is the art of listening. Successful communicators have learned that communication only works when people learn to listen to each other. You've probably heard the adage, "God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He intended us to listen twice as much as we talk!" It's a good point.

Most people only listen in order to answer, attack, or defend. In fact, there are basically four types of listeners.

1. **The Judge.** The judge is the person who believes they are always right. Their mind is already made up, so they see no benefit in listening to others. This person is usually negative and critical. They voice their opinion instead of listening.

Psalm 115:6 (CEB) refers to this type of person: "They have ears, but they can't hear."

2. **The Counselor.** The counselor listens only long enough to make a quick assessment and move on. This person is preoccupied with evaluating and offering advice that is usually not asked for. They accuse *others* of not listening. They only listen in order to dictate to others what should be done. Proverbs 18:13 (NIV) refers to this person: "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame."
3. **The Inquisitor.** This person believes the way to listen is to constantly shoot questions at the other person or persons—something which can be tiresome and counterproductive. The inquisitor is prone to interrupt and is easily distracted. Asking questions in order to clarify understanding is important, but the inquisitor overdoes this tactic.
4. **The Good Listener.** By far the most effective listener is the person who listens not only to the words being said, but who also tries to understand the feelings of the person who is speaking. The listener pays close attention to nonverbal cues such as body language, and facial expressions. The good listener is not judgmental of what is being said or how it is being expressed. The good listener's desire is to understand and respond accordingly.

## LISTEN TO HEAR AND UNDERSTAND

According to James 1:19 (NIV), "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

A wonderful Chinese symbol, or pictograph, describes the effective listener. The symbol is a composite of four individual word characters: ears (we listen with our ears); eyes (we listen with our eyes); heart (we must listen with empathy); and king (we listen and then have the power of a king to act on what we have heard with effectiveness and power). Individually, each symbol carries its own definition and use; but when placed together, they become the single Chinese word meaning listen.

Proverbs 20:12 (NIV) says, “Ears that hear and eyes that see—the LORD has made them both.”

Successful communicators have learned that we cannot really hear someone without listening to them. Effective listening is unselfish. It focuses on the other person’s needs. The listener wants to understand *what* the speaker is saying, and *why* they are saying it.



## HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

Healthy communication has two ingredients: assertiveness and active listening. Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and ask for what you want in the relationship. Being assertive does not mean that you are selfish or aggressive. What it means is that you would like to see more communication in your relationship.<sup>2</sup>

“Assertiveness is a valuable communication skill. In successful couples, both individuals tend to be quite assertive. Rather than assuming their partner can read their minds, they share how they feel and ask clearly and directly for what they want.”<sup>3</sup>

The best way to be assertive is to use “I” statements and to avoid using “you” statements. For instance, you may say something like, “When you didn’t call me to tell me you’d be late, I was worried (or frustrated, or angry, etc.)”. These “I” statements simply share your feelings without placing blame or accusing the other person. In contrast, notice this “you” statement: “You make me angry...”. This can be even more harmful when you add generalized comments like, “You never call me,” or “You don’t care about my feelings,” etc.<sup>4</sup>

When you are assertive, you make a constructive request and you are positive and respectful in your communication. You will also use polite phrases such as “please” and “thank you.” Dr. David Olson, author of the marriage preparation and enrichment program *PREPARE-ENRICH* provides us with some examples of assertive statements:<sup>5</sup>

*“I’m feeling out of balance. While I love spending time with you, I also want to spend time with my friends. I would like us to find some time to talk about this.”*

*“I want to take a ski vacation next winter, but I know you like to go to the beach. I’m feeling confused about what choice we should make.”*

The second ingredient of healthy communication is active listening, which is the ability to let your partner know you understand them by restating their message. In order to listen actively it is important that you listen attentively without interruption and then restate what you heard. You don’t simply repeat words, like a parrot might. Instead, acknowledge both the content and the feelings of the message from the other person. When you restate what you heard the other person say, you let them know whether or not you clearly understood the message they sent. Here are a couple examples of active listening:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Life Innovations, Inc. (2002). *PREPARE-ENRICH: Building Strong Marriages – Couple’s Workbook*. Minnesota: Life Innovations, Inc

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

*"I heard you say you are feeling 'out of balance' and enjoy the time we spend together but that you also need more time to be with your friends. You want to plan a time to talk about this."*

*"If I understand what you said, you are concerned because you want to go skiing next winter. But you think I would rather go to the beach. Is that correct?"*

When each of you knows what the other person feels and wants (assertiveness), and when each knows they have been heard and understood (active listening), intimacy is increased. These two communication skills can help you grow closer as a couple.

But these communication skills are not limited to couple communication. Think about how you can practice these with your children, with other members of the family, at work, or at church. Stop to listen and understand before responding. In his best seller, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, author Stephen Covey stated as habit 5: "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."<sup>7</sup> That is good, healthy communication.

## THE MAGIC RATIO

It is important to achieve the right balance between positive and negative interactions. Amazingly, research has confirmed that successful communication comes down to a simple mathematical formula: No matter what, you must have at least five times as many positive as negative interactions for lasting relationships.<sup>8</sup>

The magic ratio is **5 to 1**. In other words, as long as there are five times as many positive feelings and interactions as there is negative," Gottman found the relationship was likely to be stable.<sup>9</sup>

Here's a useful list to put more weight on the positive side of your interactions:

1. Show interest.
2. Be affectionate.
3. Show you care.
4. Be appreciative.
5. Be empathic.
6. Be accepting.
7. Joke around.
8. Share your joy.

## CONCLUSION

Communication is both a science and an art that will always need perfecting. Don't give up if you find it takes work and practice—you'll get the hang of it the more intentional effort you apply. However, even with the best communicators, conflicts are bound to happen. In the next session we will find ways to work through situations where two communicators collide.

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<sup>7</sup> Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

<sup>8</sup> Gottman, John. (1994). *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail and How You Can Make Yours Last*. New York: Simon & Schuster

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



## ICEBREAKER AND SEATING ARRANGEMENT

For this part of the session you'll want to divide the attendees into even-numbered groups of six people. You can seat the groups in circles or have everyone sit in rows. What's important is that everyone sits by new people each evening and interacts with someone different during the discussion time at the end of the session. For session 1, try having everyone line up in order according to his or her birthdate. Count off groups of six and direct each group to where they should sit.



### INTERACTION QUESTIONS

1. Turn to the person to your right and take turns sharing which communication style you most identify with and why.
2. Next, turn to the person to your left and take turns discussing which type of listener you are and why.
3. Now we are going to practice active listening. If you rephrase a few words of someone's sentence in the form of a question, you can keep them talking. For example, if someone says, "I feel rotten about work today," you can say, "Rotten about work?" and they will keep talking. Sometimes you only need the last one or two words of their sentence. If they say, "My new house is the best," just say, "Best?" and watch them elaborate. Find a partner and take turns practicing for a minute per person. I'll provide some possible talking points to start:
  - I grew up in....
  - My first pet was...
  - My favorite book is...
  - My parents always told me...
  - The most difficult situation I ever had to work through involved...

\*Materials from this section come from: Richard and Rita Tate, *11 Reasons Families Succeed* (Hensley Publishing, 2002).





## CHURCH DYNAMICS: *ADVENTIST CHURCH HISTORY*

*[Distribute handout from pages S1-1—S1-3 Church Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Each session ends with a brief focus on the church. You will find worksheets for Church Dynamics in the Appendix. Some leaders may want to go over the worksheet with the group. Others may simply refer to it and encourage people to read it at a later time. I've made this section optional in light of how much information people can absorb in one session.

This first Church Dynamics worksheet/presentation briefly covers the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For those who want to delve more deeply into Adventist church history, check out C. Mervyn Maxwell's book *Tell It to the World!* (Pacific Press, 1998), Richard W. Schwarz's *Light Bearers* (Pacific Press, 2000), or George R. Knight's *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Review & Herald, 2000). These books are available from your local Adventist Book Center (AdventistBookCenter.com or 800.765.6955).



- S2 - Recipes
- S2 - Health Tip
- S2 - Song Lyrics
- S2 - Spiritual Dynamics
- S2 - Family Dynamics
- S2 - Church Dynamics

Available from the Appendix or enclosed USB

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION MEETING 2



### FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

#### **MENU: OAT BURGERS OR STACKED ENCHILADA BAKE**

*[Distribute recipes from pages S2-1—S2-3 Recipes in the Appendix.]*

There are two options given for each meal. The recipes for each session are available in the Appendix and can be copied and laid out on the table beside each plate. You can always choose your own recipes. If you do, remember to provide dishes that are healthy, nutritious, and tasty. Whether you use a recipe from the Appendix or another source, give people a copy of your recipes. Part of the goal is to give new ideas to new members who may be unfamiliar with vegetarian cooking.

Allow attendees to sit next to whomever they choose during the meal. After the meal, dismiss the children to their programming and use an icebreaker to divide the adults into groups of six for the session.

#### **HEALTH TIP: EXERCISE AND WATER**

*[Distribute handout from pages S2-1—S2-3 Health Tip in the Appendix.]*

In order to cover the eight natural laws of health, a couple of the sessions double up on the laws. If you want to encourage people to memorize these eight principles of health, point out that each one begins with a letter that spells out the word N.E.W.S.T.A.R.T. The first health tip in session 1 was “N” for nutrition. This session covers “E” for exercise and “W” for water.

Since a lot of teaching material is packed into each program, you can simply copy from the Appendix and hand people the Health Tip each evening. You can go over this tip thoroughly or briefly refer to it, depending on the timeframe.

## LEARNING AND GROWING



### MUSIC: SELECTIONS

*[Distribute song lyrics from page S2-1 Song Lyrics in the Appendix.]*

Some leaders might enjoy the teaching aspect of *Welcome to the Family* so much that they feel the singing part is filler or even a waste of time. I believe introducing new members to a few of the songs and hymns of the church helps connect them to the body of Christ. Don't feel you need to sing every song listed. Lyrics are provided so you can copy and share worksheets of music that represent a variety of the music. You can pick your own songs, but remember to include different types of music for different age groups. And don't forget to provide words for people who may not know the songs.



### SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS: DEEPENING YOUR BIBLE STUDY

*[Distribute handout from pages S2-1—S2-2 Spiritual Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Much like prayer, Bible study is one of the foundational practices in helping Christians stay strong and connected to Jesus and truth. Neglecting to spend time in God's Word each day makes a person spiritually weak and easy prey for the devil.

This Spiritual Dynamics *handout* provides a simple overview of how to approach Bible study. There are many books available in the Adventist Book Center on how to study the Bible as well, such as a Lee J. Gugliotto's *Handbook for Bible Study* (Review & Herald, 2001) for the more serious student, or Richard W. Coffen's *Wake Up Your Bible Study: Getting the Most from Your Time with God* (Review & Herald, 2007).

The North American Division's *iFollow* series features more small group options such as Dan Day's *Bible Study Basics: Six Big Ideas for Bible Study and Discipleship Training* (available from AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800).

For pastors who would like to simply take people through a new members' Bible study, the General Conference Sabbath School Department has created the series *In Step with Jesus: New Members' Bible Study Guides* (available from your local Adventist Book Center at AdventistBookCenter.com or 800.765.6955. This tool for pastors has been a great blessing for those who have recently joined the church.



### FAMILY DYNAMICS: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

*[Distribute worksheet from pages S2-1—S2-3 Family Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Remember that the worksheet for members is an abbreviated form of your notes for teaching in this section. Everything that is underlined in your notes refers to a blank to be filled in by the members listening.

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT - *SCRIPT FOR LEADERS*

One of the more delightful pastimes to enjoy on the Internet is obtaining footage of British Parliament. YouTube, Vimeo, and many other video sites offer highlight reels<sup>1</sup> of European politicians having at each other with almost reckless abandon—and they even seem, at times, to enjoy it. As a matter of fact, sometimes it becomes so vehement that it almost resembles a rugby match—or the hooligans after a rugby match.

In one clip an honorable gentlemen stood, trying to begin his comment for several moments in vain because nobody in the room would be quiet. Eventually the speaker of the house said, “There is no point in the honorable gentleman waiting for silence, because the honorable gentleman won’t get silence—PRODUCE YOUR VOICE!” And everyone in the room cheers in approval. Another clip shows what appears to be a distinguished British politician who goes into rage mode at another calling him “a miserable pipsqueak!”<sup>2</sup> Every time you tune in the room is a boisterous cacophony of laughter, yelling, and pipsqueaking.

We aren’t quite as exciting across the pond, but we have moments where people occasional throw a shoe at the president or call him a liar in the middle of his speech. City council meetings are another rich source of vitamin D—Dysfunction and Dissention. Once at a New Jersey city council meeting a man took the mic and was instantly recognized by all the council members, who gave a collective groan as he began to weave a tapestry of conspiracy theories involving each one of them. In order to escape, one council member made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded, voted, and the meeting came to a close.

Nasty fights happen everywhere.

At work all it takes is for someone to steal another person’s credit, leave someone out of a group email by accident, gossip about a co-worker while that co-worker is standing behind them, or not clean out the company microwave after blowing up their burrito to spark a culture of tension, hurt, and angry words. And when those angry words show up on social media . . . well, people can lose jobs and friends.

Among friends—even close friends—tempers erupt when someone doesn’t get the invite to the party, or when long-standing irritations come out in an emotional dumping that wouldn’t have been nearly as bad had someone been up front with their real thoughts about Nancy’s hairdo. Or when one friend dates another’s ex, or trash talks a current boyfriend, or accidentally leaves their neighbor’s kid at the grocery store.

Family often becomes the ugliest source of conflict with longstanding feuds, divorces, remarriages, in-law differences, family budget issues, kids not doing well at school, and no one living up to what everyone thinks a family is supposed to look like.

This stuff happens even in church. In some church board meetings people become so mad they won’t even pray for each other. We argue over theology, or people’s behavior, or what the church should spend money on. Sometimes the fights in church reflect personal fights we bring from home and work: the argument with our spouse on the way to worship service, or the bad mood we bring to God’s house because our boss didn’t like our presentation, or even the snarky responses

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v'4bhpXhxP-WU>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v'rIM1pVwsAHI>

we give authority figures in church because our teacher at school gave us a bad grade.

When two ideas, personalities or actions collide, we call it conflict. Conflict happens to everyone, everywhere, and it's so potent that when try to avoid it, the conflict only becomes worse. So what can we do about it? Scripture says, "*Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger*" (Ephesians 4:26, NRSV). When you think about it, even Jesus' disciples had conflict, and later the early Christian church had conflict. As strange as it may seem, a life void of conflict is not healthy. Just remember this important principle: **Not all conflict is bad!**

Normally this verse is applied to married couples—encouraging them not to go to bed angry. Not a bad idea, but there is more to this passage for everyone. The author, Paul, not only lets us know it is okay to be angry, or to be in conflict, but he implies that we need to work out that anger or conflict instead of ignoring it. If you remain conflicted or frustrated or angry, those feelings will just follow you to the place you are trying to run away to.

Even Jesus tells us:

So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. (Matthew 5:23-25, NLT)

It is important for your family or friends to remember that conflict is the not the problem. The real problem is the way we handle conflict.

There are four possible responses to conflict. If you think about your family relationships, you will probably see these reflected in your own encounters where anger and frustration were present:

1. I win; you lose.
2. You win; I lose.
3. We both lose, and no one wins.
4. Everyone wins, and no one loses.

Your goal should be that everyone wins and no one loses.

Let's get some tools to help everyone win.

## MANAGING CONFLICT

Okay, so I know not everyone is married, wants to be married, or can be married—but still, there are principles that are taught to aspiring couples that translate well to *any* relationship you find yourself in. The following steps for resolving conflict are adapted from *Prepare-Enrich*,<sup>3</sup> which is a marriage preparation and marriage enrichment program couples take that reveals areas of potential conflict.

### Step 1: Plan Your Strategy

In order to prevent someone from feeling compelled to give an account of themselves on the spot, and to avoid an indefinite delay for resolving conflict, setting a time and place for discussion is

<sup>3</sup> *Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict*. 2008, Life Innovations

a must. Friends, spouses, or co-workers can say, “Hey, I need time to process this,” or “I am too frustrated to give a good response at the moment,” and then ask for a time to resume the discussion. This lets the other person know you care about them and that you aren’t running away from conflict, even if you aren’t currently able to discuss it.

**Step 2: Define the Issue**

Define the problem—don’t be vague.

**Step 3: You’re Both Guilty**

Every issue has two sides, and even when someone is right, they may not express their point in the right way. Take a moment to list the ways you each contribute to the conflict.

**Step 4: Historical Analysis**

If this is an old conflict, list past attempts that have been made to resolve the issue.

**Step 5: Brainstorm**

When you get back together from your argument hiatus, pool your brainpower and come up with 10 potential solutions to the conflict.

**Step 6: Possible Solutions**

Look at each solution and weigh the pros and cons.

**Step 7: Agree on an Attempt**

Pick a solution and implement it.

**Step 8: Agree on Your Parts**

Discuss how you will each approach the solution. For example, if someone tends to shout when they are angry, they may need to write down their frustration in a note; and if the other party involved shuts down and gives the silent treatment when encountering conflict, they may need to be the one who initiates the first step of setting a time when they *can* discuss the issues.

**Step 9: Post-Fight Follow-Up**

This is simply another meeting scheduled, after the solution has been tried, to see how things are going and to determine whether or not another solution needs to be tried.

**Step 10: Reward Each Other**

What gets rewarded gets repeated. A successful saving of a friendship, marriage, or office culture deserves some celebration. Plan a dinner out, or buy yourself a PlayStation—whatever you decide, it needs to be meaningful to reinforce the value of going through the process of conflict resolution.

This may seem a bit exhaustive, and certainly not all conflicts warrant this much attention, or even all of the steps. One of the main benefits is to slow us down in the heat of the moment so we can actually think about what we are doing instead of aggressively trying to win—which will inevitably make us lose.

**ACTIVE LISTENING**

You don’t have to be hard of hearing to need hearing aids. One of the tools available to those of us who hear what comes out of other people’s mouths (but don’t always understand what those noises mean) is called Active Listening. Numerous principles exist for this Ingredient of healthy communication which can make a big difference.

First, do your best to focus on the other person WITHOUT determining what you will say in response. This takes practice as most of us, especially in an argument, are not concerned with whatever it is that other person is saying because WE, the brilliant ones, know what needs to be said. It's hard. You may feel a warm, angry sensation percolating in your chest as you do it, but it is vital for what comes next.

When they are done sharing (I mean actually done—not the done that comes with you interrupting them with your own stories or opinions) slowly repeat back what they said to make sure you heard what it is they wanted you to hear. For example, you may actually say, “Okay, what I heard you say was,” or “I hear you saying...” When finished, ask them, “Is that right?” If they say no, don't get offended; simply ask them to repeat what they said and then you repeat it back again until they feel satisfied what you have articulated their position.

This takes patience, but it's worth it. And it has power to diffuse an angry situation.

Next ask, “Is there more?” or “Anything else?” You want to make sure you have all the details before you respond. It also helps lessen intense emotions when someone can get whatever it is completely out and know that you know what they think and feel.

Finally, ask them if you can respond. This is just another check to make sure the other person is ready to hear you. Then it becomes their responsibility to repeat the aforementioned steps. You still may end up disagreeing in the end; however, you will have a greater understanding of each other's positions—and maybe even a little respect for it.

## **CRITICISM VS COMPLAINING**

There is a difference between criticism and complaining. Criticism tends to be an attack on the other person, whereas complaining is stating one's feelings about what we have felt or perceived following the other person's actions. Criticism says, “You did something bad.” Complaining says, “When this happened, I was angry (or whatever the feeling may be).”

First rule, use “I” instead of “You” when expressing a concern. So instead of “You are a jerk that didn't take out the trash,” try “I feel hurt when you don't help me with chores around the house.” Otherwise we assign motives to our loved ones that may not be true. It comes dangerously close to a classic fallacy of logic.

From our first parents at the garden of Eden, the first round of The Blame Game took place. When you read Genesis 3 you see that Adam blamed God for having created the woman, and Eve blamed the serpent for tricking her into sinning. Instead of assuming responsibility for their own actions, they turned the blame on someone else – the serpent, the woman, and God Himself. (See Gen. 3).

What makes it worse is when we employ hasty generalization, to drive our points home. We say things like, “You ALWAYS act irresponsibly,” or “EVERYBODY knows that you are incompetent.” We marshal all the imaginary forces of people we assume would be on our side if they only knew what we had to put up with to try to convince the other person we are right.

It really just makes people angrier and less able to listen.

If we can reframe our concerns, not only using “I” language but with a way that makes the other



person feel affirmed, we can get a little further. Instead I can affirm the time they took to study, even to note a few points I agree with, and then say something like, “I see your point, and it’s interesting; however, I am stuck on [issue]. How would you help me get over that obstacle?”

This not only demonstrates you have heard the other person, but you have placed them in a position to help you. If they can’t, maybe they will be open to your position. Scripture contains some great examples of conflict resolution. Look at Acts 15 for a great case study in how people disagreed with each other and even separated to different spheres of work, yet remained on the same side.

Finally, remember the words of Ephesians 4:15 that tells us to speak the truth in love (even if it’s hard). The word “love” implies a relationship, which encourages us to invest in other people before we make withdrawals. Before a difficult conversation, ask yourself if you have been investing in this person, building them up, and affirming them out of genuine love. Then you have the right to lovingly share your concerns.

### ACCEPTING VALID CRITICISM

Mixed Martial Artists are a beefy, brawly bunch. They pummel the snot out of each other, break each other’s bones, knock each other out, and just plain hurt each other in a wide variety of exquisite ways to the delight of pay-per-view fans. Yet if you watch them before and after the match, many times you will see them shake hands and even embrace each other.

Among true martial artists there is a code of honor (sometimes known as *bushido*) that refuses to allow you to stoop to petty behavior and obnoxious attitudes regarding your opponent. So, when someone legitimately pins you, causes you to pass out, sweeps your legs, or delivers a kick to the chest, all you can do is congratulate them on a match well played.

At times you and I will be confronted by someone we know that loves us, and they will say something that will hurt us—not because they are being mean, but because they are being truthful. When that happens we can throw a hissy fit, or we can endure the pain and admit we are wrong.

One of the most encouraging passages in the Bible says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Jesus also tells us to forgive others numerous times (Matthew 18:22), that our forgiveness relates to our willingness to forgive others (Matthew 18:23-35), and to admit when we are wrong to each other (James 5:16). It’s okay to be wrong sometimes. As a matter of fact, the Bible says if we say we are *never* wrong, we are liars (1 John 1:8).

It’s also okay to admit we don’t know. Sometimes we are confronted about something we said or did, and, due to our own lack of self-awareness, we simply don’t know why we did what we did. It’s also okay to admit you don’t know when someone asks you a question about your faith or beliefs.

Gentle responses coupled with apologies and requests for practical ways we can make things right go a long way. What won’t help is defensive attitudes or the avoidance of conflict—though it *is* okay to ask the other person for a little space/time to process their words, as long as you give a definite time you will resume the conversation.

The Bible calls us to be peacemakers, (Matthew 5:9). Christians are called to actively engage in restoring relationships and to open lines of communication. The word “peace” (*shalom* in Hebrew) carries the idea of everything being in its right place. Let’s commit to taking the time to ensure our words and actions fit in the right place.

### BE WARY OF “WATCHMEN”

It needs to be said that some Christians view themselves as “watchmen on the walls” (taken from Ezekiel 33) and sincerely believe it is their duty to point out people’s sins as a matter of their being faithful witnesses to God. This practice not only irritates the daylights out of people, but it does not fall under faithful communication simply because these people tend to ignore the scores of scripture that tell us to speak *kind and uplifting words*. When you only talk to people when you have a criticism, and ignore all opportunities to say something positive, you are Satan.

Seriously. The name Satan, in the original biblical language, translates to “accuser.”

Yeah, so...you might want to include some kind words to your brothers and sisters in Christ, your biological brother and sisters, and, well, anyone you meet, so you don’t end up playing for the wrong side in Jesus’ name.



### ICEBREAKER AND SEATING ARRANGEMENT

For this part of the session you’ll want to divide the attendees into even-numbered groups of six people. You can seat the groups in circles or have everyone sit in rows. What’s important is that everyone sits by new people each evening and interacts with someone different during the discussion time at the end of the session. For session 2, have everyone line up according to the last digit in their cell phone number. Count off groups of six and direct each group to where they should sit.



### INTERACTION QUESTIONS:

1. Turn to the person sitting next to you. For two minutes, have them tell you about one of their favorite childhood memories. All you are allowed is facial expressions and maybe an affirming grunt. Otherwise you cannot interrupt, ask questions, or interject your own similar experiences. When they finish, repeat back to them their key points. Then describe to each other what it feels like to listen that way.
2. Find a different person next to you, and review the 10 steps for reducing conflict. Take turns and share how your conflicts usually go, compared to the steps on that list.
3. In groups of three, take turns sharing about a time you received some intense criticism, how you responded, and how you wish you would have responded.

### CHURCH DYNAMICS: CHURCH ORGANIZATION

*[Distribute handout from pages S2-1—S2-2 Church Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Church organization may not be on the top of most people’s list of interesting things to read about. But just as God created order in the universe and natural world, so does the Lord desire order in the church so it can be effective in nurturing members to spread the gospel to the world. It is helpful for new members to step back and see the big picture of how our church is based on a representative form of government.

The *handout* for this Church Dynamics section is a brief introduction to the basic organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It provides a broad look at the larger entities in the church, from the General Conference to the local member.

For a more comprehensive look at church organization, check out *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (published by the Secretariat of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists). Every five years, following a General Conference Session, a new and updated edition is printed and available at your local Adventist Book Center (AdventistBookCenter.com or 800.765.6955) and *AdventSource* (AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800). Especially look at Chapter 4 (“Organization Founded on Divine Principles”) and Chapter 5 (“Form of Organization in the Seventh-day Adventist Church”).



- S3 - Recipes
- S3 - Health Tip
- S3 - Song Lyrics
- S3 - Spiritual Dynamics
- S3 - Family Dynamics
- S3 - Church Dynamics

Available from the Appendix or enclosed USB

## LOVE WORKS MEETING 3



### FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

#### **MENU: PITA BREAD SANDWICHES WITH HUMUS TAHINI OR ARMENIAN LENTIL SOUP**

*[Distribute recipes from page S3-1 Recipes in the Appendix.]*

For new members who are looking for vegetarian alternatives, this menu provides a simple spread for sandwiches and a delicious lentil soup. You may want to provide both of these options for the meal. Otherwise, supplement with healthy crackers, raw veggies, and a healthy (low or no oil) dip.

Allow attendees to sit next to whomever they choose during the meal. After the meal, dismiss the children to their programming and use an icebreaker to divide the adults into groups of six for the session.

#### **HEALTH TIP: SUNSHINE AND TEMPERANCE**

*[Distribute handout from pages S3-1—S3-2 Health Tip in the Appendix.]*

The Health Tip for this session covers two of the eight laws of health. These may be distributed on the tables ahead of time so people can look at them while eating, or you may want to hand them out and make a few comments to the group before moving into the singing time. Some church leaders may find a brief emphasis on some of these would be helpful to certain groups. For instance, if some members are struggling with addictions, taking time to discuss the temperance *handout* may prove beneficial.

There are many seminars and even short video clips on the web that can be used to expand all of these natural laws of health. You can supplement the teaching of these eight sessions by showing 30-minute videos on each health principle found at [newstartclub.com](http://newstartclub.com). Click on one of the eight laws listed across the top of the page.

## LEARNING AND GROWING



### MUSIC: SELECTIONS

*[Distribute lyrics from pages S3-1—S3-2 Song Lyrics in the Appendix.]*

Are you taking time to sing together as a group? If your church is limited in musical resources, you might consider using music from a CD to provide accompaniment for singing. Check out *Hymns Alive* at your local Adventist Book Center (AdventistBookCenter.com or 800.765.6955) and *AdventSource* at (AdventSource.org and 402.486.8800).



### SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS: FAMILY WORSHIP IDEAS

*[Distribute handout from pages S3-1—S3-2 Spiritual Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Just as the ancient Israelites had morning and evening sacrifices, so it would be good for every Adventist home to have morning and evening worship. Family structures vary. Some homes have small children so worship time should be adjusted according to their age. Instead of doing the same thing each morning or evening, try having a variety of worship resources for different times of the week.

The *handout* for this Spiritual Dynamic comes from the General Conference Family Ministries Department and provides some quick ideas geared toward children. You can find many more ideas in books such as Karen Holford's *100 Creative Worship Ideas for Busy Families* (Pacific Press, 2014) or a seminar by John and Millie Youngberg called "Families at Worship" (available from *AdventSource* at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800). In an upcoming session there will be an overview of devotional materials members may find helpful in their personal devotions.



### FAMILY DYNAMICS: LOVE WORKS

*[Distribute worksheet from pages S3-1—S3-3 Family Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Remember that the worksheet for members is an abbreviated form of your notes for teaching in this section. Everything that is underlined in your notes refers to a blank to be filled in by the members listening.

#### LOVE WORKS - SCRIPTS FOR LEADERS

A newly engaged couple was invited over to a married couple's home to enjoy a humorous, but also serious, film about a married couple going through the rhythms of life. In the film the couple is tested and comes to the edge of divorce. Throughout all the miscommunications, arguments that degenerated into petty insults, pretending in front of the kids, and infantile behavior displayed by the couple in the film, the newly engaged young people noticed, to their horror, their married friends smirking—and even laughing.

At the end of the movie night the young couple chastised their married friends for being so callous. How could they think any of that was funny? Matter of fact, it was one of the saddest, most disturbing films the fiancés had ever seen. Before they left for the evening, they proudly announced that fights, or rudeness, or misunderstandings would NEVER characterize their future marriage. Hand in hand, the young couple left their married friends—smiling, bemused as they watched their uninitiated friends wander into the night.

About a week after they married, one of their married neighbors knocked at their door wanting to borrow the proverbial cup of sugar. No one answered, but the door was open a crack, and since the neighbor knew they were home, he stepped in and called, "Hello?" He saw the husband stewing quietly in the kitchen, and as he entered he saw the wife silently folding laundry in the hallway.

A grin crept across their neighbor's face. *Someone just had their FIRST fight!*

The neighbor quietly entered the kitchen with a polite nod as he helped himself to the cup of sugar. The husband nodded back without saying a word. The neighbor, on his way out, smiled at the wife. Her mouth twitched back. Once outside he laughed, not too audibly, but audible enough. Now, he wasn't a sadist (someone who enjoys the sufferings of others) but he recognized that finally the reality of married life had settled upon his friends' house.

Now their marriage would truly begin. That would mean working through all the fights, rudeness, and misunderstandings that are present in every human relationship—only more intense when you have decided to "become one" (see Genesis 2) with another person.

One of the main purposes of encouraging engaged couples to work through premarital counseling or premarital preparation is because everyone has a few delusions in terms of expectations. Scripture gives us some very challenging admonitions when it comes to the work involved in marriage. Romans 12:10 tell us that we are to "*Outdo one another in showing honor*" (NRSV)—even when someone forgets to pay the bills or burns the breakfast.

The book of Ephesians records a lengthy bit of advice from the Apostle Paul regarding marriage. He states:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband (Ephesians 5:22-33, ESV).

A delicate dance of love, mutual submission, and respect keep marriage partners together. A tricky situation when you have different personalities, expectations, opinions, and feelings under the same roof trying to manage the same house.

*Take note: Nothing in these verses smacks of male dominance, female subservience, or either party trying to enslave the other through emotional, sexual, or physical manipulation. Yet, both parties in a marriage will have unique needs, and communicating those needs can be a real*

challenge. An ancient Proverb says that it would be better to live in the wilderness than with an angry, complaining woman (Proverbs 21:19), and another says that a woman who continually whines and complains is like a dripping faucet (Proverbs 27:15).

And all the men said “amen.”

However, men aren’t off the hook. Paul reminds guys that they need to “love your wives, and do not be harsh with them” (Colossians 3:19).

The point is both men and women can turn into obnoxious fools under the right circumstances—and their own unique individual ways—resulting in the decades old reality that many marriages will end in divorce. Everyone can do better in their marriage and it’s important to not only be aware of the obstacles that come, but also how men and women typically process them. In this session we will look at five common flashpoints in a marriage, how men and women typically process them, and what can be done.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

When you get married your family come along with you—even if you would like to ban them from your house. Each of us catches our first glimpse of married life from our parents, good or bad, and we begin to form an expectation of how a marriage should be. If you had a Martha Stewart stay-at-home mom, then someone may place that expectation on their brand new bride—even though she wears a suit and works full-time in a law office. Likewise, if someone had a dad who could fix cars, plumbing, and the furnace, they may expect their husband to be their own personal handyman—even though he can’t stand getting his hands dirty and is much better at cooking than wrestling with a carburetor.

All of us have ideals informed by our religious background, upbringing, culture, and education that we hope our home lives up to. While many of these ideals are positive, or even neutral, some may also be negative. How many people sabotage an otherwise healthy relationship because all they have been exposed to is an abusive one? They may think that yelling, or swearing, or hitting are the norm in the home.

Scary, isn’t it?

Men and women both have some work to do in this area by first identifying the male and female roles they had modeled for them growing up. They need to do serious reflection on the dynamics their parents, grandparents, or guardians put on display—and then do some “soul searching” to see what they have taken with them into adulthood, and possibly into marriage. Both men and women need to realize that most expectations aren’t necessarily bad, they are just different—and too often assumed.

In terms of roles, consider the following areas:

- Who primarily took care of you growing up?
- Who primarily helped around the house?
- Did your mom stay home while dad worked—or was it reversed? Did both parents work?
- What did you really like about your home growing up?
- What bothered you about your home growing up?



Setting a family meeting, or even working with a counselor or clergy to discuss these questions can be enlightening and helpful as you move into the following flashpoints.

## **BANKING ON TROUBLE**

It has been suggested that money fights are the number one cause of divorce.<sup>1</sup> With turbulence in the economy, increased cost of living, increases in spending and borrowing, and the odd emergency thrown into the mix, it is easy to understand why. Nothing creates more passionate discussion than a spouse performing some unknown spending or tightening the quality of life out of the family budget.

Then there are the perceptions men and women generally have in terms of family finances. I say generally, as there are always exceptions, but they are still valuable to tuck away and talk about as your relationship progresses.

Many people point out that women desire security. That's true—and, really, who doesn't? However, some studies suggest this isn't just about climbing corporate ladders and bringing home an abundance of "bacon" to cook up. One study shares that the most meaningful type of security for women isn't financial—it's emotional. This study points out that upwards of 70% of women would rather face a financial crisis than feel a "lack of closeness with their husbands."<sup>2</sup>

How many well meaning husbands and fathers have worked themselves to death with their family, thinking their family recognizes it as a labor of love (which it is), only to view them as distant and uncaring? The traditional marriage vow uses the word "cherish" in regards to the wife—an embrace, a kiss that lasts a few moments longer than a peck, a sweet something in her ear, a thank you, or even helping her with what's on her to-do list goes further than simply slapping a paycheck on the table.

Now, ladies, another study explored this idea of men "providing" and discovered some interesting perspectives. This study found that 78% of men still felt obligated to provide even if their spouse earned enough to support them.<sup>3</sup> What does that imply? As alluded to above, it means that for many men, a primary way they say "I love you" is by being able to provide for the needs of the family. It also means they can feel lonely, pressured, and frustrated when told to take risks at work. Many would rather endure a beating by a job they hate than stay at home.

Certainly these roles/feelings can be adapted—the point is to recognize that these kinds of feelings, and ways of processing, exist in marriage. These realities need to be spoken about openly so a spouse knows whether to provide more emotionally, or affirm their hardworking spouse for all they do.

Disputes concerning finances can manifest themselves in other ways. Often in a marriage one person will be the spender and the other hoards every penny. Left on their own, one will cause bankruptcy and the other will rob everyone of their ability to live an enjoyable life. Here are some quick tips:

- As a part of your budget, create a section entitled "His/her money" or "fun money." This is an amount you both get every month that has no accountability whatsoever. It can be 10 bucks or 200 bucks, depending on your income. This money is your

1 [www.daveramsey.com/index.cfm?event=askdave/&intContentItemId=116796](http://www.daveramsey.com/index.cfm?event=askdave/&intContentItemId=116796)

2 Feldhahn, S., & Feldhahn, J. (2006). *For men only: A straightforward guide to the inner lives of women*. Sisters, OR.: Multnomah, p. 77

3 Feldhahn, S. (2004). *For Women Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men*. Sisters, OR.: Multnomah, 77.

spouse's to do with it as they please—which may mean saving it for an emergency or buying chocolate cake when the sweet tooth calls.

- Attend a Faith and Finance seminar for general counsel in making a budget and getting out of debt.

First Timothy 5:8 labels a man, or woman, who does not provide for the family as “worse than an infidel.” Talk about money, what you expect from each other, how you can support each other, and take care of business.

## SCREENSAVERS AND WINDOWS

While there is some disagreement, there is more agreement that men and women (again, generally) think differently. One of the most helpful analogies to unpack this reality in a short amount of time involves screensavers and windows. A screensaver is that single image, or endless loop of text/images, that pops up when your computer has sat idle for a while. Windows are all the little open screens within the screen that represent different functions and programs going on at the same time.

So...guess who screensavers and windows represent?

Ever asked a guy, “What are you thinking about?” only to be appalled that he says “nothing” when he just sits there looking contemplative? For many women this kind of a response is a bold-faced lie. How can a guy literally think of nothing? Or just ONE thing? Is he an idiot or just a liar?

For many women, their way of thinking doesn't function in a way that allows them to simply shut down all the feelings and unfinished conversations they've had during the day—or their life. The way they process reality is more akin to those pop-up windows on the computer screen. With an incredible ability to multi-task and a tendency to have deeper emotional connections, women process multiple relationship interactions, as well as unfinished tasks, and keenly feel them at once.<sup>4</sup> Many men, on the other hand, have a way to emotionally “minimize” their windows instead of running them simultaneously.

Again, these roles can apply to the other gender—this is just what is generally true. And generally it makes for some conversational warmth when one person is worried about a variety of things while the other seems, quite literally, tuned out and uncaring. Aside from simply understanding that these realities exist and talking about them, what can be done to help ease tensions?

Often a helpful question for men to ask, when they know their girlfriend, fiancée, or wife processes life in this way, is to ask, “what windows are currently running right now?” The natural follow up would be to ask how they might help close a few of those windows to relieve their partner's stress—which becomes incredibly important in the next section.

For now, take the time to ask each other: Do you resonate with the screensaver or windows metaphor?

## INTIMACY

A story is told about a newly married couple entering the honeymoon suite on their first night of wedded bliss. While the young husband had a variety of ideas of how the evening's festivities

<sup>4</sup> Feldhahn, S., & Feldhahn, J. (2006). *For Men Only: A Straightforward Guide to the Inner Lives of Women*. Sisters, OR.: Multnomah, 51-71.

might go, his young wife was exhausted. Before he could unpack she sent him out to pick up a few groceries. Thinking she wanted him out of the room so she could “slip into something more comfortable,” he happily ran to the store.

When he returned, she did indeed have something more comfortable on—flannel pajamas and a bathrobe and arms crossed over her chest. He got the hint as the years passed and they went on to make lovely babies. There are a thousand variations on this story illustrating the reality for many men and women—sex can be scary, painful, awkward, and a source of frustration.

Hollywood, harlequin romance novels, Christian romance novels, and the porn industry have done a marvelous job creating sexual expectations—particularly in the minds of young men—that simply remain out of reach for most mortals.

While some couples undoubtedly take to sex with ease and grace, most people have to invest some time and communication to make it great. All of us bring our own preconceived ideas about sex into the marriage, including what was modeled for us at home and how it was discussed. Consider the family that never spoke about sex, or even modeled affection, compared to the other extreme that involved sexual abuse and family secrets.

While a great many resources exist, to discuss sex within the context of Christian marriage, and some will be provided in the worksheet, three important realities need to be discussed here. First, sex is good. It is. Seriously. SEX. IS. GOOD. The reason sex is good is because sex comes from God—even before sin entered the world.

God made man and woman holistic physical/spiritual beings (Genesis 2:7). This means there isn’t an “icky” physical aspect and a beautiful “spiritual” aspect—we are a unified whole. Then it’s important to note God’s very first command to humanity was, “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28). Then there is the entire book of Song of Solomon—vivid in its depictions of physical love between a husband and wife.

Sex is good—but men and women generally approach sex differently.

Many books and articles point out that men generally go to sex for intimacy, while women need to feel emotionally connected in order to enjoy sex. This means a husband may approach his wife with his engine revved up for lovemaking—thinking he is inviting her to a fun activity—while she thinks he may possibly be somehow related to the swine species because he hasn’t so much as complimented her, helped around the house, affirmed her career, or even had a conversation with her for three days.

Another factor is that if a spouse has 30 “windows” up and running they will not be able to truly focus on sexual intimacy until some of them are shut down. After all, how can you think about sex with dishes in the sink, the dog needing a walk, the in-laws arriving in the morning, and the lawn needing a good mow?

Fight!

Complicating the matters is, generally, a man’s ability to be turned on visually. Scores of material exists exploring this apparent biological hardwiring that makes men ready for love at the sight of a thigh, a low-cut blouse, or a pair of full lips.<sup>5</sup> This isn’t about men being perverts or pigs

<sup>5</sup> Eldredge, J. (2001). *Wild at heart: Discovering the Passionate Soul of a Man*. Nashville, TN.: T. Nelson, p. 95.

and shaming them for noticing physical beauty. That is neither helpful nor godly. This does NOT mean that biology gives license to objectify women or insist their urges be satiated. Conversely, women often have a lower sex drive, are not visually stimulated by your body, and need to feel emotionally connected to enjoy sex. Just because she can't look at your chest and feel the heat like you can doesn't make her cold or unloving—just different.

These realities sometimes reverse and it can be the man needing emotional connection prior to physical connection, and women may need a little visual stimulation sometimes (hence all the shirtless scenes in superhero flicks). The important things are awareness and open communication.

First of all, Proverbs 5:3-4 says, “For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.” The context is a woman flattering a man away to infidelity. While copying the techniques of a shady lady are debatable, the principle here is that men and women need verbal admiration and respect.

Proverbs continues by saying, “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so” (Proverbs 3:27). Creating a marriage devoid of loving expression will open your marriage to infiltration by smooth-talking men and women who will make your spouse feel loved...and tempted.

Second, never withhold affection or physical love to punish your spouse. Paul says:

Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control (1 Corinthians 7:5, ESV).

Sometimes you may agree to have a season to strengthen other areas of your relationship other than sexual, but sexuality is a gift not to be deprived or used to manipulate the other person. It should also be noted that how you talk about sex with the other person deeply affects them.

Saying things like, “Well, if we have to,” or “I know you need this,” and even “Let's get this over with” are devastating messages to send to your spouse. Remember to admire them, praise them, do your best to connect emotionally with them, and know that sex is a good gift from God—even if it requires a lot of practice.

## FAITH CONFLICT

Religion can be a major issue, especially with kids (will they be Unitarian, Adventist, or Agnostic?). Again, not everyone in a marriage relationship has the same religion—or religious background within the same faith. One spouse may be more conservative or less devout than the other. While scripture admonishes people to be “equally yoked” in terms of their faith (2 Corinthians 6:14), sometimes that doesn't happen.

A few quick guidelines to keep in mind when sharing your faith with each other or with your family:

- Ask sincere questions, but never attack each other's beliefs with sarcasm. Beliefs are deeply personal, and even though you may think you are attacking an idea, the other person may feel like you are attacking them.
- Respect each other's religious freedom. Mocking someone's religious service

participation, or blocking them, is disrespectful, unkind, and unloving. Marriage isn't based on control or coercion, but respect.

- Allow children to ask open questions.
- Never make fun of the other parent's beliefs—especially in front of children.

## CONCLUSION

The most quoted scripture at weddings is the famous “love passage,” penned by the Apostle Paul. It describes the love God has for us and the kind He wishes all of us to have for each other:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends (1 Corinthians 13:4-8, ESV).

May God bless all our homes with such a love.

## ICEBREAKER AND SEATING ARRANGEMENT



For this part of the session you'll want to divide the attendees into even-numbered groups of six people. You can seat the groups in circles or have everyone sit in rows. What's important is that everyone sits by new people each evening and interacts with someone different during the discussion time at the end of the session. For session 3, have everyone line up according to their birth order—whether they are an oldest child, middle child, youngest child, etc. Count off groups of six and direct each group to where they should sit.



### INTERACTIVE QUESTIONS:

1. Find a new person of the same sex and share with them one positive thing you inherited from the home you were brought up in. Also share one negative thing.
2. In groups of 2-4, spend some time asking for God to bless each home represented and to fill it with the kind of love that He wants to be present in the relationships there.



## CHURCH DYNAMICS: STEWARDSHIP—A WAY OF LIFE

*[Distribute handout from pages S3-1—S3-3 Church Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Stewardship defines our responsibility in managing the gifts God has provided us. It includes time, money, gifts, and even our environment. The handout provided in this Church Dynamics session comes from the General Conference Stewardship Department and touches on the meaning of stewardship, tithes, offerings, and the storehouse for these resources.

One children's resources on stewardship is a series called *Stewardship Jack* by Janice Mathews (Review & Herald, 2012). These books teach children about giving. Of course, *Counsels on Stewardship* by Ellen White (Review & Herald, 2009) provides a deeply spiritual study of stewardship. *Faith and Finance* (Review & Herald, 2009) is a small group (or personal) study of stewardship in 12 lessons.

- S4 - Recipes
- S4 - Health Tip
- S4 - Song Lyrics
- S4 - Spiritual Dynamics
- S4 - Family Dynamics
- S4 - Church Dynamics

Available from the Appendix or enclosed USB

## PARENTING MEETING 4



### FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

#### **MENU: STUFFED BAKED POTATOES WITH CHIPOTLE OR CHILI AND CORNBREAD**

*[Distribute recipes from pages S4-1—S4-3 Recipes in the Appendix.]*

You are also free to use your own recipes for the meals. Remember to involve a team of members to share the responsibilities of preparation and clean up so the burden doesn't fall on a faithful few.

Allow attendees to sit next to whomever they choose during the meal. After the meal, dismiss the children to their programming and use an icebreaker to divide the adults into groups of six for the session.

#### **HEALTH TIP: FRESH AIR**

*[Distribute handout from page S4-1 Health Tip in the Appendix.]*

Just for fun, invite everyone to stand and participate in a deep-breathing exercise. This simple activity is actually good for you.

1. Stand erect and throw your shoulders gently up, back, then down.
2. Slowly inhale through your nose counting to five. Don't breathe in by lifting your shoulders. Rather, fill your lungs using your diaphragm.
3. Purse your lips and slowly exhale through your mouth to the count of about 20.
4. Do this six times (once or twice a day) and it will exercise your lungs, improve your thinking, and increase your circulation. It's also a great way to relax or relieve stress.



## LEARNING AND GROWING

### MUSIC: SELECTIONS

*[Distribute lyrics from pages S4-1—S4-2 Song Lyrics in the Appendix.]*

Instead of handing out lyrics for the songs, you can project them on a screen using PowerPoint or another program. Don't assume that new members know these songs. Provide words for everyone. Encourage the song leaders to smile when they are up front.



### SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS: HOW TO KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY

*[Distribute handout from pages S4-1—S4-4 Spiritual Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

The Sabbath is a sacred day to remind us of how much God loves us. Keeping the Sabbath holy shows our loyalty to Him. Many new members may not have a clear idea on how to keep the Sabbath. The practical handout provided in the appendix comes from the General Conference and provides some ideas.

Another clear summary statement on Sabbath-keeping is found in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Pastor John Brunt has published an article on Sabbath-keeping that helps us not become too rule-bound (see [sdanet.org/atissue/sabbath/brunt.htm](http://sdanet.org/atissue/sabbath/brunt.htm)) or Roy Adams' "Keeping the Sabbath" article in the *Adventist Review* ([archives.adventistreview.org/issue.php?issue'2007-1517&page'22](http://archives.adventistreview.org/issue.php?issue'2007-1517&page'22)). May-Ellen Colon has written a great book called *From Sundown to Sundown* (Pacific Press, 2007). Pastor Glen Holland actually lists 100 activities you might do on Sabbath in his article "Making Sabbath a Delight" (found at [AdventSource.org/as30/plusLine.article.aspx?id'129](http://AdventSource.org/as30/plusLine.article.aspx?id'129)).



### FAMILY DYNAMICS: PARENTING

*[Distribute worksheet from pages S4-1—S4-4 Family Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Remember that the worksheet for members is an abbreviated form of your notes for teaching in this section. Everything that is underlined in your notes refers to a blank to be filled in by the members listening.

#### PARENTING - SCRIPTS FOR LEADERS

*"Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalm 127:3, NASB).*

How many parents consider their children a gift from the Lord? In moments of stress, hospital bills, sleepless nights, temper tantrums, and teenage years this may be a bit of a stretch to a stressed out parent—even though they love their kids. Parenting is an intense responsibility and a job that requires a lot of work, a lot of support, and an ability to improvise when the child does something not included in the chapters of parenting books you thought had adequately prepared you.

When considering how to meet the needs of our children, we must realize one thing: There are no perfect parents. Even the most diligent parent has some regret about a time they wish they had done something differently with their child, or a decision they wish they could retract.



It's a quote that is both sobering and encouraging. We all need help to master the art and science of parenting. What follows is a little of that help.

### **Parents Need to Care for Themselves, Too**

Parents not only have the stresses that come with their child, but with the advent of Pinterest and other social media, many parents feel the need to keep up with other parents they perceive as craftier, wealthier, more organized, and just plain better than they are. Terms such as “mompitition” have been coined to characterize the frenetic life of a mom trying to live up to an online ideal that is near impossible. Dads don't have as many cool terms revealing their competitive ways, but the struggle is still real.

As parents strive for their ideals it is easy to feel selfish, incompetent, or weak when their energy and resources run out. They need to know that self-care is just as important to childcare, and a few areas are key. First, a parent's number one priority is for their children to hear the gospel and have the opportunity to come to know Christ—which means they have to model a healthy spiritual life themselves.

Children will be drawn to those things that are important to their parents. We underestimate the impact fathers have on the religious life of their kids. Does Parental Church Attendance Matter? A study concluded the following:

- When both parents attend church, 72% of their children attend when grown.
- When only the father attends, 55% of the children attend when grown.
- When only the mother attends, 15% of the children attend when grown.
- When neither parent attends, only 6% of the children attend when grown.<sup>1</sup>

Second, parents need sleep. This is hard when baby doesn't yet sleep through the night, but spouses taking turns during feedings, employing a trusted relative, or even a loving church member to take the child for a few hours while mom and dad rest can do wonders.

Third, finding a hobby or even a part-time job for a stay-at-home parent can be helpful. It will help them get out of the house, interact with adults, and exercise the parts of the brain that hold a normal conversation and don't have to repeat themselves 100 times a second.

Bottom line—ask for help and take care of yourself so you can be the best parent you can be.

### **Two Are Better Than One**

The concept of the nuclear family is under attack today. God's perfect plan is a two-parent home in which both a mother and a father are guiding the children. God knew exactly what He was doing. The mother and father have different roles, attitudes, skills, and priorities in the child's life and upbringing.

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<sup>1</sup> Cady, Nick. (2016) The Impact on Kids of Dad's Faith and Church Attendance. Downloaded from: <https://nickcady.org/2016/06/20/the-impact-on-kids-of-dads-faith-and-church-attendance/>

What if you are a single parent? God has a tender heart toward single parents and hears the cries for extra help. Sometimes this will involve other people who will come into your life to assist you; other times it will be in the form of added strength and wisdom that He will give you in your time of need.

## **You're Unique**

The most famous passage in scripture is John 3:16 which says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave *his only Son*, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." The Greek word for "only son" is *monogenes*, which literally means "only unique." Obviously Jesus Christ is absolutely unique and anthropomorphic terms falter at trying to capture His essence.

However, even with regular 100% human kids, they are our "uniques."

Each member of your family is as unique, different, and beautiful in their own way. Anyone who has more than one child knows about differences in learning styles and behavior. Some children can be disciplined with a stern look; others fail to respond to the sternest reprimands. Effective child training requires parents to customize their methods to the individual child.

## **THE SIX BASIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN**

### **1. Children need unconditional love.**

God speaks of His beloved Son in Matthew 3:17 KJV: "And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" It is important to note that at this time Jesus had never preached a sermon or performed one miracle. Yet God glowingly affirmed His Son.

What does Romans 8:38-39 (NKJV) tell us could separate us from the love of God?

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Parents trying to resolve their personal problems and failures through their children give conditional love. Too many stories exist about parents who try to live vicariously through their children, pushing them to succeed in ways that exhaust them and rob them of their childhood.

Some parents also hold to a bizarre idea that withholding approval and affection makes kids tougher—but it actually messes up their ability to relate to other human beings. It also teaches them that they are loved based on performance—something that is, theologically speaking, anti-gospel. We may not like what our kids do; it may hurt us. But we should never permanently hurt them by giving them the impression that their value is based on works.

In a television interview after she had received the Nobel Peace Prize, Mother Teresa was asked, "What can the average person do to promote world peace?" Her wise counsel was this: "If you want to promote world peace, go home and love your family."

## 2. Children need to be trained

The Bible says, “Train children in the way they should go; when they grow old, they won’t depart from it.” (Proverb 22:6, CEB). Such training needs involvement. This passage contains a key element here. It states we are to “train up” a child. The concept behind the Hebrew term translated “train up” is derived from the palate, or roof of the mouth. Specifically it was used to describe a rope placed in the mouth of a horse to give it direction

This verse is tricky. Many parents have beat themselves up when their child grows up and gets into trouble. Many sincere, intelligent, emotionally healthy parents have given their children the best shot at life, only to have their kid choose things that made their life a mess. Are we to blame the parents?

Most certainly not!

Proverbs are not promises. They are wise sayings that are generally true. If they were absolute promises, then Adam and Eve never would have sinned—since God is the greatest parent of all. However, being a God of love, He gave humanity the ability to choose good or evil; we refer to that as “free will; and unfortunately, sometimes we choose evil. Thankfully we do have promises that give us hope when things go bad. Scripture says, “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28, ESV). There is always redemption.

## 3. Children need to be nurtured

The word *nurture* means “to provide nourishment and support during the fragile stages of development.” It is imperative that parents provide this nurture with words, with touch, and with their time. Children need to be touched in order to feel nurtured. Kids need to grow up in families that hug, kiss, and let one another know they are loved. Many children never grow up seeing their parents hug one another. Children also need their parents’ time. One of my (Claudio) professors in graduate school reminded us often that, “Positive attention is better than negative attention, but negative attention is better than no attention at all. Perhaps much of the misbehavior and even rebellion in our children is no more than a call for positive attention.

The Bible reminds us of the brevity of life. This should motivate in setting our priorities correctly. James writes, “Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (James 4:14).

## 4. Children need genuine, deserved praise.

You can praise your children in four ways:

### a. Praise Selectively

Praise behavior that reflects your desires and goals for your children. Indiscriminate praise doesn’t motivate; it only confuses. It is a myth that children learn obedience by flattery.

### b. Praise Immediately

Catch your children in the act of doing a good deed and praise them at that time. Delayed praise has less meaning than immediate praise.

**c. Praise Specifically**

Use specifics as, “I loved the way you shared your toy with your sister,” or “What a good job you did making your bed today!”

**d. Praise Intentionally**

Look for ways to praise a child with a goal in mind. When you want your children to learn to be kind, praise acts of kindness. Expect your children to be kind and tell them you are not at all surprised at their kind behavior.

Use these five questions and statements regularly with your children. You’ll revolutionize your relationship with your children if they hear these words often:

- 1) “I am proud of the choice you just made.”
- 2) “What do you think about...?”
- 3) “Would you like to have my opinion about that?”
- 4) “Here are several options I think you should consider. Whatever you decide, I will stand with you.”
- 5) “Since we cannot find a way to say ‘yes,’ here is why we have to say ‘no’.”

**5. Children need consistency and follow-through.**

Some parents are too timid when it comes to correcting kids out of a fear of punishing them too harshly. Some of us have bad memories of an overly critical parent and we are terrified to do that to our little ones. However, *not* being involved and even showing indifference to bad behavior also sends an unloving message of, “You’re not worthy of my time.”

Consequences need to be fair, but most importantly consistent and with follow-through. Parents need to discuss how children will be disciplined *before* trouble happens so they can communicate to their children what happens when certain behaviors are engaged—and so parents don’t engage in negative behavior in the heat of battle.

When you communicate the consequences of certain behaviors to your children, and you have warned them, you need to follow through with whatever discipline has been decided. To perpetually promise consequences with no follow-through reveals that not only do you lack the authority to make things happen, but you do not keep your word.

Remember, even Jesus disciplines those He loves (see Revelation 3:19).

**6. Children need parents who know when to let go.**

Let’s consider an important question. Why did God create parents? We believe the answer is simple: God created parents in order to create human beings who don’t need parents! The irony of the parent-child relationship is that its ultimate goal is separation.

One of the most difficult decisions any parent must make is when to let go and expect the child to move out into the world as a capable adult. Children begin their lives needing roots. The family provides this important part of their lives. But while they are becoming “rooted” in your family, you are also helping them to grow “wings.” The day will come when you will need to help them pull up the roots and take to their wings.

When your child turns 18 you must work within the framework of a new philosophy that can be hard for some parents to accept. Your child might not do what you think is right, but they still have the right to do what *they* think is right!

Helping your child to become their own parent is one of the most important skills you will ever teach. Parents must give the world adults who are capable of making sound decisions, who contribute to society, and who further the Kingdom of God. But it's important to remember one thing.

Let Joshua 24:15 mark your home and family: "...As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

## Kindling God's Fire in Your Children

Have you ever started a bonfire? What do you need to start a good fire? Kindling, dry wood, matches, some fire accelerant. Can you start a fire with wet, green, fresh wood? Possibly, but it takes a lot more work and effort. Can you start a fire out of ashes? Can you start a fire in the middle of a hurricane, a thunderstorm, pouring rain, or a wind storm?

In the same way, if we want to kindle God's fire in our children, we need to have the right conditions and the right materials. So what are those conditions?

### 1. **Cultivate a daily, personal devotional life.**

We have looked at this in our Spiritual Dynamics section. There will be more ideas coming in this important area. You might even have devotions in a place where your children observe you reading your Bible and praying.

### 2. **Pray for your children.**

Model the blessings from the ones the Old Testament fathers spoke over their children. You only have to read some of them to realize their importance.

The Bible doesn't explain why these men said blessings; it simply states that they did. "Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home" (Genesis 31:55, ESV). Rebekah's brothers blessed her, saying to her, "Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the cities of their enemies" (Genesis 24:60, MV).

One mother shares, "At night, as my babies slept, I would put my hand on them and bless them. Not yet knowing their strengths and weaknesses, I thought of characteristics that would please God and help them throughout life. I can still picture the softly lit room and the gentle breathing of my first son as I pronounced this blessing: "Jesse, I bless you with joy. I bless you with laughter and love for life. I bless you with intimacy with Jesus and a passion for Him. I bless you with our love."

When we pronounce a blessing over our children it gives us confidence that what we prayed for is heard and will be answered. In Psalm 5:3 we read that David laid his requests before the Lord in the morning and then waited *in expectation*.

How often we pray tentative, forlorn little prayers, hoping the Lord will hear and respond. Speaking a blessing in the present tense gives us faith that our prayer is taking effect immediately. You will find it a joy—a sort of irrepressible urge to smile as you speak. You might feel like the woman in Proverbs 31 who laughs at the future with a happy conviction that all is well.

The mother who shared a moment ago also says, “Now that my children are beyond infancy, I’m able to pray more specifically for them. I can see traits that need the strengthening or curbing that the Holy Spirit provides, and I tailor my nightly blessings to each child’s personality: ‘Little one, I bless you with the ability to handle your frustrations.’ It’s helped me to keep a prayer book to record areas that need prayer and to find encouragement when I look back on problems that are now behind us.”

Not all prayers for our children need to be reformatory prayers for changes in character. We can delight in many of the qualities and gifts of our children, as does the Lord. After all, they are His unique creations. It’s refreshing to celebrate each child with the Lord. You can pray: “Father, thank You for my son’s zeal! Thank you for his wholehearted gusto for every task at hand.” Praying for our children with thanksgiving often gives us back the perspective we need after a particularly hard day!

If your extended family is not made up of believers, look for spiritual grandparents, aunts, and uncles for your children. How about the women in your Bible study or the men in your prayer group? Why not partner up and pray for each other’s kids?

**3. Practice daily family worship.**

Make family worship age-appropriate, exciting, and practical. Parents must initiate it, but children may be part of the planning and preparation.

**4. Attend church regularly.**

Remember the statistics shared earlier?

**5. Maintain a positive attitude toward the church.**

This applies not only to God’s house, but the leadership, doctrines, and members.

**6. Teach your children to exercise faith.**

Show them how to bring their little trials to Jesus in prayer.

**7. Finally, demonstrate the importance of servicing others.**

Service is a more positive activity than simply entertaining yourself. There are many service activities you can do with your children. You can be a volunteer in your community and have them join you if it is appropriate. You can visit the sick or elderly with your children.

## THE BEST GIFT

All couples, ideally, should talk about children before marriage—whether they will have them, how they will be raised, and how they will be disciplined.

The other challenge with children is their tendency to take over your marriage if you let them. Sleepless nights, profuse diaper changes, midnight feedings, school events, hobbies, playtime, and the general need to be fed and cared for requires a massive amount of energy and time. If you are not careful, your role as a parent may trump your role as a spouse. While seasons of this are inevitable, this cannot be the norm.

As one brave article points out:

But I view my investment in my relationship with my spouse as one that is beneficial to our family as a whole. Prioritizing my husband’s needs decreases our chances of

getting divorced; it also increases the probability that our children will remain in a two-parent home.<sup>2</sup>

Children need unconditional love, but they also need to see a marriage that models unconditional love between their parents. What kind of marriage do they need to see? How do you want them to love their future spouse if they choose to marry?

Not to mention, it's good for kids to know that the world doesn't always revolve around them.

Spouses need to set aside time to date and rest. Don't view this as an expense, but as an investment in the health of the marriage—and the family as a whole. Your kids need to see you loving each other well so they learn how to love well. It will take discipline. The best gift you can give your children is the gift of your marriage. It is through your relationship that they develop a healthy image of God and of themselves. It is in your home where they develop healthy attachment and security. It is in your family that they learn about overcoming obstacles and forgiving others, and themselves, when they fail. So, give your children the best gift, the gift of your healthy marriage.

Also, for couples who don't have kids yet, or who never plan on having kids, you will have similar challenges with work, hobbies, or maybe even pets. Keep communication open, keep priorities straight, and invest in each other over the other realities of life.

## SUMMARY

God has given parents a responsibility to raise their children in faith. It takes a lot of energy, prayer, patience, and perseverance. Those in the church who do not have children in the home can be a support to parents. They can pray for children in the church by name. They can learn their names and greet them on Sabbath. They can assist in the children's divisions and support them by attending school functions. Together, the church family can support and positively influence all of our children to follow the Lord.

\*Materials from this section come from: Richard and Rita Tate, *11 Reasons Families Succeed* (Hensley Publishing, 2002).

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<sup>2</sup> Doty, A. (2015, April 16). "Why I'll Always Put My Husband Before My Kids." Retrieved July 29, 2015, from <http://www.yahoo.com/parenting/why-i-love-my-husband-more-than-my-children-115951224483.html>



## ICEBREAKER AND SEATING ARRANGEMENT

For this part of the session you'll want to divide the attendees into even-numbered groups of six people. You can seat the groups in circles or have everyone sit in rows. What's important is that everyone sits by new people each evening and interacts with someone different during the discussion time at the end of the session. For session 4, have everyone line up according to their favorite season (spring, summer, fall, winter). Count off groups of six and direct each group to where they should sit.



### INTERACTION QUESTIONS

1. Share with a neighbor how your parents disciplined you growing up and whether it was effective or not.
2. Share with someone next to you how you conduct family worship, or what ideas you have tried in the past.
3. Share with a spouse, or a person next to you, three ways in which you can praise a child this week—even if you don't have any children of your own.



## CHURCH DYNAMICS: *GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH*

*[Distribute handout from pages S4-1—S4-2 Church Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

One of the most important ways for new members to connect with the church is to be involved in service. That can happen formally (serving in an elected church office) or informally (just helping out wherever there is a need). We must be careful to not assume people know how to get involved. While some will assert themselves and ask how to serve, most people prefer to be asked.

The handout for this Church Dynamics section is general in nature since every church has slightly different ways of connecting people to service. There are whole seminars dedicated to helping people find a place that fits them. An *iFollow* small group Bible study guide by Monte Sahlin called *Every Believer: God's Calling & Gifting for Ministry* can also be helpful (available from AdventSource at [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org) and 402.486.8800).



- S5 - Recipes
- S5 - Health Tip
- S5 - Song Lyrics
- S5 - Spiritual Dynamics
- S5 - Family Dynamics
- S5 - Church Dynamics

Available from the Appendix or enclosed USB

# THE HEALING GIFT OF FORGIVENESS

## MEETING 5



### FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

#### MENU: SANTA FE BURRITOS OR VEGETABLE WRAPS

*[Distribute recipe from pages S5-1—S5-3 Recipes in the Appendix.]*

Are your new members becoming more acquainted with other members in the church? Mealtime is fellowship time. Have you ever noticed how often Jesus ministered to people in the context of eating food? Don't overlook the power of this social time for members connecting with one another. Ellen White once wrote, "As a people, we lose much by lack of sympathy and sociability with one another. He who talks of independence and shuts himself up to himself, is not filling the position that God designed he should. We are children of God, mutually dependent upon one another for happiness" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 326).

#### HEALTH TIP: REST

*[Distribute handout from pages S5-1—S5-2 Health Tip in the Appendix.]*

You might be surprised at how little sleep most people are getting. Many are lucky to occasionally get the recommended eight hours. Children and teens need more. And what's most enlightening is the impact of sleep deprivation on clear thinking. Most people who lack sleep assume they are alert, but research repeatedly demonstrates they are only fooling themselves.



## LEARNING AND GROWING

### MUSIC: SELECTIONS

*[Distribute lyrics from pages S5-1—S5-2 Song Lyrics in the Appendix.]*

Sometimes the time for singing is haphazardly thrown together. A few people might volunteer to help, but there is little preparation. It’s especially detrimental if those leading the music are not acquainted with the songs they are singing. Notice this helpful advice from Ellen White:

*“Another matter which should receive attention, both at our camp meetings and elsewhere, is that of singing. A minister should not give out hymns to be sung, until it has first been ascertained that they are familiar to those who sing. A proper person should be appointed to take charge of this exercise, and it should be his duty to see that such hymns are selected as can be sung with the spirit and with the understanding also. Singing is a part of the worship of God, but in the bungling manner in which it is often conducted, it is no credit to the truth, and no honor to God. There should be system and order in this as well as every other part of the Lord’s work. Organize a company of the best singers, whose voices can lead the congregation, and then let all who will, unite with them. Those who sing should make an effort to sing in harmony; they should devote some time to practice, that they may employ this talent to the glory of God” (Pastoral Ministry, p. 178, 179).*



### SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS: DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS

*[Distribute worksheet from page S5-1 Spiritual Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

The primary devotional material for the Christian is the Bible. This worksheet highlights this all-important book and also notes the valuable resource of the Spirit of Prophecy. It also provides some helpful tips in choosing a Bible and finding other Christian materials that can assist members in their spiritual growth. You might bring a few samples of these resources for members to look over.



### FAMILY DYNAMICS: THE HEALING GIFT OF FORGIVENESS

Distribute worksheet from pages S5-1—S5-2 Family Dynamics in the Appendix. Remember that the worksheet for members is an abbreviated form of your notes for teaching in this section. Everything that is underlined in your notes refers to a blank to be filled in by the members listening.

#### THE HEALING GIFT OF FORGIVENESS - SCRIPTS FOR LEADERS

All Relationships Need Forgiveness. Jesus made a very serious statement: “And whenever you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25). If we choose to not forgive, it not only affects our relationship with others, but even our relationship with God. Jesus also said, “If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:15 NRSV).

What happens when we fail to forgive? Resentment builds, conflict increases, and hopelessness sets in. 1 Corinthians 13, the great love chapter of the Bible, is a perfect demonstration of

forgiveness. This is how verse 5 is rendered in the New International Version: "It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV). The apostle Paul echoes the words of Solomon who wrote, "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins" Prov. 10:12).

The person who gains the most from forgiveness is the person who does the forgiving. That's why you should forgive people in your life, even those who are not sorry for their actions. Holding on to anger only hurts you, not them. Bernard Meltzer said, "When you forgive, you in no way change the past - but you sure do change the future."<sup>1</sup>

Let's see what we can learn about forgiveness to make sure know what it isn't, what it is, and what we need to do to enjoy the healing balm of forgiveness in our relationships. There are three categories of forgiveness.

1. **Detached Forgiveness:** where there is a reduction in negative feelings toward the offender, but no reconciliation takes place.
2. **Limited Forgiveness:** <http://www.communityservices.org/events/2019/5/14/acs-convention-2019>.
3. **Full Forgiveness:** where there is a total cessation of negative feelings toward the offender, and the relationship is fully restored.

#### WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT

1. **Approval of what they did.** God didn't approve the decisions or actions of Adam and Eve in the Garden, and yet, He made garments of skin for them and clothed them (Gen. 3:21). Jesus forgave the woman who was caught in adultery, but He didn't approve of her lifestyle and instead told her to "go and sin no more." (John 8:11). Just as God forgives people without approving of their sin, we also must learn that forgiving people does not imply an endorsement of their evil deeds. We can forgive what we don't approve of because that is the way God has dealt with us.
2. **Excusing what they did.** We do not cover for the sins of other people. We do not point to circumstances in an attempt to explain away their behavior. Moses did not excuse the behavior of the children of Israel, but instead he appealed to God's mercy: "Forgive the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have pardoned this people, from Egypt even until now." (Numbers 14:19 NRSV) and God forgave them.
3. **Justifying what they did.** Evil cannot be justified. God will never call something that is evil "right," and He does not require us to do so. In Moses' prayer for the Israelite people, he did not offer a hint of justification for their behavior. Instead he pointed out to God that the Egyptians would not think very highly of God's power or name if they saw Him obliterate His own people. While we're required to forgive, we should never attempt to make what is wrong look like it is right.
4. **Pardoning what they did.** A pardon is a legal transaction that releases an offender from the consequences of their action, such as a penalty or a sentence. This is why

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/bernard\\_meltzer\\_132866](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/bernard_meltzer_132866) (accessed 1-6-2019)

we do not ask that the guilty rapist be exempt from punishment. He needs to pay his debt to society, and society must be protected from him.

5. **Reconciliation.** Forgiveness and reconciliation are not always the same. Reconciliation requires the participation of two people. The person you forgive may not want to see or talk to you. Or they may have passed away since the time of the offense. Moreover, you may not want to maintain a close relationship with the person you forgive. An injured person can forgive an offender without reconciliation. It is wonderful indeed if the relationship can be restored, but this must not be pressed in most cases. Some things can never be the same again. It takes two to reconcile, and there must be total willingness on both parts.
6. **Denying what they did.** Denying that an offense took place, or repression (suppressing what they really feel inside), is almost always unconscious. Some people, for various reasons, live in denial; that is, they refuse to admit or come to terms with the reality of a bad situation. It is sometimes painful to face the facts, and at times denial seems to be an easy way out. Many victims of child abuse repress the memory of the event. The conscious mind cannot accept that a parent, a trusted friend or a relative would do such a thing, so the victim often lives in denial. Rape victims experience the same phenomenon.
7. **Blindness to what happened.** Some people, especially those with an “overly scrupulous conscience”, feel that to forgive is to be willfully and consciously blind to the sin that was committed. They feel that if they offer forgiveness, they are turning a blind eye to, or ignoring, the offense, and they believe that this would, in effect, be excusing a sin against God. Willful blindness is slightly different from repression. Blindness is a conscious choice to pretend that a sin did not take place; repression is usually unconscious or involuntary.
8. **Forgetting.** Literally to forget may not be realistic. It is usually impossible to forget meaningful events in our lives, whether positive or negative. Love doesn’t erase our memories. That’s why we should never say to anyone that they need to, “Forgive and Forget.” Our brains have the capacity to recall many small things, large and small. When we recall an injury that was perpetrated against us, we may believe we have not forgiven, which then become perpetual torture. Forgiving, while still being aware of the injury, is actually a demonstration of greater grace when we are fully aware of what occurred – and we still choose to forgive.
9. **Refusing to take the wrong seriously.** We cannot truly forgive until we see clearly the offense we are forgiving and understand its seriousness. Some people think that in order to forgive they must dismiss a wrong or pass it off as inconsequential or insignificant. But that is only avoiding the problem, possibly trying to make forgiveness easier. The greater victory for the one who does the forgiving is to face up to the seriousness – even the wickedness – of what happened and still forgive.
10. **Pretending we are not hurt.** It is ridiculous to think that we should have to keep a stiff upper lip when we have been injured by a spouse’s infidelity. . . . or betrayed. . . . or molested. . . . or unjustly criticized.

## WHAT FORGIVENESS IS

Dr. Everett Worthington,<sup>2</sup> Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, believes there are two types of forgiveness. “**Decisional forgiveness**” involves deciding to forgive a personal offense and letting go of angry and resentful thoughts and feelings toward the person who has wronged you. “**Emotional forgiveness**” involves replacing the negative emotions with positive feelings like compassion, sympathy, and empathy.

Research shows that emotional forgiveness is where most health benefits lie. This type of forgiveness can reduce our stressful reaction to a transgression—and stress has been shown to lead to a suppressed immune system and an increased risk for cardiovascular issues. Emotional forgiveness also keeps us from ruminating over the wrong that was done to us, and rumination can be harmful, too: It has been associated with a number of mental health problems, including obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, and depression. Decisional forgiveness is more important in repairing and reconciling relationships.

Forgiveness is

1. **Being aware of what someone has done and still forgiving them.** Forgiveness is achieved only when we acknowledge what was done without any denial or covering up – and still refuse to make the offender pay for their crime. Forgiveness is painful. It hurts to kiss revenge good-bye. Forgiveness is not forgetting what the other person did. Forgiveness is no longer holding that person accountable for the transgression.
2. **Choosing to keep no record of wrong.** Love “keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:5). Why do we keep track of the times we are offended? To use them. To prove what happened. To wave them before someone who doubts what actually happened. As much as Love is a choice, Forgiveness is also a choice. When we develop a lifestyle of forgiveness, we learn to erase the wrong rather than file it away in our mental computer.
3. **Refusing to punish.** Refusing to punish those who deserve it – giving up the natural desire to see them “get what’s coming to them.” It is refusing to cave in to the fear that this person or those people won’t get the punishment or rebuke we think they deserve.
4. **Not telling what they did.** Anyone who truly forgives does not gossip about their offender. If you must tell someone, make sure that person is trustworthy and will never repeat your situation to those it does not concern.
5. **Being merciful.** “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7). One difference between grace and mercy is that grace is getting what we don’t deserve, and mercy is not getting what we do deserve. So when we show mercy we are withholding justice from those who have injured us, and that is one aspect of godliness.
6. **Graciousness.** Do not make a rigorous stand against your enemy even when you are clearly in the right. In Philippians 4:5 this word is translated “gentleness.” It comes down to our English word graciousness. It implies an exceedingly rare act of grace. Graciousness is withholding certain facts you know to be true, so as to leave your enemy’s reputation unscathed. Graciousness is shown by what you don’t say, even if what you could say would be true.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.evworthington-forgiveness.com/research/> - (accessed 1-6-2019)

There is a vital difference between grace and mercy. **Grace is getting what we don't deserve. Mercy is NOT getting what we deserve.** Think about this for a moment. Grace is getting what we don't deserve. By dying in our place, Jesus gave us what we don't deserve - forgiveness, to become children of God, and eternal life. Mercy, on the other hand, is NOT getting what we deserve. Because we are sinners, and the wages of sin is death, all of us will die. But in His mercy, God does not allow us to die forever.

Forgiveness means being gracious and merciful. Letting our offender get what they don't deserve, our forgiveness, and NOT letting them get what they deserve, our anger and resentment.

Can we learn to become more forgiving?

Interventions have been designed to help people reach emotional forgiveness. Dr. Worthington has developed a five-step process called **REACH** that has been tested with positive results in more than 20 controlled scientific studies. **REACH** is an acronym for this process.

**R** is for “recall”—remembering the hurt that was done to you as objectively as you can.

**E** is for “empathize”—trying to understand the viewpoint of the person who wronged you.

**A** is for the “altruism”—thinking about a time you hurt someone and were forgiven, then offering the gift of forgiveness to the person who hurt you.

**C** is for “committing”—publicly forgiving the person who wronged you

**H** is for “holding on”—not forgetting the hurt, but reminding yourself that you made the choice to forgive.

Think of forgiveness more as a journey than an event. Here are the steps we need to take on this journey.

1. Set aside time to discuss the issue one on one.
2. Identify the problem or harmful event.
3. Fully explore the pain and concerns.
4. Ask for forgiveness
5. Agree to forgive
6. Commit to refrain from doing the thing that caused the offense.
7. Expect forgiveness to take time.

Let's close this session with a few thoughts on Forgiveness.

1. Corrie Ten Boom, who lost her entire family during War World II, said, “Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.markmerrill.com/corrie-ten-boom-the-ultimate-forgiveness-story/> (accessed 1-6-2019)

2. "Forgiveness breaks the cycle. It does not settle all questions of blame and justice and fairness; to the contrary, often it evades those questions. But it does allow relationships to start over. In that way, said Solzhenitsyn, we differ from all animals. It is not our capacity to think that makes us different, but our capacity to repent, and to forgive. Only humans can perform that most unnatural act, and by doing so only they can develop relationships that transcend the relentless law of nature." Philip Yancey<sup>4</sup>
3. "Forgiveness involves letting go. Remember playing tug-of-war as a child? As long as the parties on each end of the rope are tugging, you have a "war." But when someone lets go, the war is over. When you forgive your father, you are letting go of your end of the rope. No matter how hard he may tug on the other end, if you have released your end, that war is over for you." H. Norman Wright<sup>5</sup>
4. "Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free and realizing you were the prisoner!" Max Lucado<sup>6</sup>

### ICEBREAKER AND SEATING ARRANGEMENT



For this part of the session you'll want to divide the attendees into even-numbered groups of six people. You can seat the groups in circles or have everyone sit in rows. What's important is that everyone sits by new people each evening and interacts with someone different during the discussion time at the end of the session. For this session, divide everyone into even-numbered groups of no more than six. Do your best to ensure that participants are sitting next to people they do not yet know.



### INTERACTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Look at Matthew 5:48 with a few neighbors. Read the text and try to figure out what it saying. After a few moments read the entire chapter and see if it changes your definition of what is being talked about.
2. Spend 2-3 minutes praying for the person next to you. Ask them what they need prayer for and ask if there is anyone in their circle of friends that needs prayer.
3. Turn to the person next to you and, off the top of your head, share your testimony in 2-3 minutes.

<sup>4</sup> Yancey, P. "An Unnatural Act," Christianity Today, (April 8, 1991) p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Wright, H.N. Always Daddy's Girl, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1989) pp. 235-236.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/45952-forgiveness-is-unlocking-the-door-to-set-someone-free-and> (accessed 1-6-2019)



## CHURCH DYNAMICS: *CHURCH RESOURCES AND ADVENTIST MINISTRIES*

*[Distribute worksheet from page S5-1 Church Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

There is a mountain of resources available to Adventist church members today. This short article skims the surface in explaining what is available through your local conference, union, division, and even the General Conference. In preparation for this time you might make a note of your own list of favorite resources and Adventist ministries. Keep in mind the broad range of people in your church, the different age groups, and the various needs of your members.



- S6 - Recipes
- S6 - Health Tip
- S6 - Song Lyrics
- S6 - Spiritual Dynamics
- S6 - Family Dynamics
- S6 - Church Dynamics

Available from the Appendix or enclosed USB

## CELEBRATING YOUR MARRIAGE MEETING 6



### FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

#### **MENU: TOFU SCRAMBLE WITH HASH BROWNS OR WHOLE WHEAT PANCAKES WITH BANANA DATE-NUT MUFFIN TOPS**

*[Distribute recipe from pages S6-1—S6-3 Recipes in the Appendix.]*

Has everyone enjoyed the meals? You might consider bringing samples of other Adventist cookbooks from your local Adventist Book Center to show members. Some churches purchase a few and give them away in a drawing to new members. This is a time for members to become better acquainted and learn some new healthy recipes. The two options for this session are often enjoyed as a breakfast meal but can be appreciated any time of day.

#### **HEALTH TIP: TRUSTING IN GOD**

*[Distribute handout from page S6-1 Health Tip in the Appendix.]*

Some people do not connect their spirituality with their health. Everyone knows we should trust in God, but how many see the impact a lack of trust can have on one's body? Ellen White once wrote, "Gratitude, rejoicing, benevolence, trust in God's love and care—these are health's greatest safeguard"<sup>1</sup> Encourage people to read the worksheet and practice exercising faith in God's love for them.



## LEARNING AND GROWING

### MUSIC: SELECTIONS

*[Distribute lyrics from pages S6-1—S6-2 Song Lyrics in the Appendix.]*

Have you ever stopped to think about what music will be like in heaven? When the universe gathers to worship the Creator, millions and millions of voices will join in anthems of praise with songs of joy and adoration. We who are redeemed from sin will sing songs of victory that even angels cannot sing. The greatest themes to be sung will center around Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who gave all to save us. Encourage members to sing the words with purpose and contemplate the meaning of the hymns and songs.



### SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS: BEING A WITNESS FOR CHRIST

*[Distribute handout from pages S6-1—S6-2 Spiritual Dynamics in the Appendix.]*

Many members experience fear when they think about being a witness for Christ. There are myths about sharing your faith that create barriers. Some think complex sentences must be memorized and that strangers are the primary targets of our evangelism. Actually, Christ’s method was to build friendships with people and show loving interest in them. Only after connecting relationally did Jesus say, “Follow me.” Witnessing, at its best, is personal and simple. It doesn’t focus on ourselves; it focuses on caring about others.



### FAMILY DYNAMICS: CELEBRATING YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Distribute worksheet from pages S6-1—S6-2 Family Dynamics in the Appendix. Remember that the worksheet for members is an abbreviated form of your notes for teaching in this section. Everything that is underlined in your notes refers to a blank to be filled in by the members listening.

### CELEBRATING YOUR MARRIAGE

#### Calls to Celebration

In the Bible there are several calls for God’s people to celebrate for specific reasons:

- Celebrate the Sabbath - Lev.(Lev 23:32 NKJV) "It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."
- The Jewish people celebrated annual holy days (Lev. 23:41) “You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.” (Esther 9:21, 27) And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, 21to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar,
- Celebrating special occasions - like the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem - (Neh 12:27 NKJV) Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the

Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to **celebrate the dedication** with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps.

We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, religious and political special days. We celebrate accomplishments like getting a new job or a promotion, being accepted into a college or university or graduating from one of them. We also celebrate special events like a wedding, the birth or a child, a person's baptism or ordination, and many others.

In this seminar we invite you to celebrate your marriage. Not only once a year, on the occasion of your wedding anniversary, but for many other reasons, and many other times, and in many different ways.

### 1. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE DAILY

- a. **Daily kiss.** "As Time Goes By" was a song written by Herman Hupfeld in 1931 and became most famous in 1942 when it was sung by Sam in the movie Casablanca. Some of the lyrics remind us that...

You must remember this

A kiss is still a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh

The fundamental things apply

As time goes by. . .

A daily kiss is one of those fundamental things that apply to every healthy relationship as time goes by. When do couples kiss? (list as many as you can think of; e.i. to say hello, etc.):

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As time goes by, a lot of the kissing that takes place between husbands and wives is no more than a quick peck on the cheek or a soft, passing one on the lips. Ellen Kreidman suggests that in order to maintain a healthy, vibrant, passionate marriage, couples should practice "The 10 Second Kiss." She writes:

When a couple stands at the altar and vows to love each other, "Till death do us part," they take for granted that they will be intimately connected forever. The kiss at the end of the ceremony symbolizes that connection.

The kiss is the core of a relationship. It is a barometer of how things are going. A couple can be having sex but not kissing. If they are not kissing passionately the relationship is

in trouble. Most couples aren't even aware of when their relationship started changing. What started out as a passionate relationship, over time becomes a friendship. One day they wake up and realize, "Oh, my gosh, we're roommates and no longer lovers!"

Well I'm here to tell you that you can keep your friend and get the lover back too.

When you give someone a peck on the cheek, that says, "I love you," but a 10 second kiss says, "I'm still in love with you!"

Of all the homework assignments I give, the 10 second kiss has the most immediate and dramatic effect. If you give it in the morning it sets the tone for the rest of the day and if you give it in the evening it sets the mood for the rest of the evening. It's not your brother, sister peck on the cheek that feels comfortable and platonic. It's a passionate kiss that makes you feel warm, close and connected.

I want you to grab your mate tonight and give them a passionate 10 second kiss. When they say, "What's gotten into you?", you can tell them, "We are not going to be roommates anymore. From now on we are lovers again."

Before you kiss, you may feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, tense, annoyed, distant. After, you'll feel close, warm, and connected.

When we kiss, we are exchanging our breath with one another. When we exchange breath, we are breathing in our mate's life force, his energy and he is breathing in ours. In this way we become one.

- b. Undivided attention.** For years we have suggested a simple formula to improve any marriage. Spend undivided attention with your spouse, a minimum of:

30 minutes each day

1 evening each week

1 day each month

1 weekend each quarter

Through the rest of this seminar we will refer to each of these as ways to celebrate your marriage. First, let us talk about spending a minimum of 30 minutes each day of undivided attention. By undivided attention we mean no TV, radio, computer, cell phone, magazines, books, household chores, children, friends, family, etc.

Ellen Kreidman writes: If I want to know how good your sex life is, all I have to do is ask you how good your communication is. I know that a couple who spends quality time... talking to each other every day has a better sex life than a couple who doesn't communicate.

Now here's a sad statistic...The average American couple spends 20 minutes a week talking. That's averages out to 3 minutes a day. That includes Good Morning. What's for dinner? Any mail? How are the kids? How was work?

What do you know of, that can survive on 3 minutes? Could you study for 3 minutes a day and hope to pass a course? Could you raise kids on 3 minutes a day? Could you have fallen

in love if you spent 3 minutes a day together?

So how can we spend 3 minutes a day and think we'll have a meaningful relationship? WE CAN'T! This week I want you to spend 30 minutes each day of uninterrupted time, talking together. And don't tell me that you don't have 30 minutes because I know you're watching at least one hour of TV. If you have to, hire a baby-sitter so the two of you can be alone for 30 minutes.... Here are some ideas:

Go for a nice long walk, holding hands, of course.

Go for a ride in the car and stop at a secluded spot.

Go to an informal restaurant for a cup of a hot drink.

Sit down in your favorite room; put on some soft music and just talk.

From: ([http://www.getromantic.com/passion/spice\\_up\\_sex/talking.html](http://www.getromantic.com/passion/spice_up_sex/talking.html))

List other ideas on how to spend those thirty minutes each day to celebrate each other and your relationship:

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**c. Remember when. . . memories of the past.** A fun way to celebrate your marriage is by remembering where we have been and how we got where we are. Ellen G. White wrote of the church, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." (Counsels for the Church, p.359). The same can be said of our marriage: We have nothing to fear for the future except as we forget all that God has done for us as a couple in the past.

Each day, play the game, "Remember when. . ." Select one special event in your life, find pictures of the event, talk about the people, the place, the fun memories (or even the sad ones) that brought you together at the time.

## **2. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE WEEKLY**

The American singer and songwriter Harry Chapin composed the words:

I let time go lightly when I'm here with you,

I let time go lightly when the day is through.

I keep a watch on time when I've have work to do,

I let time go lightly with you.

Put on your weekly calendar specific periods of time when you will spend time together as a couple. As we suggested before, set aside at least 30 minutes each day, and one evening each week. Let this time be without the distractions of any electronic equipment (television, computers, tablets or cellular phones), and without the company of others (children, family, friends). You should also limit activities such as shopping or running errands, and you should not dedicate this undivided time to problem solving. Let this be a time to disconnect from everything else and to reconnect with each other.

**a. Put Sex on your Calendar.** Ellen Kreidman recommends:

This week I want you to put sex on the calendar. You heard me right! Yes, I want you to plan for it. I know some of you are saying, "What about the spontaneity?" It was never spontaneous. In the beginning you always planned to be together. Let me ask you something. What do you think a honeymoon is, if not an entire week of planned sex? And everyone has the time of his or her life planning for that... sometimes a year in advance. You go out and buy special lingerie, undergarments, cologne, perfume and it's exciting, knowing that you are going to be together. We put doctor's appointments on the calendar, dentist's appointments on the calendar, we even schedule car maintenance on the calendar. But heaven forbid, we schedule the person who means the most to us, on the calendar.

So take out your calendars and schedule in a night of lovemaking. Making the decision in advance to have sex creates anticipation and can make sex just as exciting as when you were dating. Send something to your mate that will remind him or her of your date. Here are some suggestions:

- Send a negligee to him or silk boxer shorts to her at the office.
- Send body oil or lotion with the promise of a massage.
- A love letter telling your mate how you can't wait!
- A bottle of his favorite cologne or her favorite perfume.
- A tape of romantic music.

From ([http://www.getromantic.com/passion/spice\\_up\\_sex/sex\\_on\\_the\\_calendar.html](http://www.getromantic.com/passion/spice_up_sex/sex_on_the_calendar.html))

### 3. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE MONTHLY

**a. If this were our last day together. . .** You don't have to be dating to go on dates. Spending quality time together as an engaged or married couple is important to maintain a healthy relationship. Just because money's tight doesn't mean you can't go out for a night on the town... or spend the weekend doing something new and fun. So get out of your pj's and check out these budget-friendly date ideas from Marie Claire.

1. Rent bikes and go for a ride in the park or by the beach. Pack a picnic lunch or grab hotdogs at a nearby stand.
2. Grab your partner and go treasure hunting at local garage sales. If you go to the the ritziest neighborhood in your area, you up your chances of finding something special.
3. Go roller skating or ice skating. Treat yourself with ice cream or hot chocolate afterward, depending on the season.

4. Find a local farm to go fruit picking. When you've loaded up on all the apples or berries you can transport home, look up some recipes and get busy in the kitchen.
5. The bookstore can be a great place to bond. Browse through the isles sharing your old favorite or the ones you couldn't stand. Find a section that appeals to a hobby of each of yours, like art, sports, cooking, or gardening, and buy yourself a small gift.
6. Build something together! Been meaning to buy a small bookshelf for the bedroom? Why not put one together yourselves.
7. Go to a fair! Do all the appropriate things: share cotton candy, let him win you a prize, and ride the Ferris wheel until you get dizzy. Your inner children will have a ball!
8. Hauntedhouse.com has listings of spooky mansions in your area. Start off by watching a scary movie before you go, and then spook yourselves silly at a "real" haunted house. (\*\*\*)
9. Play 20 Questions. Whether you've been together for three weeks or three years, there are probably things you don't know about each other. Make sure your questions are open-ended so you don't get yes-or-no answers — and fire away.
10. Take a hike. Enjoy the weather, the scenery, and each other.
11. Take a class together at your local community school. You can find lot of options for 8-week classes, from cooking to karate.
12. Go to a museum—there are so many options! Art, science, natural history, cars, Ripley's, miniature... and the best part is that almost all museums have one day a week where you can get in for free or for a small suggested donation.
13. Check the theater offerings at local colleges and high schools. They'll often have a spring and a fall show, and it's a great way to see a version of your favorite plays and musicals for a fraction of the cost.
14. Celebrate the first snow of winter with a day of sledding. Pick a hilly spot in your town, and if you can't get ahold of real sleds, and use garbage can lids.
15. Stop at your local library and rent a few movies. Toss a coin to see whose pick you'll watch first, and try not to roll your eyes or snore during each other's choices.

From (<http://www.bride.net/2009/inexpensive-date-ideas/>)

**b. Strengthen your own marriage.** Read a book, attend a course or go to a couples' retreat.

#### **4. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE QUARTERLY**

- a. **Honor your Family.** Honor a member of your extended family whose marriage has had a significant positive impact on your own life. Invite other family members to participate.
- b. **Coupons.** Create a coupon book for your spouse, offering them coupons such as one night out, back rub or massage, car wash, special date night, etc.

## 5. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE ANNUALLY

- a. **Anniversaries.** Your wedding anniversary is a major event. Prepare for your wedding anniversary celebration in advance so that everything goes smoothly.
1. Start off right. Get up before she does to prepare a quick breakfast. Serve her breakfast in bed. You might want to plan out the menu and buy the necessary things you need to cook a great breakfast the day before your anniversary. Take a shower after that and return to her side. On the other hand, if you are the sort who makes a major mess of the kitchen whenever you cook anything or even when you make a cup of tea, then skip the breakfast in bed part. She might have a fit when she sees the kitchen after that.
  2. Present her with a bouquet of roses. Order the roses a day or more in advance and have them delivered right to the doorstep. She might chide you for wasting money, but she would be secretly very pleased with that romantic gesture.
  3. If your kids are still young, book a babysitter in advance. You don't want your night to be ruined by crying babies at your table in the restaurant when you are trying to have a romantic candle lit dinner for two. Do go for a candle light dinner. Just the 2 of you in a favourite restaurant.
  4. Relax together and take a break from your regular routine. If you both can, take a day's leave from work. Make your arrangements in the office in advance. If you can't try to go home early for a change, so you can spend more time together.
  5. Don't forget the anniversary gifts. There is a different gift for each year or marriage. You might want to go with the traditional or modern gift this anniversary.
  6. Each year, give your loved one a wedding anniversary ring to signify that year of marriage you have just shared together.
  7. On your 10th wedding anniversary, have a party. Invite those who are dear to both of you to attend. In the presence of everyone, renew your wedding vows and exchange a pair of wedding anniversary rings, to commemorate the event. Here is more information about the 10th wedding anniversary.

From (<http://www.anniversary-rings.net/10th-wedding-anniversary.htm>)

**SEE Wedding Anniversary – Resource I**

### b. Birthdays

### c. Special Occasions

### d. Write a poem, love song, or love letter

### e. Propose to your spouse all over again, but in a different way (See Marriage Proposal Ideas -- Resource II)

### f. 50 Ways to Woo Your Lover (See 50 Ways to Woo Your Lover -- Resource III)

## 6. CELEBRATE YOUR SPOUSE

“Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth” (Prov 5:18 NKJV)



- a. **Celebrate your spouse’s accomplishments.** Pay raise, educational pursuits, new job, an idea, etc.
- b. **Make a list of all you like and appreciate about your spouse.** Every time they do or say something, normal or special, add it to their list (mowing the lawn, cooking a meal, putting up a picture frame on the wall, changing a diaper, etc.)
- c. **Celebrate Your Differences**

Some people believe that opposites attract, while others believe that opposites attack. God created us, males and females, different, but complementary. When God created Adam, he “gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him” (Genesis 2:20 NJKV). While they were different, they were comparable. One way to celebrate your marriage is to celebrate your differences as male and female, as husband and wife:

While Women tend to...	Men tend to...
Be other-focused	Be self-focused
Be more cooperative	Be more competitive
Over-identify with people	Over-identify with work
Need more closeness	Need more distance
Fear abandonment	Fear engulfment
Talk mostly about people	Talk mostly about things
Be more indirect in speaking	Be more direct in speaking
Search more for hidden meanings	Take words at face value
Like to talk a problem out and take time with decisions	Be more decisive and solve problems immediately
Be better listeners	Struggle for dominance and control of conversation
Avoid intimidation	Attempt to intimidate
Avoid conflict and confrontations	Like conflict, power struggles, and confronting others
Admit wrongs and blame themselves	Apologize only when it’s expected and unavoidable
Be comfortable expressing emotions	Be taught not to show emotion
Repress their anger	Express their anger
Be less afraid of commitment	Fear or avoid commitment
Want more love in relationships	Want more sex in relationships
Be more giving	Be more cautious and conscious of what they’ll get
Seek the approval of others	Do what pleases them
Be emotionally jealous and fear loss of emotional commitment	Be more sexually jealous and fear loss of control

From *Reclaiming Intimacy*, by Bryan Craig

As you look at this list, put a check-mark by each of the statements that apply to you.  
Talk about how those differences can be or have been beneficial to your relationship

### **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

### **RESOURCES**

Craig, Bryan. *Reclaiming Intimacy*. (reprinted in Signs, January 2010)

Kreidman, Ellen. *The 10 Second Kiss*. Random House: New York, NY. 1998

## RESOURCE I

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

#### **Celebrating a Wedding Anniversary, *By Anna Lynn Sibal***

In this day and age when getting a divorce is just as common as getting married, celebrating a wedding anniversary has become more important. The longer a couple has been married, the more special each anniversary becomes. The passing of each anniversary makes the vows that couples make when they wed more meaningful, especially that part of the vow that says “Till death do us part.”

The way people celebrate a wedding anniversary varies depending on which country they live in and their own traditions surrounding the occasion. In the western world, the first, the fifth, the 10th, the 15th, the 20th, the 25th, the 50th and each anniversary following that are often celebrated lavishly. But it ultimately depends on the married couple how they wish to spend their wedding anniversary.

#### **Traditional and Modern Wedding Anniversary Gifts**

Couples celebrating a wedding anniversary are customarily given specific gifts corresponding to the number of years they have been married. According to historians, this custom is a carry-over from the Middle Ages, wherein people believed that tokens given after a certain number of years of a couple’s marriage are supposed to bring more luck to the couple. Aside from being tokens of good luck, each gift also represents the irreplaceable investment that the couple has made on each other while they are married.

Here is the list of traditional and modern anniversary gifts as compiled and popularized by the Chicago Public Library:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Modern</b>	<b>Flowers</b>
1st	paper	clocks	carnation
2nd	cotton	china	lily of the valley
3rd	leather	crystal, glass	sunflower
4th	linen, silk	appliances	hydrangea
5th	wood	silverware	daisy
6th	iron	wooden objects	calla lily
7th	wool, copper	desk sets	freesia
8th	bronze	linens, lace	lilac
9th	pottery, china	leather goods	bird of paradise
10th	tin, aluminum	diamond jewelry	daffodil
11th	steel	fashion jewelry	tulip
12th	silk	pearls, colored gems	peony
13th	lace	textiles, furs	chrysanthemum
14th	ivory	gold jewelry	orchid
15th	crystal	watches	rose
16th		silver hollowware	

17th		furniture	
18th		porcelain	
19th		bronze	
20th	china	platinum	aster
21st		brass, nickel	
22nd		copper	
23rd		silver plate	
24th		musical instruments	
25th	silver	sterling silver	iris
30th	pearl	diamond	lily
35th	coral, jade	jade	
40th	ruby	ruby	gladiolus
45th	sapphire	sapphire	
50th	gold	gold	yellow roses
55th	emerald	emerald	
60th	diamond	Diamond	

(<http://www.allweddingideas.com/wedding-anniversary.shtml>)

**RESOURCE II**  
**MARRIAGE PROPOSAL IDEAS - CLASSIC, ROMANTIC AND FUN**

**Romantic Marriage Proposal Ideas.** Here is our list of the most romantic ways to propose.

- Cook her a romantic dinner for two, decorate the table with nice china, candles, cloth napkins, etc. Propose sometime during the dinner.
- Take her out for dinner at your favorite restaurant and arrange with the waiter to write "Will you marry me again?" in chocolate sauce on the rim of her dessert plate.
- Rent a limousine. Propose to her in the limo on the way to or from your special evening. Be sure to bring sparkling cider to celebrate.
- Rent your favorite romantic movie. Make it special with homemade popcorn and her favorite movie treat. Tell her you want your own happy ending by proposing as the credits roll at the end.
- Give her three roses: Tell her one represents the past, one represents the present and the last one represents the future.
- If you enjoy sailing, go for a sunset sail and propose at sea. Remember to bring some food and sparkling cider for a toast.
- Is she a traditional gal? Arrange for a family dinner, propose again at the table.

**Marriage Proposal Ideas Don't Have to be Classic to be Romantic, so Have FUN!**

- Go for a hot air balloon ride and propose as you're watching the sunset. Make sure you bring food and sparkling cider and celebrate with a toast.
- Send her on a treasure hunt. Provide clues all over town to your favorite spots or just around the house. The last hint should lead her to you, sparkling cider, and a greeting card.

Adapted from (<http://www.danforthdiamond.com/marriage-proposal-ideas/>)

## RESOURCE III

### 50 WAYS TO WOO YOUR LOVE

*By Gregory J.P. Godek*

So you want to do something special for your beloved, but you're stumped for ideas. Whether you want a gesture that's creative, outrageous, affordable, quick or classic, we've got the answer.

#### CREATIVE

Looking for some fun ways to add romance to your relationship? Try these creative romance tips:

1. Give your lover a dozen roses -- and do it with a creative twist. Give eleven red roses and one white rose. Attach a note that reads: "In every bunch there's one who stands out -- and you are that one."
2. Fake a power outage at home. (Loosen the fuses or throw the breaker switches.) With no TV to tempt you . . . with no computer to occupy you . . . with no furnace to heat you . . . you pretty much have no choice but to get out the candles, huddle around the fireplace and be romantic!
3. Get your partner a wristwatch. Inscribe it with: "I always have time for you."
4. Attach a \$100 bill to a Victoria's Secret catalog, along with a note to him saying, "You choose."
5. Identify that one pivotal event that brought the two of you together. Celebrate that event every year.
6. Practice even-day/odd-day romance: On even days it's your turn to be romantic, and on odd days it's your partner's turn.
7. Following a bubble bath you've prepared for her, wrap her in a towel that you've warmed up in the dryer.
8. Write your partner a love letter or poem on one sheet of paper. Glue it to thin cardboard, cut it up into puzzle-shaped pieces, then mail all the pieces. Or, mail one puzzle piece per day!
9. Remove all the paper strips (that say "Kisses" on them) from a couple hundred Hershey's Kisses. Fill a jewelry box with them. Wrap 'em up and present them to your partner. Write a certificate explaining that the slips are coupons redeemable for one kiss each.
10. Doesn't your partner deserve a trophy for being the "World's Best Lover"? Trophy shops have a wealth of ideas waiting for you. Just think of the romantic possibilities of plaques, medals, ribbons, nameplates, certificates and banners. And they all can be personalized, engraved, lettered or monogrammed.

#### OUTRAGEOUS

To make a big impression, consider these outrageous romance tips:

1. Visit a karaoke bar and surprise your lover by getting up and singing "your song" to him/her.
2. Kidnap her! Blindfold her. Drive her around town until she's thoroughly lost. Then reveal your destination: Her favorite restaurant, or maybe a romantic inn.
3. Make a GIANT greeting card out of a big cardboard box, (such as the type used to pack a refrigerator).
4. Does your partner love M&M's? Fill a one-gallon glass jar with them as a gift.
5. Want to jazz up the presentation of a special meal? Buy a little hunk of dry ice from a local ice house. Put it in a bowl of water and place it on your serving tray. You'll create wondrous, billowing white clouds!
6. Call your partner from work, every-hour-on-the-hour, just to say "I love you."
7. Slow-dance at a restaurant -- when there's no music playing. (\*\*\*)
8. It's romantic -- but commonplace -- to eat dinner by candlelight. So here's a change of pace: Eat breakfast by candlelight.
9. Take your lover on a surprise two-week vacation to Paris.
10. Many couples have "His" and "Hers" matching towels, but here are some other ideas: "His" and "Hers" matching silk pajamas, motorcycles, T-shirts, overnight bags (have them packed at all times), jack-o'-lanterns at Halloween, rocking chairs, Porsches, heart-shaped tattoos, Christmas tree ornaments, tennis rackets, beach towels.

## AFFORDABLE

Short on cash but big on love? Try these affordable romance tips:

1. Spend the entire day watching romantic movies.
2. If you'd like to spend a romantic summer night making wishes on falling stars, mark the second week in August on your calendar. The earth passes through the Perseid meteor belt around August 12 every year, which usually results in spectacular meteor showers for two to three nights.
3. Buy a lottery ticket. Give it to your partner with a little note attached: "I hit the jackpot when I married you!" (\*\*\*)
4. Pick flowers for your partner from the side of the road.
5. Write a short note to your lover that's spread out over several postcards, then mail the cards one at a time. You'll build anticipation for the romantic conclusion on the final postcard. (Maybe deliver that last one in person.)
6. If you're not much of a writer, create an audio love letter. Sit down with a tape recorder and just talk to her for ten minutes. Then giftwrap it and mail it to her.

7. Don't just go out to a movie on Saturday, like always. Call your partner from work on Wednesday and formally ask for a date.(\*\*\*)
8. Call a local radio station and request a special love song to be dedicated to your partner. Make sure he or she is listening!
9. Make a custom certificate for your lover. (You can get blank certificate forms at a stationery or paper store.) Here are some suggestions: A certificate "For Putting Up With Me Over the Years," an award for "The World's Best Wife," a ribbon "For Hugs & Kisses Above and Beyond the Call of Duty."
10. Mail your partner a Rolodex card with your name and number on it. Write on it: "Your instant resource for love. Call when lonely."

## QUICK

If you don't have as much time as you'd like for love, try these swift but sweet romance tips:

1. Write "I love you" on the bathroom mirror with a piece of soap.
2. Place a little love note or poem under the driver's-side windshield wiper of his or her car.
3. Every once in a while, kiss her hand with a flourish. Note: The proper way to kiss a woman's hand is to lower your lips to her hand. You don't raise her hand to your lips.
4. Have "your song" playing on the stereo when your partner returns home from work.
5. When out together in public, wink at your partner from across the room.
6. On your partner's birthday, send a thank-you card to his/her mother.
7. Unplug the TV. Put a note on the screen saying, "Turn me on instead."
8. Make a toast to one another every time you hold a drink. Make eye contact. Take turns making the toast. Whisper it.
9. Get the whole "family of products" in the fragrance of her favorite perfume (bath powder, soaps, cremes, candles, etc.)
10. Call your partner from work for no other reason than to say, "I love you."

## CLASSIC

Looking for a tried-and-true method for declaring your love? Consider these classic romance tips:

1. Spread rose petals all over the bedroom.
2. What could be more classic than a fine gold locket with your photo inside? (Maybe a photo of the two of you.)
3. Bring home one small, unexpected gift each week.
4. Write a classic, romantic, passionate, handwritten, heartfelt love letter. Most adults haven't



written a love letter since high school. (Why not? Have we lost our youthful idealism, or have we just gotten lazy?)

5. When traveling, give your partner a bouquet of roses; one rose for each day that you'll be away. Attach a note that says something like this: "These three roses represent the three days I'll be away from you. They also symbolize the love, joy, and laughter we share together."
6. Say "I love you" at least three times a day.
7. Guys: Surprise her by performing one of her chores for her. (And not something easy like carrying the groceries in from the car, but something that requires some time and effort -- like cooking all the meals over a weekend, or cleaning the entire house.)
8. Ladies: Send him a letter sealed with a kiss. (Use your reddest lipstick.)
9. Hold hands.
10. On your yearly romantic checklist, make plans for Valentine's Day -- well in advance!

From 1001 Ways to Be Romantic

(<http://www.rd.com/living-healthy/50-ways-to-woo-your-lover/article12676.html>)

## ICEBREAKER AND SEATING ARRANGEMENT



For this part of the session you'll want to divide the attendees into even-numbered groups of six people. You can seat the groups in circles or have everyone sit in rows. What's important is that everyone sits by new people each evening and interacts with someone different during the discussion time at the end of the session. For this session, divide everyone into even-numbered groups of no more than six. Do your best to ensure that participants are sitting next to people they do not yet know.



## CHURCH DYNAMICS: *ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH*

[Distribute handout from pages *S6-1—S6-2 Church Dynamics* in the Appendix.]

This worksheet provides a broad overview of what services a pastor offers his or her congregation. Perhaps, if you are the pastor leading this seminar, you may want to customize your own list of pastoral care ministries you provide members. The second part of the worksheet touches on typical services of the church, such as Sabbath school, the worship service, communion, church business meetings, and so forth. The list is pretty basic and there are obviously many more ministries that could be listed, such as Adventist Youth meetings, Vacation Bible School, etc. Use the worksheet as a guide to make your own list. Many new members are not aware of such ministries as a house blessing or child dedication.



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## A FINAL NOTE

As you conclude these sessions, I would encourage you to track the attendance of all the new members who have attended. See if your experience has been like mine. I found these meetings helped my newly baptized members stick to the church. One year after conducting these seminars, all the people who attended were still active in the church. I realize there is no guarantee, but by helping people deal with some of the basic relational and family challenges of life, you remove one of the doorways out of the church. People with tools they can use to deal with personal issues and who are also connected to a loving church family are more likely to stay than leave.

Let me add that there are a variety of family structures in your church. It's challenging to create a seminar where one size fits all. While I've attempted to be inclusive of the different family units in this material, I would encourage family life leaders and pastors to especially remember the single parents, the divorced, the widowed, retirees, and singles. Think of providing additional resources, worksheets, websites, pamphlets, books, and DVD materials for the array of needs among the families in your church. You can find helpful resources from places like your local conference Family Ministries Department, your Adventist Book Center ([AdventistBookCenter.com](http://AdventistBookCenter.com)), *AdventSource* ([AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org)), and the North American Division Family Ministries Department ([AdventistFamilyMinistries.com](http://AdventistFamilyMinistries.com)).

You might consider conducting *Welcome to the Family* on a regular basis, perhaps once a year or when you have a cluster of people baptized. Don't feel boxed in by the materials I've provided here. Add your own materials or focus on areas you feel are weak in your church. But remember to provide time for food and fellowship, for worship and teaching. I believe it will help people stick to the church!

—Claudio Consuegra

# APPENDIX

## OPTION 1

### CREAMY STROGANOFF

This recipe is an example of how cashew nuts can be blended to make an even richer, creamier sauce. It uses Veggie Cutlets (recipe follows) for the “meat.”

¾ cup cashew nuts	1 onion, sliced into thin strips
1 cup tofu	1 cup or more canned mushrooms, or 2 cups fresh, sliced mushrooms
1 cup water	2 cups Veggie Cutlets (recipe follows) cut or torn into pieces (canned gluten pieces such as Worthington Skallops may be used)
2 tablespoons Bragg Liquid Aminos	
2 tablespoons beef-like seasoning	
2 tablespoons onion powder	
3 tablespoons yeast flakes	
2 cups water	

1. Place cashews and tofu in blender with 1 cup water; blend until smooth.
2. While blending, add seasonings and then the remaining 2 cups water after blend is smooth.
3. Meanwhile, sauté onions and mushrooms in a small amount of water until tender. Stir in the blended tofu mixture and the gluten pieces. Heat to serving temperature.
4. Serve over brown rice or pasta.

Makes 7 cups.

### VEGGIE CUTLETS

*Here's a meaty chicken- or turkey-like substitute. It freezes beautifully, and is low in cost—a little goes a long way.*

2 cups soaked soybeans or garbanzos (if you use canned garbanzos: drain the liquid into a measuring cup and add the water to equal 1 ½ cups total liquid)	3 tablespoons chicken-like seasoning
2 tablespoons soy sauce or ¼ cup Bragg Liquid Aminos	1 tablespoon onion powder
	½ teaspoon garlic powder
	2 cups gluten flour

1. To soak soybeans or garbanzos, place at least 1 cup dry beans in about 2 cups of water and leave at room temperature for about 12 hours.
2. Place 2 cups of soaked, drained beans in a blender with 1 ½ cups water and blend.
3. While blending, add seasonings and blend smooth.
4. Pour into a bowl and add the gluten flour. It will become very stiff, and the last of the flour should be kneaded in with your hands. Knead for 2 minutes. If it is too soft (not holding together in an elastic ball), knead in ¼ - ½ cup more gluten flour. This can be done in an electric mixer or by hand. Longer kneading will make a final product that is more chewy and elastic, while less kneading will make a final product that is more spongy and breadlike.
5. Form into two oval-shaped loaves and place on an oiled cookie sheet. Bake 50 minutes at 350 F. Cool on a rack. Freeze for later, if desired.
6. When cool, slice very thin (about 1/8 inch) and simmer in the following broth for five minutes.

## BROTH

4 cups water

2 tablespoons Bragg Liquid Aminos

2 tablespoons chicken-like or beef-like seasoning (depending on which flavor is desired)

7. For a slightly thicker broth (which makes a richer, more attractive presentation), dissolve 1 ½ tablespoons cornstarch in ¼ cup water and gradually stir into the simmering cutlets.

8. Serve with stroganoff

Makes 2 veggie cutlet loaves.

Serving suggestion: Add a vegetable and bread item to complete the meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 29, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## OPTION 2

### RATATOUILLE STIR-FRY

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 medium onion, diced               | 1 teaspoon basil                                       |
| 1 green or red bell pepper          | 2 small yellow summer squash or green zucchini, sliced |
| 2 cloves garlic, crushed            | 2 Roma tomatoes, diced                                 |
| 1 tablespoon Bragg Liquid Aminos    | 1 recipe Marinated Baked Tofu (recipe follows)         |
| 1 teaspoon onion powder             |  |
| 1 tablespoon chicken-like seasoning |  |

1. Place onions and red or green pepper in skillet along with garlic and seasonings. Add about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water and cover. Simmer for 1 minute.
2. Add zucchini or yellow squash and diced tomatoes and sprinkle with  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt. Add a small amount of water (enough to keep from sticking, but not more than can be absorbed in about 4 more minutes of cooking). Cover and simmer for about 2 minutes. Uncover and gently stir, cooking until vegetables are just beginning to become tender (don't overcook). Stir in Marinated Baked Tofu. Optional: serve over brown rice.

Makes 5 cups.

### MARINATED BAKED TOFU

- $\frac{1}{2}$  brick firm tofu (8 ounces)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce or Bragg Liquid Aminos
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons chicken-like seasoning

Dice tofu and place in a bowl with soy sauce and chicken-like seasoning; gently stir to coat. Fry on medium-high heat in a nonstick skillet, turning occasionally until browned. Or bake on a cookie sheet (line with Bake Magic) at 400 F until golden brown and puffy.

Serving suggestion: Add a vegetable and bread item to complete the meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 39, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## NUTRITION

The American Dietetic Association has finally conceded—a vegetarian diet can supply all the necessary dietary ingredients to maintain health. The prestigious Mayo Clinic endorses a plant-based diet. More and more researchers, physicians and nutritionists are beginning to echo the same: “Go plant-based!” Eating a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts will prevent many diseases and cause others to disappear, largely through anti-inflammatory properties.

A plant-based diet makes it so much easier to get the most antioxidants, fiber, vitamins, and minerals with the least amount of calories. Talk about eye-popping appeal to stimulate the appetite! Those brightly-colored plant pigments of red, orange, yellow, blue, and deep-green have an added bonus: they fight disease! All of these beautiful pigments are abundant in health-giving phytochemicals.

**Worried about Protein?** Don’t be. It can be obtained from many sources other than risky, often disease-ridden meat. Peas and a variety of beans are excellent sources, especially when combined with a whole grain such as brown rice, whole wheat, oats or corn. Nuts are also rich in protein, but eat them sparingly. A cup of vegetarian baked beans has a whopping 12 grams of protein! Even vegetables such as broccoli and potatoes contain protein. A diet high in meat and cheese provides too much protein, which along with animal fat, stimulates atherosclerosis leading to heart disease. Large quantities of protein can also overwork the kidneys and produce kidney disease.

**Carbohydrates** contain the energy for every day optimum work performance. High carb foods are energy foods. However, eliminate the “bad carbs” – table sugar, refined grains like white rice and white flour, desserts, sweetened cereals, and pastries. Oust candies and soft drinks from the diet. Complex carbohydrates, or “good carbs,” are the best. Good sources include potatoes, brown rice, whole grain breads and whole grain cereals.

**Avoid bad fats.** Lard, shortening, butter, fish, meat, poultry, margarine, fried foods, cream, mayonnaise, and cheese are not needed and contain harmful fats. Avocado, olives, seeds, and nuts contain healthy fats. Omega 3 fats are very healthy and can be found in walnuts and ground flax seeds.

**Fiber** is like scrub brushes in our body to keep our digestive system clean and functioning well. Whole plant foods are high in fiber! Meats, milk products, and refined foods have no fiber and tend to clog the digestive system, leading to disease. Research has shown that a high fiber diet decreases the risk of many forms of cancer and heart attacks.

**Sodium!** Very salty foods such as meat products, pickles, canned foods, baked goods with baking soda or baking powder, and even many breakfast cereals can cause high blood pressure and heart disease. Try to limit salt in your diet. A little salt is good, however.

**What should I eat?** Whole plant foods are bursting with nutrition! (Nutrient dense and calorie shy.) Every day we should enjoy liberal portions of vegetables and fruit, along with whole grains. This will help prevent overeating and obesity as whole foods are much more satisfying. Legumes and nuts can replace meat and cheese.



**Breakfast is the most important** meal of the day! A good breakfast should contain the most calories of any meal. Choose foods high in protein and complex carbohydrates. Don't forget the fruit. Try to eat a good lunch and a very light supper. This will give you energy for the day and a better night of rest.

(From "NEWSTART Lifestyle Club" at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/nutrition](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/nutrition))

**REDEEMED!** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #337)

*Verse 1:* Redeemed! How I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child, and forever, I am.

*Chorus:* Redeemed, redeemed, Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed, redeemed, His child, and forever, I am.

*Verse 2:* Redeemed! And so happy in Jesus! No language my rapture can tell;  
I know that the light of His presence with me doth continually dwell.

*Verse 3:* I know there's a crown that is waiting in yonder bright mansion for me;  
And soon, with the saints made perfect, At home with the Lord I shall be.

**DEEP AND WIDE** (Sing for Joy, #64)

Deep and wide, deep and wide, there's a fountain flowing deep and wide.  
Deep and wide, deep and wide, there's a fountain flowing deep and wide.

**O DAY OF REST AND GLADNESS** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #383)

*Verse 1:* O day of rest and gladness, O day of joy and light,  
O balm of care and sadness, Most beautiful most bright;  
On thee, the high and lowly, who bend before the throne,  
Sing, Holy, holy, holy, To the Eternal One.

*Verse 2:* Thou art a port protected from storms that round us rise,  
A garden intersected with stream of Paradise;  
Thou art a cooling fountain in life's dry, dreary sand;  
From thee, like Pisgah's mountain, we view our promised land.

*Verse 3:* A day of sweet reflection Thou art a day of love;  
A day to raise affection from earth to things above.  
New graces ever gaining from this our day of rest,  
We seek the rest remaining in mansions of the blest.

**MY GOD IS SO GREAT** (Praise Time, #36)

My God is so great, so strong and so mighty. There's nothing my God cannot do! (clap, clap)  
My God is so great, so strong and so mighty. There's nothing my God cannot do! (clap, clap)  
The mountains are His. The valleys are His. The stars are His handiwork too.  
My God is so great, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do! (clap, clap)

**HALLELU, HALLELUJAH!** (Praise Time, #21)

Hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu jah! Praise ye the Lord!  
Hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu jah! Praise ye the Lord!  
Praise ye the Lord! Hal-le-lu-jah! Praise ye the Lord! Hal-le-lu-jah!  
Praise ye the Lord! Hal-le-lu-jah! Praise ye the Lord!

**SEEK YE FIRST** (He Is Our Song, #83)

*Verse 1:* Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness;  
And all these things shall be added unto you. Al-le-lu, al-le-lu-ia.

*Verse 2:* Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word  
That proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Al-le-lu, al-le-lu-ia.

*Verse 3:* Ask, and it shall be given unto you, seek, and ye shall find,  
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you. Al-le-lu, al-le-lu-ia.

## A POWERFUL PRAYER LIFE

### Private Personal Prayer: Jesus, Our Example

*Permission given by John and Carol Shewmake, Prayer Partner Ministry of Placerville Seventh-day Adventist Church*

Jesus is the best teacher of prayer and our best example in prayer. His counsel on how to conduct personal prayer is simple and concise:

*“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6:6, NIV).*

Notice the 5 basic principles for prayer contained in this short verse:

1. When you pray—*a time for prayer*
2. Go into your room—*a place for prayer*
3. Close the door—*privacy for prayer*
4. Pray to your Father—*a specific Person in mind—your Father in heaven*
5. Then your Father will reward you—*God answers prayer!*

Because Jesus knew that many people prayed to idols and false gods, He clearly identified the *Father in heaven* as the One to be addressed in prayer.

A Christian writer comments about this passage: “Christ’s lessons in regard to prayer should be carefully considered. There is a divine science in prayer, and the illustration brings to view principles that all need to understand. He shows what is the true spirit of prayer, He teaches the necessity of perseverance in presenting our requests to God, and assures us of His willingness to hear and answer prayer.” –Ellen White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 142.

Jesus gives us another ground rule for prayer in John 15:16: *“Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name (John 15:16, emphasis added). Notice the last part. We must not only pray to the Father, but also in the name of Jesus, our Elder Brother, our Redeemer.*

### **Are there any special words I need to use?**

The idea of talking to Someone you cannot see with your physical sight or hear with your physical ears is sometimes daunting. Although there is a science to the art of prayer (conditions for answers to prayer: humility of heart, confession of sins, faith, etc.), it is also the channel of an *individual* relationship with God. God loves our individuality—so we don’t need to recite written prayers but can speak them from our own hearts, speaking as though face-to-face with a friend.

### **Differing ways to pray**

Like speaking with a friend, talking with God can differ from time to time. Sometimes we pray in great immediate need, sometimes it is because we have sensed God calling us to praise Him. Many of us come at a regular time each day to receive forgiveness, to learn more of Him, seek guidance. There is no one way to pray. You can’t describe the perfect way to pray. As long as you come to Him with a humble, contrite heart, He hears you.

Different personalities and cultures may find different ways to make prayer more meaningful to them. Sometimes it helps all of us to better sense God’s presence when we experiment

with various ways to pray. Here are a few suggestions of ways that can easily lead into a deepening, heart-felt devotional prayer time.

### **Guides for Prayer**

Many Christians find that a guide not only helps them find more meaning and enjoyment in daily prayer, but also helps them in understanding God. Here are a few suggestions of prayer guides:

#### **1. Acronym of ACTS:**

Some people receive great blessing in praying through the four steps of the acronym of ACTS: adoration (acknowledging God as the Creator of the Universe), confession (confessing our own sinfulness and weakness, specific sins), thanksgiving (thanking God for His personal benefits to us—forgiveness, family, and material comforts), and supplication (asking for what we need.)

#### **2. Scripture Passages:**

Portions of Scripture can also be used as guides, such as the passage we know as The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 7:9-13). The concepts expressed in this passage can be put into our words and our time. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), and many other passages can be used in the same way as a guide for prayer.

#### **3. Sanctuary Prayer:**

Sanctuary Prayer is my personal favorite prayer guide for morning devotions because God has taught me so much about Himself through this model. When God instructed Moses to liberate the Hebrew slaves from Egypt to become His chosen people, more than four hundred years had dimmed their memories of the true God. They were ignorant, steeped in Egyptian idolatry and traditions. They needed instruction and demonstration. God set up the wilderness sanctuary to teach the people about the true God, to make the one true God real to them, to demonstrate to them how He saves each human soul, and to give them teaching tools to share the gospel with the nations around them. God had chosen this people not to be an exclusive group, but to be teachers to include the whole world in Christianity.

The services of the sanctuary centered around the ministry of the coming Redeemer, Jesus. It is true that those antitypical (pointing forward) services ended when they met fulfillment at Christ's crucifixion, yet His intercession and judgment ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary (of which the wilderness sanctuary was only a copy) is still going on.

Following the steps the priests took daily in their sanctuary work helps me consciously co-operate with our High Priest, Jesus, in His intercession and ministry for each of us personally in the *Heavenly Sanctuary*. (See Hebrews 7:23-25.)

This visual aid illustrated in the earthly example opens our minds to the extent of the redemptive work necessary for our salvation. It is prophetic as it points to the coming Redeemer, the continual intercession of our High Priest, and the culmination of sin. The sinless life Jesus lived here on earth and the death He died to pay the

price for our sins, are completed. But God has not left us alone since then. As a High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary, His ministry for us continues. He hears our prayers; He guides, teaches, and disciplines us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the angels. Understanding of Scripture is opened to our minds. We become intimate with God. Eyes of faith look forward to Christ's second coming, the end of sin, and a sinless eternity before us.

**4. Prayer Journaling:**

Some people find their quiet time with God more meaningful when they sit at a desk or table with pen in hand, composing letters to God. Often these letters are written in a daily journal that can be re-read to remember the needs expressed, the sorrow or joy put into words, the contrition of a heart lifted up to God. This is not a diary but a journal written to God. The form they use is as individual as the people they are.

# COMMUNICATION

*"Fools think their own way is right, but the wise \_\_\_\_\_ to advice"*  
(Proverbs 12:15, NRSV).

Good communication plays a \_\_\_\_\_ in our \_\_\_\_\_.

**There are two basic avenues for communication:**

## 1. \_\_\_\_\_ communication

- Proverbs 18:21 says, "The tongue has the \_\_\_\_\_ of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."
- Ephesians 4:29 says, "Do not let any \_\_\_\_\_ talk come out of your mouths, but only what is \_\_\_\_\_ for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

## 2. Nonverbal \_\_\_\_\_ language

- This may include posture, \_\_\_\_\_, eye movement, \_\_\_\_\_ expressions
- But we can only pick up certain \_\_\_\_\_ from a person's behavior.
- It's impossible to know what another is \_\_\_\_\_ simply by \_\_\_\_\_ at them.

## THREE COMMUNICATION STYLES

### 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Communicators

- A rude form of communicating
- Bossy and overbearing, selfish and accusing
- Can include physical aggression

### 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Communicators

- Communicating is strained and rare
- People are fearful of confrontation
- Creates apathy, family is disconnected
- Communication is only a last resort in a crisis

### 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Communicators

- Communication is a priority
- Family members are free to express opinions
- Strive to respect the feelings and thoughts of others

## FOUR TYPES OF LISTENERS

### 1. The \_\_\_\_\_

- “I’m always right.”
- Negative and critical
- Psalm 115:6, “They have ears but cannot \_\_\_\_\_ ...”

### 2. The \_\_\_\_\_

- Listens briefly, makes quick assessments
- Preoccupied with giving advice
- Proverbs 18:13, “To \_\_\_\_\_ before listening—that is folly and shame.”

### 3. The \_\_\_\_\_

- Constantly shooting questions at the other person
- Prone to interrupt
- Overdoes asking questions to clarify

### 4. The \_\_\_\_\_ Listener

- Tries to understand the feelings of the person speaking
- Pays attention to nonverbal signs
- Withholds judgment, seeks to understand

## LISTEN TO HEAR AND UNDERSTAND

“Everyone should be \_\_\_\_\_ to listen, to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19).

A wonderful Chinese symbol, or pictograph, describes the effective listener. The symbol is a composite of four individual word characters: \_\_\_\_\_ (we listen with our ears); \_\_\_\_\_ (we listen with our eyes); \_\_\_\_\_ (we must listen with empathy); and \_\_\_\_\_ (we listen and then have the power of a king to act on what we have heard with effectiveness and power). Individually, each symbol carries its own definition and use; but when placed together, they become the single Chinese word meaning “listen.”



“Ears that \_\_\_\_\_ and eyes that \_\_\_\_\_—the LORD has made them both” (Proverbs 20:12).



\_\_\_\_\_ listening is the practice of \_\_\_\_\_ and then \_\_\_\_\_ back to the speaker what you \_\_\_\_\_. This confirms you heard what he or she is trying to \_\_\_\_\_ .

### HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

Healthy communication has two ingredients— \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ listening.

The best way to be assertive is to use \_\_\_\_\_ statements and to avoid using \_\_\_\_\_ statements.

The second ingredient of healthy communication is \_\_\_\_\_ listening, which is the ability to let your partner know you understand them by \_\_\_\_\_ their message. In order to listen actively it is important that you listen \_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_ and then restating what you heard..

### THE MAGIC RATIO

It is important to achieve the right balance positive and negative \_\_\_\_\_. Amazingly, research has confirmed that successful \_\_\_\_\_ comes down to a simple \_\_\_\_\_ formula: no matter what you must have at least \_\_\_\_\_ times as many positive as negative \_\_\_\_\_ for lasting \_\_\_\_\_ .

The magic ratio is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ .

### EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

1. Show \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Be \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Show you \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Be \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. Be \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. Be \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. \_\_\_\_\_ around.
8. Share your \_\_\_\_\_ .

## ADVENTIST CHURCH HISTORY

### From Great Disappointment to General Conference

The Millerites firmly believed that Jesus Christ's "second advent" (His second coming to earth) would occur on October 22, 1844. When His second coming did not take place, many Millerites were disillusioned and gave up belief in a literal second advent. But others went back to studying the scriptures.

Over the next 15 years, former Millerites, meeting in a sequence of "Bible conferences," identified a series of Bible truths forgotten since the days of the early Church. The key beliefs they adopted were:

1. That Christ's second coming is imminent and will be literal, not metaphorical, seen by all the world.
2. That the seventh day, Saturday, not Sunday, is God's Sabbath and the obligation to keep it is perpetual.
3. That God does not eternally torment sinners, but rather that the dead "sleep" until the second coming and last judgment.
4. That Christ ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, thereby mediating to us the benefits of His death on the cross, saving us by His righteousness, not our own deeds.
5. That in the last days Christians will be tempted by apostasy, but will be called back to divine truth — the "third angel's message" of Revelation 14 — by a small "remnant" of faithful believers.
6. That the remnant would be marked by a recurrence of the prophetic ministry.

In all this they were guided by a young woman, Ellen G. White, who, further to their sixth belief, they recognized as a prophet inspired by God.

These beliefs emerged gradually. In the 1850s there was no Seventh-day Adventist Church—only small groups scattered across the northern United States who had these beliefs in common but who did not even have a name for themselves. Some, however, like James White, identified themselves as belonging to "the Great Second Advent Movement" while others used the term "sabbatarian adventist."

Eventually, however, inspired by Christ's great commission to "go and make disciples," the seventh-day sabbatarian adventists recognized that they needed to organize so they could more effectively and more widely proclaim the third angel's message. A vital step was taken by a gathering of delegates from across the northern United States on October 1, 1860, who agreed to "take the name Seventh-day Adventist." Then, on May 20 and 21, 1863, at a further meeting, delegates from all those American states with Seventh-day Adventist congregations formed the "General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," an organized church focused on mission and on proclaiming the good news of a God who created us, lived among us, died for us, and redeems us.

Because our image of the founders of our church is largely shaped by photographs of middle-aged men, we often do not realize how diverse they were in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity.

During the formative years of the movement its leaders were mostly young, in their late teens, 20s and 30s. At the time of the Great Disappointment of 1844, James White was 23; Ellen White and Annie Smith were 16; John N. Andrews was 15, and Minerva Loughborough not quite 15. Uriah Smith and John N. Loughborough (brothers of Annie and Minerva) were only 13, and George I. Butler was just 10.

Yet it was these young men and women, aided by elder statesmen like Joseph Bates (who in 1844 was aged 52), who took the lead in the Bible conferences of the late 1840s and the 1850s, during which the beliefs of what became the Seventh-day Adventist Church were discussed, debated, and agreed. It was they who published a series of pamphlets, persuasively setting out the new beliefs, as well as a magazine, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (today's *Adventist Review*), which connected all the widely scattered believers together, and without which the church would never have been founded. It was they who led the efforts to transform a network of small groups of believers into an organization that would unite all Seventh-day Adventists and provide a basis for mission. Most of the youngsters of the 1850s provided leadership to the church into the 1880s and some into the 20th century.

Although only men attended the original General Conference Session in 1863, among the first members of the newly created church, women were prominent. In addition to Ellen White there were Minerva Chapman (née Loughborough), a key figure in the early publishing work who later became Treasurer of the General Conference; Maud Sisley Boyd, who became a pioneer missionary to Europe, South Africa and Australia; and Nellie Druillard (née Rankin), who became a pioneer missionary to Africa and an influential educator and health reformer. Also among those first members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863 were the Hardys, a prominent African-American family.

Today we see pictures of our pioneers in later life, their faces creased by the strain of lives struggling against overwhelming odds. It is easy to forget that they created our church when they were still in their 20s and 30s—easy, too, to forget that although Adventists did not ordain women to gospel ministry, they accorded women important roles in leadership. And it is too little known that not only were most of the believers in the 1850s fervent abolitionists, but also that in the late nineteenth century, when blacks and Chinese were being relegated to second-class citizens across the United States, Seventh-day Adventists ordained them to the ministry and entrusted important mission work to them.

American society of the time did not place much value on youth and marginalized women and ethnic minorities. Further, Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were unpopular among religious scholars. Whence came the boldness to defy both social conventions and the general consensus of leading theologians? Seventh-day Adventists were inspired by love for Jesus and conviction that He was coming soon, by confidence in divine prophecies, and by belief that the Spirit of Prophecy was manifested in Ellen White. They were, in consequence, willing to dare anything. While it took them until 1874 to realize that fulfilling the Great Commission meant they had to

send missionaries overseas, they swiftly thereafter became committed to worldwide mission. They sought to reform not only theology but also lifestyle, promoting radical health reforms and prioritizing education. They preached prophetic truths, but also wanted to make men and women whole in the here and now. To this end, during the denomination's first half century, Adventists worked in big cities and among people of all languages and social classes, inspired by the example of Jesus.

As we mark 150 years (in 2013) of Seventh-day Adventists being united for mission, there is more need than ever for Adventist men and women of *all* ages and all ethnic and social backgrounds, to follow the example of our founders. Founded in love for our Savior and His love for sinners, we need to proclaim Christ and Him crucified, His longing that men and women be whole, and His desire that we “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

\*Reprinted from [150.adventist.org](http://150.adventist.org)

## OPTION 1

### OAT BURGERS

This recipe replaces America's favorite fast food, the hamburger, and is an example of how grains and nuts can be combined to make delicious meatlike foods. Vegetarian burgers are readily available in many restaurants and supermarkets, but a careful look at the label is very revealing. Most are high in refined oils, and the few that are not are low in flavor. Here is an easy, cost-saving recipe you can make and freeze.

3 cups water	½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup Bragg Liquid Aminos or 2 tablespoons soy sauce	3 tablespoons food yeast flakes
1 tablespoon beef-like seasoning	¼ cup dry onion flakes or 1 onion diced
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning	3 cups quick oats (or 2 cups quick oats and 1 cup bulgur wheat)
1 teaspoon garlic powder	½ cup ground walnuts or pecans
½ teaspoon onion powder	

1. Place all ingredients in a saucepan except oats and nuts; simmer together for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in quick oats and nuts. Allow sufficient cooling to handle in next step.
2. Shape into burger-sized patties (use a half-cup ice-cream scoop if available) and place on a nonstick or Pam-sprayed cookie sheet.
3. Bake at 375°F until browned on both sides, or brown on a nonstick griddle.

Makes 10-12 patties.

Serve on whole wheat hamburger buns with toppings of your choice.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 35, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

### FRENCH FRIES (OVEN BAKED)

- 1 large russet baking potato (serves 1 to 2 people depending on size), salt, and paprika
1. Wash potato and slice lengthwise into ½ inch slides. Cut the slices into French fry strips (skin may be left on).
  2. Place in a Pyrex baking dish or bowl and sprinkle with salt and paprika to taste. Toss until evenly coated.
  3. Place in microwave and cook for approximately 5 minutes, or until tender but not shriveled. Non-microwave option: Steam 10 minutes in stove.
  4. Place precooked potatoes on a lightly oiled or Bake Magic-lined cookie sheet and bake at 450°F for approximately 15 minutes or until crispy brown and puffy— watch carefully so they don't burn.
  5. Serve immediately with the condiments of your choice.

Serving suggestion: Add a green salad to complete this meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 55, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## OPTION 2

### STACKED ENCHILADA BAKE

This casserole is a perfect last-minute dish. Shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes, and Tofu Sour Cream (recipe follows) or guacamole make tasty “fixins” to top each serving.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 12 corn tortillas, torn into bite-sized pieces (or just use regular corn chips) | 1 ½ cups Simple Cheese Sauce (Recipe on next page) |
| 4 cups seasoned black beans or chili  | 3 medium green onions, sliced (¼ cup)              |
| 14-ounce can Mexican-style tomatoes (blend briefly or mash)                     | 1 cup sliced black olives                          |

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Grease 2-quart casserole.
2. Place half the tortilla pieces in casserole and top with half the beans. Repeat layers. Pour 1 cup of Simple Cheese Sauce over the beans and tortilla pieces and then the canned tomatoes. Dot the top with the remaining Simple Cheese Sauce and sprinkle with chopped onions and sliced olives.
3. Bake uncovered about 20 minutes or until bubbly around edge.

Serves 6-8.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 47, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

### TOFU SOUR CREAM

Try this on the Stacked Enchilada Bake, baked potatoes, or any place you would use sour cream.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 12-ounce box MoriNu Silken Soft Tofu, or 9 ounces regular tofu and ½ cup water | 1 tablespoon lemon juice                                  |
| ½ cup raw cashew nuts  | 2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives (may use dried chives) |

1. Place all ingredients in blender, except the chives. Blend for at least 1 minute until silky smooth.
2. Add the chives. (Blend briefly or green sour cream will result.) Serve (thickens more if chilled).

Makes 2 cups.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 58, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## SIMPLE CHEESE SAUCE

1 cup raw cashew nuts	1 ½ teaspoons salt
2 cups water	2 teaspoons onion powder
½ large or 1 small red bell pepper (or ¼ cup canned pimentos or red peppers)	2 tablespoons food yeast flakes (optional)
	½ teaspoon garlic powder

Blend until smooth (about 2 minutes) and then bring to a boil, stirring until thick. Use for pizza, lasagna, burritos, etc.

Lite Cheese Option: Use only about ½ cup cashew nuts plus 1 tablespoon cornstarch.

Makes 3 cups.

Serving suggestion: Add a green salad to complete this meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 26, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## EXERCISE AND WATER

### EXERCISE

We are a sedentary nation of couch potatoes often addicted to computer games, TV, and spectator sports. We need exercise! Children, who once were off the charts in exercise demand, now sit; and way too much—17 percent are overweight or obese, largely due to so much sitting. This makes them prone to adult type 2 diabetes, with its dire complications.

**Pregnancy:** Moms-to-be, you need to get out and get going! Research shows that moderate exercise increases placental blood flow and decreases risks of pregnancy. When you exercise, so does your baby. It decreases baby's resting heart rate and birth weight—important conditioning parameters.

#### Exercise may help:

- Control weight (the metabolic rate increases, burning more calories even at rest!)
- Increase lung capacity and recharge oxygen supply
- Improve blood pressure, circulation, and strengthen your heart
- Lower cholesterol and improve blood flow in the arteries (it can even help reverse arteriosclerosis!)
- Relieve stress, tension, depression, and improve sleep naturally (without a pill!)
- Promote the body's ability to get rid of toxic wastes
- Improve metabolism (stabilizes blood sugar)
- Strengthen the bones and counteract osteoporosis
- Increase physical strength and tone of muscles by improving oxygen utilization
- Improve posture and decrease back problems
- Prevent the big C word: CANCER

#### What kind of activity is best?

Walking is the ideal exercise. Other good activities include swimming, cycling, gardening, and yard work. One of the special benefits of exercising outside is that you can combine at least three of the health principles: sunlight, fresh air, and exercise.

A daily program of at least 30 to 40 minutes is best for maximum benefit. The important thing is that you enjoy what you do and do it regularly.

#### Exercise Precautions

1. Start slowly and progress gradually.
2. It is better to exercise before a meal than right after a meal.



3. Allow time to warm up and cool down.
4. Discontinue your exercise and see your physician should you have any of the following symptoms:
  1. Pain in the chest, teeth, jaw, neck, arms, bones, or joints
  2. Difficulty in breathing, light-headedness, or fainting
  3. Irregular heart rate during exercise or recovery period
  4. Excess fatigue
  5. Recurrent nausea or vomiting occurring after exercise

*A balanced and well-planned exercise program is one of the wisest investments you can make. Choose an activity you enjoy and stick to it. Have fun and feel better every day!*

(From "NEWSTART Lifestyle Club" at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/exercise](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/exercise))

## **WATER**

"Anything but water, please!" We really don't say it, but when we go to the drive-up window or sit down to order a meal, that is exactly what most Americans in essence say: coffee please, or Mountain Dew, Coke, a milk shake, a glass of wine, but rarely plain water! Hot days? We automatically reach for a soda.

Your brain is about 80% water. Water keeps you thinking clearly. "Anything but water" is a bad tradition that puts an overwhelming osmotic load into the blood stream, making it sticky and flowing poorly. Only water can create the proper environment for your blood to flow smoothly, help regulate your blood pressure, and promote vascular health. In one study, men who drank five or more glasses of water daily had a 54% less risk of a heart attack than those who drank two or less daily, or who used other beverages.

## **Weight Loss**

People who drank two eight-ounce glasses of water 20 - 30 minutes before meals ate an average of 75 fewer calories at that meal. In another study, two eight-ounce glasses of water before meals resulted in a 44% greater weight loss over 12 weeks than in a non-water control group. That is staggering! Reach for water, not coffee or soda. That is a proven way to curb appetite and lose weight.

## **Caffeine**

Avoid it entirely! Caffeine is a diuretic. Coffee and most soda pop contains a whopping amount of caffeine geared to dehydrate you. It can raise the blood pressure, blood sugar, and blood fats. It stimulates the nervous system and can cause irritability, anxiety, tremors, chronic fatigue, and insomnia. After time, the pick-me-up is only preventing a major let-down produced by the habit itself. Eventually you hit bottom.

### **What happens if I don't drink enough water?**

The kidneys have to work much harder to excrete toxins and may become damaged. Each cell in the body needs water to function well, so inadequate water intake can cause disease. Chronic lack of water is linked to bladder cancer. Fatigue and headaches are a common result of drinking too little water. In the summer months, increase intake and stay ahead of thirst. When you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

Water keeps the body cool. It brings the heat from the inner organs to the surface of the skin in the form of sweat, and also acts as an evaporative cooler.

Drink eight cups per day. Also, enjoy hot and cold contrast showers. The cold stimulates the immune system, and hot baths open the pores and eliminate toxins.

*Remember, water is of vital importance—use it abundantly for good health and vitality.*

(From “NEWSTART Lifestyle Club” at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/water](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/water))

**O, HOW I LOVE JESUS** (Sing for Joy, #114)

O, how I love Jesus, O, how I love Jesus,  
O, how I love Jesus, Because He first loved me!

**HAPPY ALL THE TIME** (Praise Time, #18)

I'm in-right, out-right, up-right, down-right, Happy all the time.  
I'm in-right, out-right, up-right, down-right, Happy all the time.  
Since Jesus Christ came in, I gave my heart to Him.  
I'm in-right, out-right, up-right, down-right, Happy all the time!

**WHEN HE COMETH** (Sing for Joy, #93)

When He cometh, when He cometh, to make up His jewels,  
All His jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own.

*Chorus:* Like the stars of the morning, His bright crown adorning  
They shall shine in their beauty, bright gems for His crown.

*Verse 2:* He will gather, He will gather the gems for His kingdom,  
All the pure ones, all the bright ones, His loved and His own.

*Verse 3:* Little children, little children who love their Redeemer,  
Are the jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own.

**PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #694 or #695)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, son, and Holy Ghost.

**HEAR OUR PRAYER, O LORD** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #684)

Hear our prayer, O Lord, Hear our prayer, O Lord;  
Incline Thine ear to us, And grant us they peace. Amen.

**SING HALLELUJAH** (He Is Our Song: The Music Collection, #27)

Sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord. Sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord.  
Sing hal-le-lu-jah, sing hal-le-lu-jah,  
Sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord.

## DEEPENING YOUR BIBLE STUDY

### How to Study the Bible

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105, KJV).

1. **We must believe that the whole Bible is the inspired Word of God**, and we must be willing to abide by its teachings, even if they go contrary to our own personal ideas and practices.

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

*"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4).

2. **We must be humble and teachable.** However great and extensive our knowledge and educational achievements, we must come humbly to the word of God, not seeking to study it from a secular standpoint as a scientific or philosophical work, and with a dependence upon human intellect. Trusting in intellectual pride and humanistic opinion will prevent us from being able to understand the deep spiritual truths of the Bible. God requires us to come humbly and with a teachable attitude, sincerely and prayerfully seeking to understand His word.

Jesus said, *"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto babes"* (Matthew 11:25).

3. **We must compare scripture with scripture**, letting the Bible explain itself. It is common to find individuals and groups of people who build a whole theology upon one single statement of the Bible. This can be very dangerous and misleading, depending upon the method of interpretation employed in their biblical research. The only correct and safe way of securing an understanding of a particular truth is to study everything the Bible has to say about that specific topic.

We must study broadly, permitting the Bible to define its own terms. This will preserve us from the practice of some, in taking an isolated passage and twisting it to fit or "prove" their own ideas. We should always approach the Bible with an open and honest attitude, willing to lay aside any established beliefs and practices, whenever we find them to be without scriptural foundation.

4. **We should ask the Holy Spirit to guide us** as we study the Bible. Though written by men, the Bible has been supernaturally inspired. We therefore need the Holy Spirit, the author of all Scripture, to guide and instruct us as we study. Prayer for divine instruction and enlightenment should always precede a study of God's Word. Without heaven's assistance to render our minds spiritually receptive, it is not possible to properly interpret and appreciate the truths of the Bible, which are often "hidden beneath the surface" and readily missed by the casual, superficial approach.

*“(For) no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God ...The Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:7-14).*

5. **We must truly want to know the truth before we can know the truth.** Our motives for studying the Bible must always be honorable and acceptable to God if we would receive instruction and guidance from the Holy Spirit. If it is our determined purpose to research the Bible in order to find an argument against the truth, God will leave us to our own devices. For example, some people use a few scriptural verses to supposedly prove that God’s law was abolished when Jesus Christ died upon the cross. A proper method of research will clearly demonstrate that such is not the case, and the verses used to substantiate this idea are found to be unsupportive when placed in their proper context.

Only those who are willing to love and accept the truth when it is made plain, and do not seek to construct arguments against it, will be preserved from the dangers of self-deception. God will not force us to believe anything against our will. However, His Word clearly describes what will happen to those who still choose to believe contrary to what He has plainly said:

*... “Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved ... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2: 10, 11, KJV).*

6. **Bible study must become a priority in life.** Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to “a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:45, 46). We must earnestly search for truth, recognizing that it is worth more than anything else in life. This quest must be made priority, especially when other things seek to crowd out the time that should be allocated to Bible study.

*God’s promise to us is that, “You will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). Our desire, our relish and our love for the Bible will strengthen and deepen as we discipline ourselves to study it every day.*

7. **We must live up to all the light we have before God will teach us more.** As truth is opened to our understanding, we should determine by God’s grace to walk in its light. God has set before us an upward pathway and it is His will that we should walk in His footsteps. As our Savior therefore leads us further along the pathway of advanced truth, we must determine to follow if we would keep in step with Him and remain His disciple. Also, living according to the truth that we already have qualifies us to receive more light and truth from God.

*“If you abide in My Word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31, 32).*

Permission from <http://www.bibleuniverse.com/articles/how-to-study-the-bible.aspx>)

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When two ideas, personalities or actions collide, we call it \_\_\_\_\_ .

Scripture says, “*Be angry but do not \_\_\_\_\_ ; do not let the sun go down on your \_\_\_\_\_*” (Ephesians 4:26, NRSV).

As strange as it may seem, a life void of conflict is not \_\_\_\_\_. Just remember this important principle: Not all \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_!

Even Jesus tells us:

So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something \_\_\_\_\_ you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be \_\_\_\_\_ to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences \_\_\_\_\_. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. (Matthew 5:23-25, NLT)

Conflict is the not the \_\_\_\_\_. The real problem is the way we \_\_\_\_\_ conflict.

There are four possible responses to conflict:

1. I win; you \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. You \_\_\_\_\_ ; I lose.
3. We both \_\_\_\_\_ , and no one \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. \_\_\_\_\_ wins, and no one \_\_\_\_\_ .

Your goal should be that everyone \_\_\_\_\_ and no one loses.

### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT/10 STEPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

**Step 1: Plan Your \_\_\_\_\_**

In order to prevent someone from feeling \_\_\_\_\_ to give an account of themselves on the \_\_\_\_\_ , and to avoid an indefinite \_\_\_\_\_ for resolving conflict, setting a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for discussion is a must.

**Step 2: Define the \_\_\_\_\_**

Define the problem—don't be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step 3: You're Both \_\_\_\_\_**

Every issue has \_\_\_\_\_ sides, and even when someone is \_\_\_\_\_, they may not \_\_\_\_\_ their point in the right way.

**Step 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Analysis**

If this is an \_\_\_\_\_ conflict, list past attempts that have been made to \_\_\_\_\_ the issue.

**Step 5: \_\_\_\_\_**

When you get back together from your argument \_\_\_\_\_, pool your \_\_\_\_\_ and come up with 10 potential \_\_\_\_\_ to the conflict.

**Step 6: Evaluate \_\_\_\_\_**

Look at each solution and \_\_\_\_\_ the pros and cons.

**Step 7: Agree on an \_\_\_\_\_**

Pick a solution and \_\_\_\_\_ it.

**Step 8: Agree on Your \_\_\_\_\_**

Discuss how you will each \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step 9: Post- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow- \_\_\_\_\_**

This is simply another \_\_\_\_\_ scheduled, after the solution has been \_\_\_\_\_, to see how things are going and whether or not another \_\_\_\_\_ needs to be tried.

**Step 10: Reward \_\_\_\_\_**

What gets \_\_\_\_\_ gets \_\_\_\_\_.

**ACTIVE LISTENING**

You don't have to be hard of \_\_\_\_\_ to need hearing \_\_\_\_\_.

First, do your best to focus on the other person \_\_\_\_\_ determining what you will say in response.

When they are done \_\_\_\_\_ (I mean actually done—not the “done” that comes with you \_\_\_\_\_ them with your own stories or \_\_\_\_\_) slowly repeat back what they said to make sure you heard what it is they \_\_\_\_\_ you to hear.

Next ask, "Is there \_\_\_\_\_?" or "Anything \_\_\_\_\_?"

Finally, ask them if you can \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Reframing Criticism**

Criticism is \_\_\_\_\_ because everyone messes up \_\_\_\_\_.

To live a life free from \_\_\_\_\_ means you probably aren't trying to do anything \_\_\_\_\_.

However, there is a difference between being \_\_\_\_\_ critical and simply being mean and \_\_\_\_\_.

First rule, use \_\_\_\_\_ instead of \_\_\_\_\_ when expressing a concern.

This fallacy known as \_\_\_\_\_ involves arguing by personally attacking someone.

What makes it worse is when we employ another fallacy of logic, known as a \_\_\_\_\_, to drive our points home.

If we can \_\_\_\_\_ our concerns, not only using \_\_\_\_\_ language, but in a way that makes the other person feel \_\_\_\_\_, we can get a little further.

Say something like, "I see your \_\_\_\_\_, and it's \_\_\_\_\_; however, I am stuck on [issue]. How would you \_\_\_\_\_ me get over that \_\_\_\_\_?"

Finally, remember the words of Ephesians 4:15 that tells us to speak the truth in \_\_\_\_\_ (even if it's hard).

### **ACCEPTING VALID CRITICISM**

The Bible says, "*If we \_\_\_\_\_ our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and \_\_\_\_\_ us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9).

It's also okay to admit we don't \_\_\_\_\_.

Gentle \_\_\_\_\_ coupled with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for practical ways we can make things right go a long way.

The Bible calls us to be \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 5:9).

### **Be Wary of "Watchmen"**

When you only talk to people when you have a \_\_\_\_\_, and ignore all \_\_\_\_\_ to say something positive, you are \_\_\_\_\_.

The name Satan, in the original biblical language, translates to \_\_\_\_\_.



# CHURCH ORGANIZATION

## Organizational Structure

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is organized with a representative form of church government. This means authority in the Church comes from the membership of local churches. Executive responsibility is given to representative bodies and officers to govern the Church. Four levels of Church structure lead from the individual believer to the worldwide Church organization:

- The *local church* is made up of individual believers.
- The *conference*, or local field/mission, is made up of a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory.
- The *union conference*, or union field/mission, is made up of conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country).
- The *General Conference*, the most extensive unit of organization, is made up of all unions/entities in all parts of the world. *Divisions* are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility for particular geographical areas.



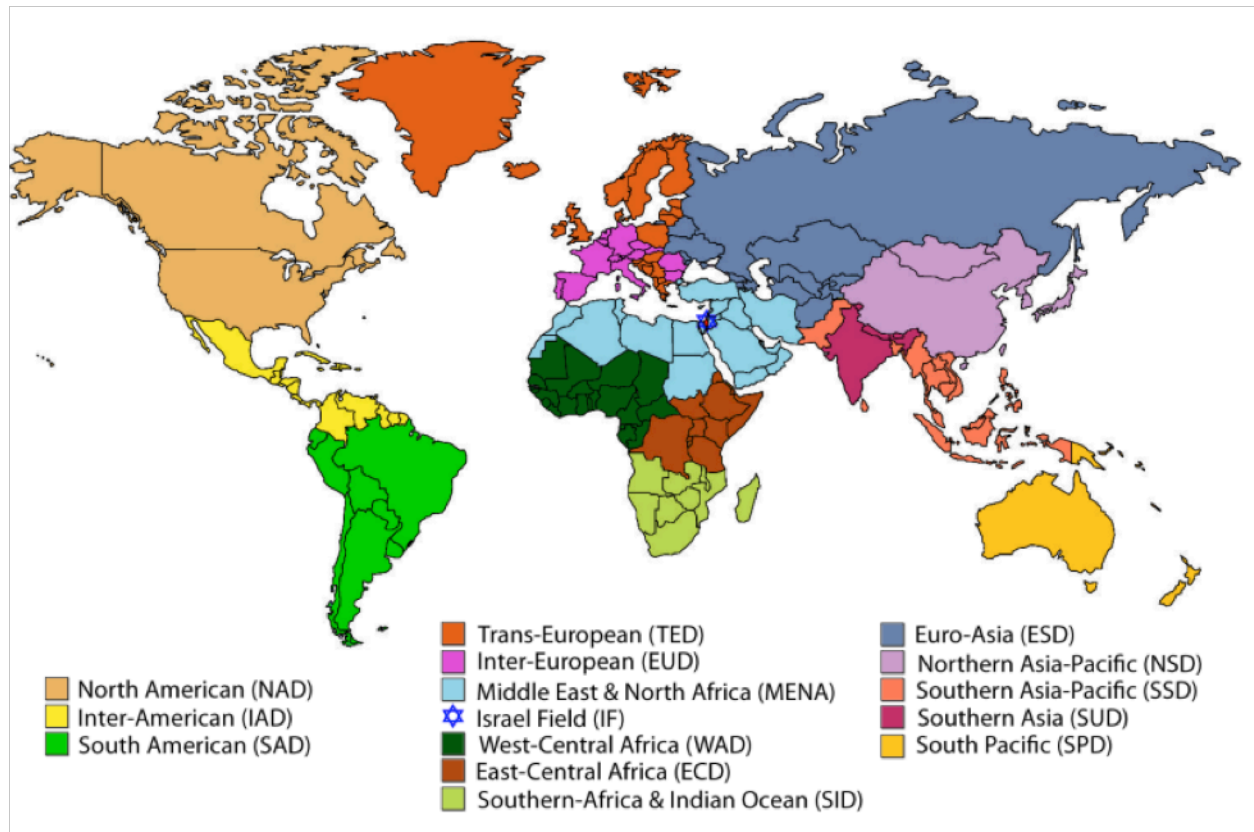
Each level is “representative.” That is, it reflects a democratic process of formation and election. Local churches elect their own officers and church boards by majority voting. Churches elect delegates to the conferences which meet “in session” every two or three years. Executive authority between sessions is exercised by the Conference Executive Committee and the executive officers (normally President, Secretary and Treasurer), all of whom are elected by the session.

A similar process operates for Union sessions usually every five years, and General Conference sessions, at which times officers and committees are elected, reports the policies decided.

Within these four levels the Church operates various institutions. In their world outreach, Adventists serve the whole person and have developed educational, health-care, publishing, media (radio, print, television, web, satellite), and other institutions. The multiple units of the world Church, whether congregations, conferences, health-care institutions, publishing houses, schools, or other organizations, all find their organizational unity in the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, in which they have representation.

The General Conference is the highest earthly authority for the Church. The General Conference in session, and the Executive Committee between sessions is the highest organization in the administration of the Church's worldwide work, and is authorized by its constitution to create subordinate organizations to promote specific interests in various sections of the world. When differences arise in or between organizations and institutions, appeal to the next higher organization is proper until it reaches the General Conference in session, or the Executive Committee at the Annual Council. During the interim between these sessions, the Executive Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop.

Administratively, the worldwide Church has 13 Divisions, which are composed of churches grouped by a collection of missions, fields, or states into unions of churches. The North American Division is one of the 13 Divisions. The Divisions, and headquarters are:



## OPTION 1

### HUMMUS TAHINI AND PITA BREAD SANDWICHES

*A good slice of whole wheat bread is a perfect companion for this wonderful spread. If you don't have sesame tahini, you can use toasted sesame seeds.*

2 cups cooked garbanzos (15-ounce can)	½ teaspoon cumin
2 tablespoons sesame tahini	½ to 1 cup water (or juice from canned garbanzos)
2 tablespoons lemon juice	
1 clove garlic or ½ teaspoon garlic powder	6-8 sprigs fresh cilantro leaves (optional)
Salt to taste (½ to 1 teaspoon)	

Blend all together, except cilantro, adding water in the amount needed to the thickness desired. Blend until smooth, about 1 minute. Add cilantro leaves and blend briefly, just enough to chop.

Use as a sandwich spread and add vegetables of your choice (lettuce, tomato, avocado, olives, cucumber, pickle, etc.)

Makes 3 cups.

Serving suggestion: Add cucumber salad to complete this meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 58, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## OPTION 2

### ARMENIAN LENTIL SOUP

*Lentils and rice make this soup a satisfying main dish. Spinach and tomatoes are added after the main cooking is completed to keep their distinct green and red color, and give the soup eye appeal.*

1 ½ cups lentils	1 tablespoon chicken-like seasoning
10 cups water	1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ cup brown rice	1 teaspoon dill weed
1 cup diced onions	2 teaspoons cumin
2 tablespoons Bragg Liquid Aminos	1 cup frozen chopped spinach
1 tablespoon onion powder	15-ounce can diced tomatoes
1 tablespoon salt	

1. Place all ingredients in kettle except spinach and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 1 hour or until lentils are tender.
2. Add spinach and simmer 1 minute. Add the tomatoes just before serving.

Makes 12 cups.

Especially good served with Hummus Tahini and pocket bread sandwiches.

Serving suggestion: Add salad and bread item to complete this meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 69, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## SUNSHINE AND TEMPERANCE

### SUNLIGHT

When we think “sunshine” we often think of a luxury SUN-cruise on the Caribbean, with stops at enchanting island retreats like Jamaica or Barbados, or we think CANCER. Why these extremes? In reality, most people can get plenty of sunshine in their own backyards! Ten or 15 minutes in noontime summer sun leads to the production of 10,000 IU (International Units) of Vitamin D, which has proven to decrease the risk for many cancers.

The myth is busted! Sunshine protects against a very deadly form of skin cancer called melanoma. A new study published in the March 2011 *European Journal of Cancer* discovered that those people who spent four to five hours in the sun each day over weekends were less likely to develop melanoma than those who did not. This is exciting for those who love the sun. (A word of caution here: those who burn easily were at higher risk *regardless* of the amount of time spent in the sun. So avoid sunburn.) Another piece of good news for sun lovers is that women with high sun exposure had half the risk of developing advanced breast cancer. Also, reduced risk of other cancers by sunshine include prostate, colon, lung, ovary, bladder, uterus, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, kidney, multiple myeloma, and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

#### **Sunlight Increases Immunity**

Immunity is increased by exposure to sunlight and your body’s resistance to infection is strengthened. White blood cells are increased. Antibodies are increased too. These effects can last up to three weeks. Even 10 minutes of sun twice a week can greatly reduce the incidence of colds.

#### **Sunlight Strengthens Bones**

Bones are strengthened by sunlight. It allows the body to make Vitamin D, which helps calcium absorption from the intestines and calcium deposit in building healthy bones. Sunlight prevents rickets and helps prevent and reverse osteoporosis. There is also a connection with lowered incidence of dental cavities.

#### **Sunlight Promotes Sense of Well-being**

Sense of well-being is promoted by sunlight and the mood is elevated. Daily exposure to natural sunlight will boost melatonin output, which also improves sleep. For most people, sunlight is an important therapy—especially if combined with exercise—in preventing and treating acute and chronic depression. Sunlight helps produce serotonin to lift the mood.

#### **Other Benefits of Sunlight**

Other benefits of sunshine include alleviating pain from swollen arthritic joints and even relieving some symptoms of pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS). It also helps ward off heart disease, hypertension, and autoimmune diseases like Crohn’s, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Juvenile Diabetes, MS, and also obesity.

*Remember—it’s not all that bad. Enjoy the sun moderately and it will increase your vitality and good health.*

(From “NEWSTART Lifestyle Club” at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/sunlight](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/sunlight))

## TEMPERANCE

**Balance has lost its true meaning:** Modern society has become a society of excesses! We try to take something bad and make it good. For example, cigarette filters were added to cigarettes in the 1950s in response to the first reports that tar in cigarettes was associated with the increased risk of lung cancer. Still, tobacco is a major cause of death in the United States, killing 1200 Americans every day.

### Alcohol

We have found a way to make this a health benefit in saying that drinking only one or two drinks per day will benefit our hearts. Yet, 5000 youth per year lose their lives to binge drinking. In reality, the bad effects to the whole body and on the heart itself counter any benefits it may have to the heart. Alcohol increases the risk of stroke, heart failure, stomach ulcers, and cancer, and causes high blood pressure—a very dangerous condition for the cardiovascular system. One or two drinks can produce spasm of the coronary arteries, decreasing the oxygen supply to the heart. So, the reports of the health benefits of alcohol are really misleading to the public. Unfortunately, millions of people have become alcoholics, ruining body, mind, and soul, and destroying families in the process. Perhaps the saddest statistics are those of damaged babies who are permanently impaired due to their parents' alcohol use.

### Coffee and Caffeine

Coffee is being highly praised for its anticancer phytochemicals and antioxidants. On the other hand, caffeine is addictive, stresses the nervous system by overworking it, can lead to depression and anxiety with the jitters, and in pregnant mothers increases the risk of miscarriage. A new study shows that 5% of all heart attacks are attributed to caffeine use alone.

### Drugs

Despite all the education about illegal drugs, we continue to see an increase in their use and abuse. Many begin using drugs out of curiosity, to please friends, to provide an escape from reality, or to avoid dealing with problems. Because drugs don't solve problems, users often find that instead of escaping their problems they end up creating something worse—drug addiction. The need for the drug often becomes so strong that users will resort to dangerous and illegal activities to obtain a continuing supply. Up to 70% of prison inmates are incarcerated for drug-related crimes. If you or someone you know is addicted to drugs, get help!

We need to rethink “moderation” and “balance.” The goal of temperate living is peak physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Temperance really means to “abstain” from anything that is harmful and use in moderation things that are good. Temperance does not just involve alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. It refers to all aspects of our lifestyle, whether it be overeating, overworking, too much play, or too little/much of anything. Such unbalanced living robs men and women of a rich, healthy, and satisfying life.

Common sense changes in your lifestyle can add years, perhaps decades, to your life. What's more, your quality of life can vastly improve. Plan right now to enjoy filling the years ahead with a balanced, high quality life!

(From “NEWSTART Lifestyle Club” at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/temperance](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/temperance))

**BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE** (He Is Our Song, #42)

Behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us.

Behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us.

That we should be called the children of God, that we should be called the children of God.

**I'M GONNA SING, SING, SING** (Praise Time, #9)

I'm gonna sing, sing, sing. I'm gonna shout, shout, shout.

I'm gonna sing, I'm gonna shout, praise the Lord!

When the gates are open wide, I'm gonna sit at Jesus side.

I'm gonna sing, I'm gonna shout, praise the Lord!

**PRAISE TO THE LORD** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #1)

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!

O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!

All ye who hear, Now to His temple draw near; Join ye in glad adoration!

*Verse 2:* Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,  
Shieldeth thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!  
Hast thou not seen, how thy desires e'er have been, granted in what He ordaineth?

*Verse 3:* Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;  
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.  
Ponder anew, what the Almighty can do, if with His love He befriend thee.

**DAY IS DYING IN THE WEST** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #51)

Day is dying in the west; heaven is touching earth with rest;

Wait and worship while the night, sets her evening lamps a-light, through all the sky.

*Chorus:* Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts! Heaven and earth are full of Thee;  
Heaven and earth are praising Thee, O Lord most high!

*Verse 2:* While the deepening shadows fall, heart of love, enfolding all,  
Thro' the glory and the grace, of the stars that veil Thy face, our hearts ascend.

*Verse 3:* When forever from our sight, pass the stars, the day, the night,  
Lord of angels, on our eyes, let eternal morning rise, and shadows end.

**AMIGOS DE CRISTO** (Sing for Joy, #69)

Amigos de Cristo, we're friends of the Lord, Amigos de Cristo; we're friends of the Lord;  
For we've been forgiven and we've been restored, Amigos de Cristo; we're friends of the Lord.

**HE KNOWS MY NAME** (Praise Time, #85)

I have a Maker. He formed my heart. Before even time began, my life was in His hands.

*Chorus:* He knows my name. He knows my every thought.  
He sees each tear that falls and hears me when I call.

*Verse 2:* I have a Father. He calls me His own. He'll never leave me, no matter where I roam.

## FAMILY WORSHIP IDEAS

### FUN & EASY FAMILY WORSHIP MEMORIES

- Make up a tune for a favorite Bible passage and sing it around the dinner table every day for a week. Think about choosing 52 passages from a modern version to commit to memory this year, adding a new song to your family repertoire each week.
- Read Matthew 8:1–3 and try to imagine the scene. What is the leper wearing? What does his voice sound like as he calls out to Jesus? Pretend your family is in the crowd around Jesus. Call out what you think you hear them saying. Let your nonverbal communication mimic theirs. Then stop. What do you think Jesus is thinking? How would you describe the look in His eyes? His tone of voice? His touch? Imagine yourself the leper. Experience the moment of the miracle as you think he experienced it. What is it like to be healed by Jesus? What would you like to say to Jesus now?
- Collect 25–30 paint swatch samples of a variety of colors from a home improvement store. Find as many color matches as you can in the natural world. Make a windowsill display or a centerpiece for your dinner table from what you have found.
- Take turns choosing a button from Mom’s button collection that reminds you of someone who knows your name and who has helped you know God as Heavenly Father. Tell the others in your family a story about this person’s influence in your life.
- Read Isaiah 40:28–31. What makes you feel just great, like you could conquer Mt. Everest? Share with your family a time when God renewed your strength. Tell your family practical ways they could be the “wind beneath your wings” this week.
- Read Genesis 1. Talk about the world fresh from the Creator’s hand. What do you see? Feel? Smell? Taste? Hear? What do you think God was asking human beings to do when He gave them dominion over the earth? You may want to look on the Internet for the amazing story about the ivory-billed woodpecker’s comeback from extinction.
- Make a set of “Count Your Blessings” place mats for your table. Think of things you are thankful for and find something that reminds you of them. Arrange pictures, pressed leaves and flowers, and other flattened nature objects on a piece of waxed paper, leaving a two inch margin around the edge. You can add letters and words cut out of brightly colored or designed paper. Then cover your work with another piece of waxed paper the same size. Carefully press the two sheets of waxed paper together with a warm iron, moving the iron gently over the entire place mat to seal everything in place.
- Ask each family member to bring to family worship something that comforts them when they are tired, sick, or worried. Perhaps it’s a favorite blanket, a hot drink, a soft toy, a warm bath with bubbles, aromatic lotion, etc. Read Isaiah 40:1–2. Talk together about the comfort that comes from knowing that God has reconciled the whole world to Himself in Jesus Christ, and that you are part of that world brought back into the family of God. Celebrate your decision to accept this gift from God by standing in a circle and holding out your tightly closed fists, then deliberately unclasping them to receive the salvation that is yours in Jesus.



- Identify at least two spiritual gifts you think God has given to each of your children. Find something to symbolize these gifts and wrap each individually with beautiful gift wrap and ribbon. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and give each child their gifts, affirming evidence you have seen that God has bestowed these gifts upon them. Give each one a chance to think about how they will enjoy these gifts and use them to share the Good News about Jesus and in service to others.
- Read the story of the prodigal son in a modern Bible version (Luke 15:11-31). Focus in on the hug in vs. 20. What made that hug feel so good? Create your own family hug by standing together in a circle with hips tight together—no space between. On the count of three, everyone take one giant step toward the middle. Think about God being in your circle, part of your family hug.
- Write your child a love note on a colorful piece of paper and decorate it with stickers, etc. Cut the paper into 8-10 odd-shaped puzzle pieces and put them in a sandwich bag. Tuck it in their lunch box as a surprise. Remind them often that you love them and that God loves them even more!
- Read Luke 7:36-47. What other stories of forgiveness can you think of in the Bible? Why do you think Jesus said that much forgiveness produces much love and little forgiveness produces little love? Help the younger children understand God's forgiveness by blowing some soap bubbles and watching them pop and disappear. God's forgiveness is just like that. Take time for a prayer of love and thanks to God for forgiveness!
- Play a game of hide and seek in the house after dark with the lights out. Pair up little children with an adult. What does it feel like to be lost? To be found? To be the "finder"? Read Luke 15:1-10. Celebrate with God that you were lost, but God found you. You may want to plan a party! Pray for people who don't yet know that God has found them and wants them to join the party.

Department of Family Ministries  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

## LOVE WORKS

One of the main purposes of encouraging engaged couples to work through premarital counseling is because everyone has a few \_\_\_\_\_ in terms of \_\_\_\_\_.

Outdo one \_\_\_\_\_ in showing \_\_\_\_\_. ~ Romans 12:10

A delicate dance of \_\_\_\_\_, mutual \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ keep marriage partners together.

The point is both men and women can turn into \_\_\_\_\_ fools under the right circumstances—and their own \_\_\_\_\_ individual ways—resulting in the decades-old reality that \_\_\_\_\_ marriages will end in \_\_\_\_\_.

### Great Expectations

When you get \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ come along with you—even if you \_\_\_\_\_ them from your \_\_\_\_\_.

All of us have \_\_\_\_\_ informed by our upbringing, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ that we hope our home lives up to.

Men and women both have some \_\_\_\_\_ to do in this area by first \_\_\_\_\_ the male and female \_\_\_\_\_ they had modeled for them growing up

- Who \_\_\_\_\_ took care of you growing up?
- Who primarily \_\_\_\_\_ around the house?
- Did your mom stay at home while dad worked—or was it \_\_\_\_\_? Did parents \_\_\_\_\_?
- What did you really \_\_\_\_\_ about your home \_\_\_\_\_ up?
- What \_\_\_\_\_ you about your home \_\_\_\_\_ up?

### BANKING ON TROUBLE

It has been suggested that \_\_\_\_\_ fights are the number one cause of \_\_\_\_\_.

One study shares that the most meaningful type of \_\_\_\_\_ for women isn't financial—it's \_\_\_\_\_.

This study points out that upwards of \_\_\_\_\_ of women would rather face a \_\_\_\_\_ crisis than feel a "lack of \_\_\_\_\_ with their husbands."

This study found that \_\_\_\_\_ of men still felt \_\_\_\_\_ to provide even if their spouse earned enough to \_\_\_\_\_ them.

Certainly these roles/feelings can be \_\_\_\_\_—the point is to recognize that these kinds of \_\_\_\_\_, and ways of \_\_\_\_\_, exist in \_\_\_\_\_.

These \_\_\_\_\_ need to be spoken about \_\_\_\_\_ so a spouse knows whether to provide more \_\_\_\_\_, or affirm their \_\_\_\_\_ spouse for all they do.

Talk about \_\_\_\_\_, what you expect from each other, how you can support each other, and take care of \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Screensavers and Windows**

While there is some \_\_\_\_\_, there is more agreement that men and women (again, generally) think \_\_\_\_\_.

With an incredible ability to \_\_\_\_\_ and a tendency to have deeper \_\_\_\_\_ connections, women process multiple relationship interactions, as well as unfinished tasks, and keenly feel them at \_\_\_\_\_.

Many men, on the other hand, have a way to emotionally \_\_\_\_\_ their windows instead of running them \_\_\_\_\_.

For now, take the time to ask each other: Do you resonate with the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ metaphor?

### **INTIMACY**

Hollywood, harlequin \_\_\_\_\_ novels, \_\_\_\_\_ romance novels, and the \_\_\_\_\_ industry have done a marvelous job creating sexual \_\_\_\_\_—particularly in the minds of young \_\_\_\_\_—that simply remain out of reach for most mortals.

While some couples undoubtedly take to sex with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, most people have to invest some \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to make it great.

First, sex is \_\_\_\_\_. It is. Seriously. \_\_\_\_\_. IS. GOOD. The reason sex is good is because sex comes from \_\_\_\_\_—even \_\_\_\_\_ sin entered the world.

God made man and woman \_\_\_\_\_ physical/spiritual beings (Gen. 2:7). This means there isn't an \_\_\_\_\_ physical aspect and a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ aspect—we are a unified whole.

Many books and articles point out that men generally go to sex for \_\_\_\_\_, while women need to feel \_\_\_\_\_ connected in order to enjoy sex.

Complicating the matters is, generally, a man's ability to be turned on \_\_\_\_\_.

Conversely, women often have a \_\_\_\_\_ sex drive, are not \_\_\_\_\_ stimulated by your body, and need to feel emotionally \_\_\_\_\_ to enjoy sex.

The principle here is that men and women need verbal \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Never withhold \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ love to \_\_\_\_\_ your spouse.

### **FAITH FIGHTS**

Again, not everyone in a marriage relationship has the same \_\_\_\_\_—or religious background within the same \_\_\_\_\_.

While scripture admonishes people to be \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ in terms of their faith (2 Corinthians 6:14), sometimes that doesn't happen.

Ask sincere \_\_\_\_\_, but never attack each other's beliefs with \_\_\_\_\_.

Respect each other's religious \_\_\_\_\_.

Allow children to ask open \_\_\_\_\_ and give equal \_\_\_\_\_ to religious beliefs—but give them \_\_\_\_\_ to choose once they are old enough.

Never make fun of the other \_\_\_\_\_ beliefs—especially in front of \_\_\_\_\_.

## STEWARDSHIP, A WAY OF LIFE

### STEWARDSHIP

#### **What is a steward?**

Stewards were created to “image” God and to represent His interests. To be a living image, stewards must mirror God’s love, character, and purpose. God’s stewards are to demonstrate what He is like. Creation and redemption place stewards in close relationship with their Master. Stewards are disciples of Jesus Christ.

#### **What does it mean to be a steward in God’s family?**

Stewards come from all races, tribes, languages, and nations to be members of God’s family. Membership in God’s family transcends all other ties and human relationships. Membership in God’s family means that stewards become one in purpose and one in mission. This oneness of purpose fulfills the prayer of Christ: “That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” (John 17:21).

#### **What is stewardship?**

The starting point of stewardship is to recognize that God initiates stewardship. He gives us life and invites us into intimate partnership. This partnership begins with accepting Jesus Christ as Savior—experiencing the joy of Salvation. This then leads us to trust Him enough to accept Him as Lord or Owner of our lives.

#### **What is Biblical stewardship?**

The Bible tells us that only a person who has a relationship with God can truly partner with Him and worship Him with their whole life. Stewardship is acknowledgment of God’s ownership and sovereignty and also of Jesus Christ’s claim of lordship in our lives.

#### **Is money part of stewardship?**

Yes. Yet, stewardship also includes every area of life: our bodies, skills, time, environment, and work. In loving God with all of our heart, mind and soul, all of our affairs reflect who we are in relationship to who God is. Therefore, with this all-inclusive view of stewardship, Jesus is also Lord of our financial resources.

#### **Who are faithful stewards?**

Viewed from its totality, stewardship is an expression of discipleship with a heart for God’s mission in the world. Stewards are partners with God, living out their faithfulness as members and church leaders in unity with His worldwide church. Consequently, stewardship is the lifestyle of one who has accepted Christ’s lordship, and is walking in partnership with God and acting as God’s agent to manage His affairs on earth.

### TITHE

#### **What is tithe?**

Tithe is one tenth of your increase from either money or product that is returned to God. It is holy and belongs to Him, the Owner of all of our material possessions and lives. (Leviticus 27:30). The returning of tithes is an expression of our faithfulness to God.

### **Is there a difference between tithes and offerings?**

Yes. Tithes are returned while offerings are given. Offerings are our response of love and gratitude to God's blessings and goodness. In giving tithes and offerings we worship God and advance His mission to make disciples in the world.

### **When should I tithe?**

Tithe should be returned first, when the personal income or increase is received.

### **How is tithe to be returned?**

With money, place it in a Tithe and Offering envelope and return the envelope to the church you attend. Make it an act of worship as you remember that He is your Creator, Redeemer and Lord of all your life.

### **How is the tithe distributed?**

Within the SDA church tithe is received by the local congregation and sent on to the local conference/mission/field office. This is the central "storehouse" for distribution in keeping with Church Policy.

### **How is the tithe used?**

While the distribution percentages vary somewhat in different conferences, the largest portion of the tithe is used to support the ministry of local churches through pastoral salaries, as well as evangelism and additional services provided to the local church.

### **Was the tithing system practiced in the Old Testament?**

Yes. As the Israelites were about to be established as a nation, tithing was reaffirmed by God (Deuteronomy 14:22-27). The tithing system reaches beyond the days of Moses and Abraham, thus providing a foundation for tithing practices in the New Testament.

### **Should people tithe when in debt?**

Regardless of your financial obligations, you are always "in debt" to God, the owner of all. It is a gross injustice to use God's holy tithe to square your accounts with human creditors.

### **Is tithing easier for the rich than for the poor?**

Love is the motive and rationale that leads us to recognize our responsibility whether rich or poor. Without love, the rich will not like to return tithe. Without love, the poor will not like to return tithe from the little he has. Tithing is easy for all who remember God's ownership and respond in love and worship.

### **Why should we tithe?**

By returning one tenth of our increase to Him, we remember God is the owner of everything He has entrusted into our hands. Tithing incorporates our worship to partnership with God, support of His mission, ministry, and church. Tithing is also an expression of loyalty that connects us with God's promises and blessings, giving us a sense of fellowship in the Divine-human partnership.

## **OFFERINGS**

### **What are offerings?**

Offerings are our response of love responding to God's blessings and goodness. They serve as a means of helping to further integrate God into the financial side of our lives. Recognizing God as Owner, we follow the convicting of the Holy Spirit—managing what He has placed in our hands

and worshiping God by returning some of what He has placed in our hands. We give where and how the Holy Spirit convicts and empowers us to do so. We give to worship God, and we do so by supporting His Church, by advancing His mission, and by helping others—but most of all by listening to Him and following where He leads and doing what He convicts.

### **How should I give offerings?**

Two principles should guide our offerings—as God blesses and as He guides us through His Spirit. “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV). The Macedonian churches give us an example of the way to give. “For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will” (2 Corinthians 8:3–5, NIV).

### **What are Special Offerings?**

Special offerings are offerings that are approved by the GC Executive Committee. These special offerings are collected every year worldwide during the worship service in support of programs, projects, institutions, or agencies of the church. The offerings are “special” because they are collected separately from the mission offerings received through Sabbath School and each has a specific purpose. Visit [www.adventiststewardship.com](http://www.adventiststewardship.com) for more information.

## **STOREHOUSE**

### **What does the term “storehouse” mean?**

The term “storehouse” has become a contemporary term describing the place we choose to bring our tithes. It comes from God’s call in Malachi 3:10, “‘Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it’” (NIV).

### **Where did the term “storehouse” originate?**

The concept of storehouse began during the revival at the time of King Hezekiah when the people returned their past tithe as part of the revival. So much was brought in that the king ordered the construction of storerooms (2 Chronicles 31:2–11).

### **How does the “storehouse” function in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?**

The local conference office is considered the storehouse for tithe within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Tithe is returned through the local congregation and then passed on to the conference where it is distributed according to the policies voted by the world church. Most of the tithe is used within the local conference, and the major portion is used for ministry in the local church.

\*From: <http://www.adventiststewardship.com/article/4/frequently-asked-questions>

## OPTION 1

### STUFFED BAKED POTATOES WITH CHIPOTLE

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| 2 large hot baked potatoes  | Sour Cream (see page 107)  |
| 4 tablespoons Simple Butter (recipe follows) or Earth Balance     | 1 firm-ripe avocado, diced |
| 1 recipe Creamy Chipotle Pepper Dressing (recipe follows) or Tofu | 1 tomato, sliced           |

1. Cut potatoes in half and scoop out the potato. Top with 1 tablespoon Simple Butter and mash lightly with a fork. Add salt if desired.
2. Return potato mixture to potato skin halves. Place in shallow baking dish and bake at 400°F for 10 minutes.
3. To serve, spoon Creamy Chipotle Pepper Dressing or Tofu Sour Cream over potato and top with diced avocado and tomatoes.

Serves 8.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 52, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

### SIMPLE BUTTER

- |                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1¾ cup coconut milk           | ½ teaspoon salt, or McCormick's   |
| ½ cup water                   | Butter Flavored Salt, or Flavacol |
| 2 tablespoons yellow cornmeal | Popcorn Salt                      |

Recipes

1. Place all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer 5 minutes. (It should begin to thicken to about the consistency of thin porridge. This can vary with the cornmeal used, so if it isn't getting thick, add another teaspoon of cornmeal and cook a few more minutes until it is like thin pancake batter or porridge.)
2. Place in blender, cover, and turn on low, then increase to high. Blend for about 1 minute until as smooth as possible.
3. Pour into container; cover and chill. It will be runny, but sets up when cold.

This will keep for about 10 days in the refrigerator, but after a few days it gets stiffer. If this happens, just add a bit of water and stir briskly until soft. I like to make a new batch every week. If there is any of the old still remaining, I stir it into a frozen vegetable dish, such as frozen corn.

Makes 1 cup.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 56, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)



## CREAMY CHIPOTLE PEPPER DRESSING

*This dip is good on burgers, sandwiches, as a dip for French fries, carrot sticks, and just about anything!*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 red, yellow, or orange pepper, cut in half<br>(may use green pepper) | ½ teaspoon Wright's Hickory Seasoning   |
| 2-3 tablespoons sweet or green onion,<br>chopped very fine             | 1 tablespoon tomato paste (you can use 2<br>tablespoons barbecue sauce instead of the<br>Wright's seasoning and tomato paste) |
| ½ teaspoon cumin   | 1 recipe Tofu Sour Cream (see page 80)  |
| ¼ teaspoon garlic powder   |   |

1. Arrange pepper halves on a cookie sheet, skin side up, and place under broiler. Broil until skin is black. Peel skin off and dice peppers into small pieces (or save time and chop raw.)
2. Mix peppers and all other ingredients together with Tofu Sour Cream. Chill and use when needed.

Makes 2 cups.

Serving suggestion: Add a vegetable or green salad and dinner rolls to complete this meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 58, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## OPTION 2

### CHILI WITH CORN

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ½ cup diced onion  | ½ teaspoon salt   |
| 1-2 cloves fresh garlic, crushed, or ½<br>teaspoon garlic powder | 2 cups cooked black or small red<br>beans (may be canned) |
| 1 teaspoon cumin   | 1 ½ cups frozen or fresh corn                             |
| 1 ½ teaspoons chili powder                                       | 14-ounce can diced tomatoes in juice                      |
| 2 teaspoons onion powder   | 2 tablespoons molasses                                    |

1. Put onion, peppers, and seasonings in a medium-sized kettle and add about ½ cup water. Simmer for about 8 minutes until onion is tender.
2. Add remaining ingredients, and heat to serving temperature.

Makes 6 cups.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 48, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## LIGHT AND TENDER CORN BREAD

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cornmeal	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup applesauce
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole wheat flour	2 tablespoons honey
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt	2 tablespoons water or as needed
2 teaspoons aluminum free baking powder	
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut milk (or use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons soy milk and omit water)	

1. Mix together in a mixing bowl: cornmeal, flour, salt, and baking powder.
2. Stir together the coconut or soy milk, applesauce, and honey in measuring cup. Add water as needed to make 1 full cup of mixture.
3. Combine wet and dry ingredients, stirring briskly until smooth. Pour into an 8" x 8" pan, or scoop into muffin tins. Bake at 375°F for 20-25 minutes.

Makes 9 squares.

Serving suggestion: Add a green salad to complete this meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 48, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## FRESH AIR

### AIR

#### Smog's Contribution to Illness

You feel like someone's choking you! Your chest feels tight, you may cough or wheeze, and you just can't seem to catch your breath. You feel panicky! What do you do? You run for the freshest, most oxygenated air around. Perhaps you grab an inhaler, maybe even take a whiff from an oxygen bottle, and you hope for miraculous relief. This scenario is not uncommon. About 20 million Americans suffer from asthma. In severe cases, asthma attacks can be deadly. They kill 5,000 people every year in the United States. Ask anyone with this condition how important air is. The culprit? Air pollution from cars, factories and power plants.

More than 159 million Americans—over half the nation's population—live in areas with bad air. A research study published in 2002 estimated that 30 percent of childhood asthma is due to environmental exposures, costing the nation \$2 billion per year. And studies also suggest that air pollution may contribute to the development of asthma in previously healthy people. For children with asthma, hospitalizations occur up to 26 percent more frequently on high air pollution days compared to normal days. Air pollution has also been implicated in causing pneumonia, heart attacks, heart arrhythmias, cancer, and other diseases. So my advice is to move out of the cities and enjoy the air the way God created it—fresh, crisp, clean, and with the scent of evergreen trees and flowers. Trees, water, and wind help keep air fresh.

#### Indoor Air Pollution

The yellow-brown pall of smog hanging over a city is not the only breathing threat to humanity. Consider indoor air pollution, which can be a source of colds, flu, sore throats, headaches, asthma, and other respiratory problems. Formaldehyde is found in building materials, tobacco smoke, household products, and the use of gas stoves or kerosene space heaters. Formaldehyde may be used to add permanent-press qualities to clothing and draperies, as a component of glues and adhesives, as a preservative in some paints and coating products, and in pressed wood products like particleboard. While we may not get rid of it, it is important **to open windows and keep the air circulating** to cut down on high concentrations. Some people may find great relief in removing products with chemical adhesives. Other indoor pollutants include: pesticides, paints, varnishes, hobby products, tobacco smoke, and cleaning products; bacteria, mold, mildew, viruses, animal dander, dust mites, cockroaches, and pollen.

#### Fresh Air's Importance to the Sick

An incredible story! During the 1919 flu epidemic, the hospital in Eureka, California, was overflowing with patients. The head doctor called the army, which gave them tents, cots, and blankets. The overflow patients were moved into the tents in which there was no heat, except hot water bottles that were used to keep the feet warm. It was found that no patients in the tents, with the fresh air they were getting, were dying. However, numbers of patients in the hospital were dying. When this was realized, the heat in the hospital was turned down and the windows were raised. The patients had to put on heavy underwear, but their death rate went down (Gunter B. Paulien PhD. *The Divine Philosophy and Science of Health and Healing*, p. 88).

(From "NEWSTART Lifestyle Club" at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/air](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/air))

**KING OF KINGS** (He Is Our Song, #69)

King of kings and Lord of lords, glory, [clap] hal-le-lu-jah!  
King of kings and Lord of lords, glory, [clap] hal-le-lu-jah!  
Jesus, Prince of Peace, glory, [clap] hal-le-lu-jah!  
Jesus, Prince of Peace, glory, [clap] hal-le-lu-jah!

**THE LAW OF THE LORD** (He Is Our Song, #97)

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing my soul.  
The word of the Lord is sure, revealing His wisdom.

*Chorus:* More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb.

*Verse 2:* The standards of the Lord are right, bestowing great joy.  
The command of the Lord is pure, directing my way.

*Verse 3:* May the words that I speak aloud, and my mind's secret whisperings,  
Be according to your will, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

**OH FILL IT UP** (Praise Time, #42)

*Chorus:* (Guys) Oh fill it up. (Girls) Fill it up and let it overflow.  
(Guys) Oh fill it up. (Girls) Fill it up and let it overflow.  
(Guys) Oh fill it up. (Girls) Fill it up and let it overflow. (All) Let it overflow with love.

*Verse 1:* (Guys) Oh Zacchaeus. (Girls) Zacchaeus was a wee little man.  
(Guys) A little man. (Girls) A little man was he.  
(Guys) Not very big. (Girls) Climbed up in a sycamore tree, (All) For the Lord he wanted to see.

*Verse 2:* (Guys) Amazing grace. (Girls) Amazing grace how sweet the sound.  
(Guys) How sweet the sound. (Girls) That saved a wretch like me.  
(Guys) A wretch like me. (Girls) I once was lost but now am found, (All) Was blind but now I see.

*Verse 3:* (Guys) Oh what a friend. (Girls) What a friend we have in Jesus.  
(Guys) Oh what a friend. (Girls) All our sins and griefs to bear.  
(Guys) Our griefs to bear. (Girls) What a privilege to carry, (All) Everything to God in prayer.

**TELL ME THE STORY OF JESUS** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #152)

*Verse 1:* Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every word,  
Tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard;  
Tell how the angels, in chorus, sang as they welcomed His birth,  
Glory to God in the highest, peace and good tidings to earth.

*Chorus:* Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every word,  
Tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard.

*Verse 2:* Fasting, alone in the desert, tell of the days that He passed,  
How for our sins He was tempted, yet was triumphant at last;  
Tell of the years of His labor, tell of the sorrow He bore,  
He was despised and afflicted, homeless, rejected, and poor.

*Verse 3:* Tell of the cross where they nailed Him, writhing in anguish and pain;  
Tell of the grave where they laid Him, tell how He liveth again;  
Love in that story so tender, clearer than ever I see;  
Stay, let me weep while you whisper, love paid the ransom for me.

**FACE TO FACE** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #206)

*Verse 1:* Face to face with Christ my Savior, face to face, what will it be,  
When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ, who died for me?

*Chorus:* Face to face shall I behold Him, far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!

*Verse 2:* Only faintly now I see Him, with the darkening veil between,  
But a blessed day is coming, when His glory shall be seen.

*Verse 3:* What rejoicing in His presence, when are banished grief and pain;  
When the crooked ways are straightened, and the dark things shall be plain!

*Verse 4:* Face to face! Oh, blissful moment! Face to face—to see and know;  
Face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who loves me so.

**LORD, I LIFT YOUR NAME ON HIGH** (Praise Time, #71)

Lord, I lift Your name on high! Lord, I love to sing Your praises.  
I'm so glad You're in my life. I'm so glad You came to save us.

*Chorus:* You came from heaven to earth, to show the way,  
From the earth to the cross, My debt to pay.  
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky, Lord I lift Your name on high!

## HOW TO KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY

### SABBATH - A SAFEGUARD OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The Sabbath encompasses our entire relationship with God. It is an indication of God's action on our behalf in the past, present, and future. The Sabbath protects man's friendship with God and provides the time essential for the development of that relationship. The Sabbath clarifies the relationship between God and the human family, for it points to God as Creator at a time when human beings would like to usurp God's position in the universe.

In this age of materialism, the Sabbath points men and women to the spiritual and to the personal. The consequences for forgetting the Sabbath day to keep it holy are serious. It will lead to the distortion and eventual destruction of a person's relationship with God.

When the Sabbath is kept, it is a witness to the rest that comes from trusting God alone as our sustainer, as the basis of our salvation, and as the ground of our hope in the future. As such, the Sabbath is a delight because we have entered God's rest and have accepted the invitation to fellowship with Him.

When God asks us to remember the Sabbath day, He does so because He wants us to remember *Him*.

### Principles and Theology of Sabbath Observance

- 1) *Nature and Purpose of the Sabbath.* The origin of the Sabbath lies in Creation when God rested from His work on the seventh day (Genesis 1-3). The Sabbath has significance as a perpetual sign of the everlasting covenant between God and His people in order that they might know who it is that created them (Exodus 31:17) and sanctifies them (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12), and that they might recognize Him as the Lord their God (Ezekiel 20:20).
- 2) *Uniqueness of the Sabbath.* The Sabbath is a special occasion for worshiping God as Creator and Redeemer and as the Lord of Life with whom the human family will be reunited at the second advent. The Sabbath commandment forms the center of the moral law as the seal of God's authority. Since it is a symbol of God's love relationship with His earthly children, human beings are obliged to respect this gift in the sense that they will do everything in their power to promote and engage in activities that will help establish and enhance a lasting relationship with God. Thus His people will engage only in those activities that are directed toward God and their fellowmen and not in those that lean toward self-gratification or self-interest.
- 3) *Universality of the Sabbath.* The universality of the Sabbath is rooted in Creation. Thus its privileges and obligations are binding in all nations, sectors, or classes. (See Exodus 20:11; 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:13; Isaiah 56:1-8.) Sabbath observance pertains to all members of the household, including children, and extends even "to the stranger that is within thy gates" (Exodus 20:10).
- 4) *Time Frame of the Sabbath.* Biblical Data: The Sabbath starts at the end of the sixth day of the week and lasts one day, from evening to evening (Genesis 1; Mark 1:32). This time coincides with the time of sunset. Wherever a clear delineation of the time of sunset is difficult to

ascertain, the Sabbath keeper will begin the Sabbath at the end of the day as marked by the diminishing light.

- 5) *Principles Guiding Sabbath Observance.* Although the Bible does not deal directly with many of the specific questions we may have regarding Sabbath observance in our day, it does provide us with general principles that are applicable today (See Exodus 16:29; 20:8–11; 34:21; Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15–22).
- 6) *Sabbath and the Authority of God’s Word.* Ellen White points out that the Sabbath commandment is unique, for it contains the seal of God’s law. It alone “brings to view both the name and title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 452.

### **Home and Family Life as Related to the Sabbath**

- 1) *Introduction.* Home life is the cornerstone of proper Sabbath observance. Only when individuals keep the Sabbath conscientiously in the home and assume their assigned responsibilities as members of the family will the Church as a whole reveal to the world the joys and privileges of God’s holy day.
- 2) *Different Kinds of Homes.* In the 20th century there are various kinds of homes, for example, the home in which there is a husband, wife, and children; the home in which there is husband and wife and no children; the home in which there is a single parent and children (where because of death or divorce one parent must function in both maternal and paternal roles); the home in which a person has never married or where death or divorce has left one single, and no children are involved; or the home in which one parent only is a member of the Church. In addressing the needs and problems of these categories, it should be understood that some of the principles and suggestions enunciated will apply to all groups and some will be more specialized.
- 3) *Two Sacred Institutions—The Home and the Sabbath.* “In the beginning” God placed a man and a woman in the Garden of Eden as their home. Also, “in the beginning” God gave to human beings the Sabbath. These two institutions, the home and the Sabbath, belong together. Both are gifts from God. Therefore both are sacred, the latter strengthening and enriching in its unique manner the bond of the former.
- 4) *Responsibilities of Adults as Teachers.* In choosing Abraham as the father of the chosen people, God said, “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him” (Genesis 18:19). It seems clear, then, that an enormous responsibility has been given to adults in the home for the spiritual welfare of their children. By both precept and example, they must provide the kind of structure and atmosphere that will make the Sabbath a delight and such a vital part of Christian living that, long after leaving the home, the children will continue the customs they were taught in childhood.
- 5) *Preparation for the Sabbath.* If the Sabbath is to be observed properly, the entire week should be programmed in such a way that every member will be ready to welcome God’s holy day

when it arrives. This means that the adult family members will plan so that all household tasks—the buying and preparing of food, the readying of clothes, and all the other necessities of everyday life—will be completed before sundown Friday. The day of rest should become the pivot around which the wheel of the entire week turns. When Friday night approaches and sundown is near, adults and children will be able to greet the Sabbath with tranquility of mind, with all preparation finished, and with the home in readiness to spend the next 24 hours with God and with one another. Children can help achieve this by carrying Sabbath preparation responsibilities commensurate with their maturity. The way the family approaches the beginning of the Sabbath at sundown on Friday night and the way Friday night is spent will set the stage for receiving the blessings that the Lord has in store for the entire day which follows.

- 6) *Proper Sabbath Dress.* Where there are children in the home, on Sabbath morning as the family dresses for church, adults may, by precept and example, teach children that one way to honor God is to appear in His house in clean, representative clothing appropriate to the culture in which they live.
- 7) *Importance of Bible Study Hour.* Where children do not have the advantage of attending Adventist schools, the Sabbath School becomes the most important means of religious instruction outside the home. The value of this Bible study hour cannot be overestimated. Therefore, parents should attend Sabbath morning services and do everything possible to take their children with them.
- 8) *Family Activities on the Sabbath.* In most cultures the Sabbath noon meal, when the family gathers around the dinner table in the home, is a high point of the week. The spirit of sacred joy and fellowship, begun upon arising and continued through the worship services at church, is intensified. Free from the distractions of a secular atmosphere the family can converse on themes of mutual interest and maintain the spiritual mood of the day.

When the sacred nature of the Sabbath is understood and a loving relationship exists between parents and children, all will seek to prevent intrusions into the holy hours by secular music, radio, and video and television programs, and by newspapers, books, and magazines.

Sabbath afternoons, as far as possible, will be spent in family activities—exploring nature; making missionary visits to shut-ins, the sick, or others in need of encouragement; and attending meetings in the church. As the children grow older, activities will enlarge to encompass other members of their age group in the church, with the question always in mind, “Does this activity cause me to understand better the true nature and sacredness of the Sabbath?” Thus proper Sabbath observance in the home will have a lasting influence for time and eternity.

### **Sabbath Observance and Recreational Activities**

- 1) *Introduction.* Sabbath observance includes both worship and fellowship. The invitation to enjoy both is open and generous. Sabbath worship directed toward God usually takes place in a community of believers. The same community provides fellowship. Both worship and fellowship offer unlimited potential to praise God and to enrich the lives of Christians. When either Sabbath worship or fellowship is distorted or abused, both praise to God and personal enrichment are threatened. As God’s gift of Himself to us, the Sabbath brings real joy in the



Lord. It is an opportunity for believers to recognize and reach their God-given potential. Thus to the believer, the Sabbath is a delight.

- 2) *Alien Factors to Sabbath Observance.* The Sabbath can be intruded upon easily by elements alien to its spirit. In the experience of worship and fellowship the believer must ever be alert to alien factors which are detrimental to one's realization of Sabbath sacredness. The sense of Sabbath holiness is threatened particularly by the wrong kinds of fellowship and activities. By contrast, the sacredness of the Sabbath is upheld when the Creator remains the center of that holy day.
- 3) *Culturally Conditioned Phenomena in Sabbath Observance.* It is important to understand that Christians render obedience to God and thus observe the Sabbath at the place in history and culture where they live. It is possible that both history and culture may falsely condition us and distort our values. By appealing to culture we may be guilty of giving ourselves license or excuse to indulge in sports and recreational activities that are incompatible with Sabbath holiness. For example, intensive physical exertion and various forms of tourism are out of harmony with true Sabbath observance.

Any attempt to regulate Sabbath observance beyond biblical principles by developing lists of Sabbath prohibitions will be counterproductive to a sound spiritual experience. The Christian will test his Sabbath experience by principle. He knows that it is the main purpose of the Sabbath to strengthen the bond of union between himself and God. Thus one's activities guided by biblical principles and contributing toward such a strengthening are acceptable.

Inasmuch as no one can evaluate rightly the personal motives of others, a Christian must be very careful not to criticize his brethren living in cultural contexts other than his own who engage in Sabbath recreational activities of which they approve.

While traveling, Adventist tourists should make every effort to observe the Sabbath with their fellow believers in any given area. Respecting the sacredness of the seventh day, it is recommended that Adventists avoid using the day for a holiday set aside for sightseeing and secular activity.

\*This is a partial selection of a larger document found at [adventist.org](http://adventist.org).

## PARENTING

*“Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a \_\_\_\_\_” (Psalm 127:3, NASB).*

When considering how to meet the needs of our \_\_\_\_\_, we must realize one thing: There are no \_\_\_\_\_ parents.

### Parents Need to Care for Themselves

Parents not only have the \_\_\_\_\_ that come with their child, but with the advent of \_\_\_\_\_ and other social \_\_\_\_\_, many parents feel the need to keep up with other parents they perceive as \_\_\_\_\_, wealthier, more \_\_\_\_\_, and just plain better than they are.

As parents strive for their ideals it is easy to feel selfish, incompetent, or weak when their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ run out.

First, a parent’s number one priority is for their children to \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel and have the opportunity come to to \_\_\_\_\_ Christ.

One Swiss study shows:

- If both parents attend church, \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the children will attend church regularly.
- If only the mother attends church, \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the children will attend church regularly.
- If only the father attends church, \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the children will attend church regularly.

Second, parents need \_\_\_\_\_.

Third, finding a \_\_\_\_\_ or even a \_\_\_\_\_ job for a stay-at-home parent can be helpful.

Bottom line—ask for \_\_\_\_\_ and take care of yourself so you can be the best \_\_\_\_\_ you can be.

## Two Are Better Than One

The concept of the \_\_\_\_\_ family is under attack today.

God's perfect plan is a \_\_\_\_\_-parent home.

God has a tender heart toward \_\_\_\_\_ parents and hears the cries for extra \_\_\_\_\_.

## You're Unique

Effective child training requires parents to \_\_\_\_\_ their methods to the individual child.

## The Six Basic Needs of Children

1. Children need \_\_\_\_\_ love.

- "And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My \_\_\_\_\_ Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17, KJV).
- Parents trying to resolve their personal problems and failures through their children give \_\_\_\_\_ love.

2. Children need to be \_\_\_\_\_.

- "Train up a child in the way they should go; and when they are \_\_\_\_\_, they will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6, CEB).
- Training requires doing it \_\_\_\_\_ and again until the child gets it.
- Parents must realize that with children more is \_\_\_\_\_ than taught.
- Proverbs are not \_\_\_\_\_. They are wise sayings that are \_\_\_\_\_ true.

3. Children need to be \_\_\_\_\_

- Nurture means to provide nourishment and \_\_\_\_\_ during the fragile stages of development.
- Many children never grow up seeing their parents \_\_\_\_\_ one another.
- "Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a \_\_\_\_\_ that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).

4. Children need genuine, deserved \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Praise \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Praise \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Praise \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Praise \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) "I am \_\_\_\_\_ of the choice you just made."
- 2) "What do you think about....?"
- 3) "Would you like to have my \_\_\_\_\_ about that?"
- 4) "Here are several options I think you should consider..."
- 5) "Since we cannot find a way to say ' \_\_\_\_\_ ', here is why we have to say 'no.'"

5. Children need \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

- However, not being \_\_\_\_\_ and even showing \_\_\_\_\_ to bad behavior also sends an unloving message of, "You're not \_\_\_\_\_ of my time."
- Consequences need to be \_\_\_\_\_—but mostly importantly \_\_\_\_\_ and with follow \_\_\_\_\_.
- To perpetually \_\_\_\_\_ consequences with no follow \_\_\_\_\_ reveals that not only do you lack the \_\_\_\_\_ to make things happen—but you do not keep your \_\_\_\_\_.

6. Children need parents who know when to let \_\_\_\_\_.

- The irony of the parent-child relationship is that its ultimate goal is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Helping your child to become their own \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the most important skills you will ever teach.

### **Kindling God's Fire in Your Children**

1. Cultivate a daily, personal \_\_\_\_\_ life.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ for your children.

- Model the \_\_\_\_\_ from the ones the Old Testament fathers spoke over their children.
- When we pronounce a blessing over our children it gives us \_\_\_\_\_ that what we prayed for is heard and will be answered.
- It's refreshing to \_\_\_\_\_ each child with the Lord.
- If your extended family is not made up of believers, look for \_\_\_\_\_ grandparents, aunts, and uncles for your children.

3. Practice daily \_\_\_\_\_ worship.

4. Attend \_\_\_\_\_ regularly.

5. Maintain a \_\_\_\_\_ attitude toward the church.

6. Teach your children to exercise \_\_\_\_\_.

7. Finally, demonstrate the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ others.

## Child's Play

All couples, ideally, should talk about children before \_\_\_\_\_.

The other challenge with \_\_\_\_\_ is their tendency to take over your \_\_\_\_\_ if you let them.

If you are not careful, your role as a \_\_\_\_\_ may trump your role as a \_\_\_\_\_.

Children need \_\_\_\_\_ love, but they also need to see a marriage that models \_\_\_\_\_ love between their \_\_\_\_\_.

It's good for kids to know that the \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't always \_\_\_\_\_ around them

Spouses need to set aside time to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Don't view this as an \_\_\_\_\_, but as an \_\_\_\_\_ in the health of the marriage—and the \_\_\_\_\_ as a whole.

Also, for couples who don't have \_\_\_\_\_ yet, or who never \_\_\_\_\_ on having kids, you will have similar challenges with \_\_\_\_\_, hobbies, or maybe even pets. Keep open, keep \_\_\_\_\_ straight, and invest in each other over the other realities of life.

## GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

The Bible teaches that every member of the church is important. Each of us is unique in our make-up. The diversity of gifts, personalities, and interests is comparable to the different parts of the human body. Just as we have hands, feet, eyes, noses, tongues, ears, etc. so in the church we have different talents. Paul writes, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Corinthians 12:1). Every church member should be aware of how it is normal to serve somewhere in God’s church.

Serving in the church isn’t just doing a job. It is ministry to the body of Christ. That means when you help out as a greeter, take up the offering, teach children in Sabbath school, or clean up after a fellowship dinner, you are not just serving people, you are serving Jesus. Christ once explained how our kind acts of service toward others goes beyond what we might think. He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it [kind actions] to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40).

The challenge is to figure out how to fit in. Do you look around and just volunteer your time to help where needed? Sure, that’s not a bad place to start. But many people would rather be asked. And some places in the church are positions or offices that the church body votes on. Once a year, in most Adventist churches, a selected group meets called the Nominating Committee. Its purpose is to guide members into places of service in the church.

The Nominating Committee may meet once a week for a month or more, review the positions of service in the church, and then discuss names of people who would match those areas of service. Phone calls are made and members are invited to prayerfully consider a position. When these places of service are filled, a report is given to the whole church body and voted on. The process sounds smooth and simple, but there are challenges.

Sometimes the committee overlooks new members. Some people may not be asked to serve in any position. Ideally, everyone should serve somewhere. Even homebound members might be able to serve by writing cards or making phone calls. Obviously people who are ill or going through a severe crisis will be limited. But if you have not been asked to serve, mention it to your pastor.

Another challenge is matching people’s gifts with positions that fit. The Nominating Committee is not set up to teach people about spiritual gifts. There are some churches that conduct classes to help people clearly know how God has given them special abilities that match certain areas of service. You can find books or online gift assessments to help you discover your gifts. Most of them encourage you to learn about your talents in a group setting with others.

If the Nominating Committee calls you and asks you to serve in a place of service in the church, think about it. Tell the person you’d like to pray about their call. Then ask yourself, “Is this a position that fits my gifts and interests? Am I motivated to take this office for my own ego or to build up the church and make it strong?” If a position doesn’t fit you, it’s okay to say no. But don’t just leave it at that—mention to the person calling what you believe some of your gifts are or possible types of ministries that would interest you. Maybe you

love meeting people and would enjoy being a greeter. Perhaps you thrive in fixing things or working outside and would be happy to help with grounds or maintenance work.

Many churches encourage people to serve in places that fit their gifts, but also ask people to help out with short-term needs that may or may not exactly fit people's gifts. A church work bee to rip out some old shrubs or plant new flowers may not perfectly fit your talents, but you can show up and help out. Cleaning the kitchen after a cooking school might not be one of your spiritual gifts, but it's something that needs to be done.

Be careful to not overload yourself. Sometimes new members are so enthusiastic about serving that they take on too much and burn out. God wants us to live with balance. We should serve in the church. But we should also spend time with our families, take care of our bodies, make a living, and enjoy some recreation. Part of our calendar should include time for service.

Another overlooked aspect of spiritual gifts is taking time to develop our talents. Just like the story of the talents in the Bible (see Matthew 25:14-30), we should invest in our abilities. Take some time to read books or attend seminars that will grow your gifts. Look up articles on mercy, hospitality, leadership, discernment, intercessory prayer, encouragement, or whatever your gift might be and learn how to improve your abilities.

Whatever your gifts, open your heart to God and pray, "Lord, wherever You want me to serve, I'm available. Whatever you'd like me to do, give me humility and wisdom to help make Your church strong."

## OPTION 1

### SANTA FE BURRITOS

8–10 large whole wheat flour tortillas (or white flour tortillas)	2 cups cooked, mashed pinto or black beans (or canned vegetarian no-oil, refried beans)
8-ounce can tomato sauce	
2 14-ounce cans Mexican stewed tomatoes, blend briefly or mash	2 cups Simple Cheese Sauce (see page 80 for recipe)

1. Lightly coat an oblong baking dish (about 9" x 13") with cooking spray or oil, and cover the bottom with half the tomato sauce and one can mashed Mexican stewed tomatoes.
2. Thinly spread entire surface of each tortilla with mashed beans and roll up.
3. Nestle each rolled tortilla into the tomato sauce in the casserole dish, one layer deep.
4. Spread Simple Cheese Sauce over the burritos—then spread the other can of tomato sauce and Mexican stewed tomatoes over the top, using a spoon or rubber spatula to let some of the Cheese Sauce show through the tomatoes. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves and sliced black olives if desired.
5. Bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes and serve.

Serves 6–8.

Serving suggestion: Add a corn and/or green salad to complete this meal.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 47, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## OPTION 2

### VEGETABLE WRAPS

4–5 large flour tortillas, whole wheat or white  
⅓ cup Vegemaise or your own ranch-style dressing  
1 recipe Roasted Vegetable Filling (page 126)

1. Place tortillas in a plastic bag and warm in the microwave for about 40 seconds, until just warm (not too long or they will become tough). Or place one at a time on a preheated nonstick skillet over medium-high heat for about 30 seconds. Stack and cover with a cloth or place in a plastic bag to keep moist and warm.  
*Note: If you don't warm the tortillas they will be stiff and brittle, and tend to crack when rolled.*
2. Spread a tablespoon of mayonnaise or dressing down the center of each tortilla and about ½ cup of vegetable filling (and lettuce if desired). Turn up the bottom to make a small fold, then roll the sides toward the middle—the bottom folded in and the top open.
3. Place in 8-inch casserole or on plate, cover with a cloth, and keep warm in a 175°F oven until ready to serve. Or chill and serve cool. Great food for a sack lunch, picnic, or hike!

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 75, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)



## SIMPLE MAYONNAISE

12-ounce box MoriNu Silken Soft Tofu, or ½ brick regular tofu plus ¾ cup of water	1 ½ tablespoons honey (or 2 tablespoons sugar)
1 cup raw cashew nuts	1 teaspoon onion powder (be sure it is the fine powder, not granulated onion)
¼ cup lemon juice	

Place all ingredients in blender and blend for at least 1 minute until silky smooth. Chill to thicken.

Tip: Don't underestimate the importance of the right balance of lemon, sweetening, and salt. This is what helps your spread taste like mayonnaise. For low salt, cut salt, sweetener, and lemon juice in half.

Makes 3 cups.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 57, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## RANCH-STYLE DRESSING

1 cup mayonnaise of choice	1 rounded tablespoon Ranch-style Dressing Mix (recipe follows)
1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional)	
¼ cup water	

Mix all ingredients together in a small bowl and serve with tossed salad.

Tip: You can buy regular packaged dressing mix to use here. But when you have the time, the homemade mix below is simple to make and much less expensive.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 57, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## RANCH-STYLE DRESSING MIX

½ cup onion powder	2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 tablespoon celery salt or Vege-Sal	2 teaspoons sweet basil
2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes	1 ½ teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon poppy seeds	1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon dill weed	

Mix together and store in an airtight container.

Makes 1 cup.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 57, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## ROASTED VEGETABLE FILLING

½ cup Soy Curls or 8 ounces firm tofu, cut into ½-inch cubes	1 medium zucchini, cut lengthwise and then into ¼-inch slides
⅓ cup water	1 cup broccoli, cut into small pieces (optional)
1 teaspoon chicken-like seasoning	¼ pound fresh mushrooms, cut into fourths (optional)
1 teaspoon yeast flakes	
1 tablespoon Bragg Liquid Aminos	
1 medium bell pepper, diced	
1 medium red onion, cut into ½-inch wedges	

Sweet and Sour Marinade: Combine 1 tablespoon Bragg Liquid Aminos with 1 tablespoon honey, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, and 1 teaspoon Lawry's Season Salt (or ½ teaspoon salt).

1. Combine Soy Curls with water and seasonings in a small saucepan or microwave container. Bring to a boil and let stand 10 minutes. If using tofu, omit water and coat with same seasonings.
2. Set oven to broil. Combine vegetables with Sweet and Sour Marinade in a bowl and mix to coat vegetables. Drain off excess. Add soaked Soy Curls or seasoned tofu. Spread mixture on lightly greased cookie sheet. Broil uncovered 5 to 10 minutes or until crisp-tender.
3. Serve in Vegetable Wraps (previous page). Can also be served as filling for Santa Fe Burritos (Session 5).

Makes 4 cups, fills 10 wraps.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 45, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

Serving suggestion: Add raw vegetables and the dip of your choice to complete this meal.

## REST

Today, as never before, “the pressure is on.” Pressure to beat out the other guy for the top spot. Pressure to get the highest grade in school or advance to the next level. Pressure just to make ends meet in a teetering economy. Seems like no time to sleep, no time to meditate and rest! It is thought that working late into the night will accomplish much! So people pop pills, drink coffee, or use other energy boosting techniques to stay up late into the night, and into the wee hours of the morning in the hopes of getting the grade or finishing a task. Wait! Can we unravel the delicate fabric of life and really think we will win in the end?

A study was done where 44 college students put in an all-nighter and then took a test in critical thinking. They performed worse on the test than an “eight-hour control group” but were more confident they had done better and were more focused. Conclusion: College students are not aware of the extent to which sleep deprivation negatively affects their ability to complete cognitive tasks (Pilcher and Waters, 1997).

Mark Mahowald, a professor of neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, says that any amount of sleep deprivation will diminish mental performance. “One complete night of sleep deprivation is as impairing in simulated driving tests as a legally intoxicating blood-alcohol level.” If missing a night of sleep can do that to your driving ability, think what it would do to your performance to get ahead! The prestigious Lancet medical journal made this observation: Chronic sleep loss may not only increase the severity but also hasten the onset of age related diseases such as “diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and memory loss” (Lancet, October 23, 1999).

**What about sleeping medications** to induce sleep if you cannot get to sleep? During normal sleep, one has alternating periods of light and deep sleep. Dreaming seems to be a natural outlet and takes place during the light sleep or REM sleep. Sleep medications often suppress this stage of sleep, and on awaking you may not feel as refreshed in spite of apparently sound sleep. If continued over time, sleep medications will contribute to chronic fatigue and may lessen mental performance!

To get a good night’s sleep, make sure you have a totally dark room. Don’t leave bright lights, computer screens, or TV sets on. Use a nightlight if you have to get out of bed for the bathroom—a dim red or blue light is best.

### The Best Sleep Inducers are Natural Means

- Engage in active **exercise** daily to best counteract mental and emotional fatigue.
- Find an outdoor activity you like and can do every day. Sunshine, exercise, and fresh air promote sleep. Skip TV viewing.
- **Avoid caffeine**, even during the day. It commonly causes insomnia.
- Maintain a **regular schedule** for going to bed and getting up.
- An **empty stomach** promotes better sleep. Make evening meals light.

- Don't rehearse the day's problems at bedtime. **Count your blessings** and fill your mind with gratitude and thanksgiving. Take a warm bath.
- Seek a relationship with God who can bear your anxieties and refresh your spirit.
- Science has shown that the Judeo-Christian "one day of rest per week" enhances work performance on the other six. Try a Sabbath rest!

(From "NEWSTART Lifestyle Club" at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/rest](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/rest))

**DARE TO BE A DANIEL** (Sing for Joy, #116)

*Verse 1:* Standing by a purpose true, heeding God's command,  
Honor them the faithful few! All hail to Daniel's Band!

*Chorus:* Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone,  
Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known!

*Verse 2:* Hold the gospel banner high! On to vict'ry grand!  
Satan and his host defy, and shout for Daniel's Band!

**OUR GOD REIGNS** (He Is Our Song, #41)

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news, good news,  
Announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness; our God reigns, our God reigns!

*Chorus:* Our God reigns, our God reigns, our God reigns, our God reigns!

**I WANT TO KNOW YOU MORE** (Praise Time, #55)

Oh, I want to know You more, deep within my soul I want to know You,  
Oh, I want to know You.

To feel Your heart and know Your mind. Looking in Your eyes stirs up within me  
Cries that say I want to know You, Oh, I want to know You more.

**FATHER, LEAD ME DAY BY DAY** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #482)

*Verse 1:* Father, lead me day by day, ever in Thine own sweet way;  
Teach me to be pure and true; show me what I ought to do.

*Verse 2:* When in danger, make me brave; make me know that Thou canst save;  
Keep me safe by Thy dear side; let me in Thy love abide.

*Verse 3:* When I'm tempted to do wrong, make me steadfast, wise, and strong;  
And when all alone I stand, shield me with Thy mighty hand.

*Verse 4:* May I do the good I know, be Thy loving child below,  
Then at last go home to Thee, evermore Thy child to be.

**JESUS IS COMING AGAIN** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #213)

*Verse 1:* Lift up the trumpet, and loud let it ring: Jesus is coming again!  
Cheer up, ye pilgrims, be joyful and sing; Jesus is coming again!

*Refrain:* Coming again, coming again, Jesus is coming again!

*Verse 2:* Echo it, hilltops; proclaim it, ye plains: Jesus is coming again!  
Coming in glory, the Lamb that was slain; Jesus is coming again!

*Verse 3:* Heavings of earth, tell the vast, wondering throng: Jesus is coming again!  
Tempests and whirlwinds, the anthem prolong; Jesus is coming again!

*Verse 4:* Nations are angry – by this we do know, Jesus is coming again!  
Knowledge increases; men run to and fro; Jesus is coming again!

**IN HIS TIME** (He Is Our Song, #93)

*Verse 1:* In His time, in His time, He makes all things beautiful in His time.  
Lord, please show me every day, as you're teaching me your way,  
That you do just what you say, in your time.

*Verse 2:* In your time, in your time, you make all things beautiful in your time.  
Lord, my life to you I bring, may each song I have to sing  
Be to you a lovely thing, in your time.

## DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS

The ultimate devotional book that is the foundation of our faith, our doctrines, and our practices is the Bible. There is no substitute for taking time each day to partake from the bread of heaven for it is in the Word of God that we most clearly see Jesus Christ our Savior. Whatever other good Christian materials you might read (or listen to), they should be in addition to Bible reading, not a substitute for the Scriptures. All the best writers in the world cannot stand in place of the written Word of God. It is in this sacred book that we find the sharpest picture and the strongest presentation of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Choose a Bible that provides you with helpful tools for study. Many Bibles have built-in resources to guide you in understanding difficult-to-understand passages. They can give you a better sense of the background, setting, and author of different books. A Bible dictionary can explain words that are unfamiliar to you and a concordance makes it easier to find passages on different topics. Marginal notes can explain passages and also refer you to other Bible verses on the same topic. Choose a Bible for your study that is faithful to the original manuscripts. These are often word for word translations instead of paraphrases.

There are helpful devotional books which are based on the Bible and point us to the Scriptures. The Spirit of Prophecy given to the church in the last days through the writings of Ellen G. White are a blessing in guiding us to the Scriptures. Her writings are full of God's Word and direct us again and again to testimonies of the prophets and apostles found in the Old and New Testaments. Many people have found certain books to be classical devotional books, such as the five-part *Conflict of the Ages Series* which cover the history of the world down through the last days. They include *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *The Desire of Ages*, *Acts of the Apostles*, and *The Great Controversy*. Three other books are also found to be deeply appreciated as devotional books by Ellen White. They are *Steps to Christ*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, and *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*. Some compilations of her books have been created as daily devotionals that follow the calendar year. These are all available at your local Adventist Book Center ([www.AdventistBookCenter.com](http://www.AdventistBookCenter.com) or 800.765.6955).

Along with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, the Seventh-day Adventist Church annually publishes devotionals for different groups in the church. Some are for youth, women, Primary age, Junior/Earliten age, young adult, and even preschool. A growing number are available in languages other than English and some are now ready to download in digital or audio format.

What's most important is that you spend daily time with Jesus. Whether you pray while going for a walk each morning, listen to the Bible in audio format, kneel alone in the quietness of your bedroom, or study at the kitchen table with a few study tools on your computer, make time each day to be alone with God. Dig for truth. Reflect on what you learn. Ask God to help you apply it to your life. Then commit yourself completely to God.

## THE HEALING GIFT OF FORGIVENESS

All relationships need forgiveness, "If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:15 NRSV).

What happens when we fail to forgive? Resentment builds, conflict increases, and hopelessness sets in.

There are three categories of forgiveness:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Forgiveness
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Forgiveness
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Forgiveness

### WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ of what they did.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ what they did.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ what they did.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ what they did.
5. \_\_\_\_\_.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ what they did.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ to what happened.
8. \_\_\_\_\_.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ to take the wrong seriously.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ we are not hurt.

### WHAT FORGIVENESS IS

Two types of forgiveness:

" \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness"

" \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness"

Forgiveness is:

1. Being \_\_\_\_\_ of what someone has done and still forgiving them.
2. Choosing to keep no \_\_\_\_\_ of wrong.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ to punish.



4. Not \_\_\_\_\_ what they did.

5. Being \_\_\_\_\_.

6. \_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. Worthington has developed a five-step process called **REACH** that has been tested with positive results in more than 20 controlled scientific studies. **REACH** is an acronym for this process:

**R** is for “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”—remembering the hurt that was done to you as objectively as you can.

**E** is for “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”—trying to understand the viewpoint of the person who wronged you.

**A** is for the “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”—thinking about a time you hurt someone and were forgiven, then offering the gift of forgiveness to the person who hurt you.

**C** is for “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”—publicly forgiving the person who wronged you

**H** is for “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”—not forgetting the hurt, but reminding yourself that you made the choice to forgive.

Think of forgiveness more as a journey than an event. Here are the steps we need to take on this journey.

1. Set aside \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss the issue one on one.

2. Identify the problem or \_\_\_\_\_ event.

3. Fully explore the \_\_\_\_\_ and concerns.

4. Ask for \_\_\_\_\_

5. Agree to \_\_\_\_\_

6. Commit to \_\_\_\_\_ from doing the thing that caused the offense.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness to take time.

## CHURCH RESOURCES AND ADVENTIST MINISTRIES

Did you know there are a variety of ministries in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to help you grow as a Christian? New members may only be aware of their local church's ministries, but there is a whole array of web pages, offices, organizations, para-church ministries, publishing houses, educational institutions, media ministries, resource centers, and more to strengthen the work of the Adventist church and assist members in their life and work as a Christian. Some organizations work directly under the denominational umbrella while others are partners who work alongside the church.

Your local church is connected to a local conference office which coordinates the work of a cluster of churches within a given state, province or territory. This office coordinates the work within your region to help operate Christian schools, run summer camps, hire pastors, operate an Adventist Book Center, provide training to local churches, and host annual summer camp meetings.

Each local conference is also connected to a Union conference office that also resources churches and members, typically in areas that deal with larger areas, such as assisting with colleges and universities, providing religious liberty support, publishing a Union paper for members, and working closely with Adventist hospitals. Union conferences are tied to an even larger part of a given territory known as the Division. At this level of the organization you will also find resources for the local church. Overseeing the work of the Divisions is the General Conference. Each of these entities has web pages that provide information helpful to members, pastors, and churches. Visit [www.adventist.org](http://www.adventist.org) to see a list of these pages.

In the North American Division you will find a variety of ministries helpful to your work and growth as a Christian. One such organization is called *AdventSource*. It is the official leadership resource center for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. From seminars and how-to guides for local church leaders to Pathfinder uniforms and small group studies, they provide a wide array of materials at [www.AdventSource.org](http://www.AdventSource.org). PlusLine is the official helpdesk for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. It is a source for tools and information to assist your church and provides free articles and ideas. Call them at 800.732.7587 or visit [www.PlusLine.org](http://www.PlusLine.org).

Another helpful source of material for Christian growth is the variety of Adventist periodicals available to church members. Most Unions provide a monthly paper to all of its members. The Adventist Review also provides a monthly edition to all members in the North American Division. You can purchase the weekly edition as well at [www.adventistreview.org](http://www.adventistreview.org). Other examples of periodicals include *Insight Magazine*, *Ministry Magazine*, *Signs of the Times*, *Vibrant Life*, *Journal of Adventist Education*, and papers for Sabbath school-age groups like *Our Little Friend*, *Primary Treasure*, *Junior Guide*, etc.

There are many affiliated organizations that assist the work of the Adventist church in North America. Did you know there is an Adventist Amateur Radio Association? Are you looking for materials for people who are visually impaired? Are you wondering how to get involved in a short-term mission trip? You can find a list of organizations like these and more at [www.nadadventist.org](http://www.nadadventist.org). Look under "Directory" and "Affiliated Organizations."

Another listing of Adventist organizations can be found at [www.adventistdirectory.org](http://www.adventistdirectory.org) where you can search for churches, schools and other entities like hospitals, publishing houses, bookstores, media services and more. There are so many helpful resources available to Seventh-day Adventist Christians that we cannot begin to list them all on this simple worksheet. We encourage you to take advantage of the wide array of materials, seminars, support groups, and organizations that can strengthen your walk with God!

## OPTION 1

### TOFU SCRAMBLE

*This tofu recipe is especially good when the tofu is served moist, with the vegetables not overcooked to preserve their bright colors.*

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 16-ounce brick of firm tofu    | 4 fresh mushrooms, sliced, or 1 small zucchini, diced |
| 1-2 cloves garlic, pressed       | 3 green onions, chopped                               |
| 1 teaspoon butter-flavored salt* | 1 small tomato, diced                                 |
| 2 teaspoons Bragg Liquid Aminos  |   |
| ¼ teaspoon turmeric              |   |

1. Crumble tofu into a nonstick skillet and add garlic, salt, Bragg's, and turmeric. Cook covered 10 minutes (medium-high).  
*Hint: For a look and texture more similar to scrambled eggs, don't stir as you would eggs or the result will be crumbly. Simply turn once or twice.*
2. Add zucchini or mushrooms and cook uncovered for 5 minutes. Add green onions and cook about 1 minute. Remove from heat and add the tomato.

Serves 4.

\*Flavacol Popcorn Salt is best. Purchase online (Amazon carries it) or from the popcorn section at a grocery store, or you can use 1 tablespoon of chicken-like seasoning or just 1 teaspoon of salt.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 24, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## OVEN HASH BROWNS

¾ cup water	2 tablespoons chicken-like seasoning
¾ cup raw cashews (or ¾ cup coconut milk and omit water)	½ cup finely diced onion (optional)
½ tablespoon onion powder	2 pounds frozen shredded hash browns (about 8 cups)
½ teaspoon garlic powder	

*May use purchased frozen potatoes, but make sure they are free of hydrogenated oils. If you make them from home-cooked potatoes, it works best if potatoes are slightly undercooked.*

1. Blend cashews and water with seasonings for at least 1 minute until smooth. (May use 1 cup coconut milk instead.)
2. Pour over potatoes and add the diced onion. Mix well with hands to coat all the potatoes. (May freeze some of the uncooked mix for future use.)
3. Place on a nonstick or lightly oiled cookie sheet and place on bottom rack of unheated oven. Turn on the oven to 400°F and bake for 20–30 minutes until golden brown on the edges and lightly browned in places on the bottom. Don't over bake, or they will become dry.
4. Pile in a serving dish to retain some of the moisture and serve. The serving dish may be covered and placed in a warm oven. Don't leave them warming for more than 30 minutes—they will begin to discolor.

Makes 8 cups.

Serving suggestion: Add a selection of sliced fruit to complete this meal. You could also add the breakfast side dishes of your choice.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 25. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## OPTION 2

### WHOLE WHEAT PANCAKES

2 cups whole wheat pastry flour	2 tablespoons Ener-G Baking Powder
1 teaspoon salt	(or 1 tablespoon regular baking powder)
2 cups soy milk or nut milk	
2 tablespoons honey	

1. Blend all ingredients together in a blender or with a white whip.
2. Pour onto hot griddle, being careful not to stir down the bubbles (no bubbles with regular baking powder). Bake until golden brown on each side. Serve with Fresh Fruit Sauce (recipe follows), nut butter and applesauce, maple syrup, or the toppings of your choice.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 19, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## FRESH FRUIT SAUCE

2 cups fresh or frozen fruit (peaches, pears, mangos, strawberries, blackberries, or raspberries)  
honey or other sweetener of choice

1. Peel and cut the fruit into small pieces.
2. Place fruit in a food processor and add sweetener. Secure top and pulse several times to coarsely chop the fruit.

Makes 2 cups.

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 19, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## BANANA DATE-NUT MUFFIN TOPS

1 cup whole wheat flour	½ cup walnuts
2 teaspoons of aluminum free baking powder	½ cup chopped dates
½ teaspoon salt	1 medium banana
Scant ½ cup Brazil nuts or walnuts	¼ cup honey
	¼ cup or more soy milk (or water)

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and prepare muffin top pan or cookie sheet by coating lightly with oil—or line the cookie sheet with a Bake Magic baking sheet.
2. Place flour, baking powder, salt, and Brazil nuts in a food processor and process together for 1 minute, until the nuts are as fine as the flour. Add walnuts and blend a few seconds to chop the nuts coarsely.
3. Mash the bananas with a fork and place in a 2-cup measuring cup along with the honey. Add soy milk to make a total of 1 cup mixture with the bananas and honey. Stir together.
4. Place flour mixture in a mixing bowl. Add dates and banana mixture, and stir briskly until well mixed. Scoop into muffin top pan. Or using an ice-cream scoop, place six mounds of batter on a cookie sheet. Briskly rap the cookie sheet on the counter several times, and the mounds will spread into flat circles.
5. Place in 400°F oven; bake for 15–20 minutes or until golden brown on top and bottom.

Makes 8 muffin tops.

Serving suggestion: Add fresh fruit and the breakfast side dishes of your choice to complete this meal

(Reprinted from *Seven Secrets Cookbook* by Neva and Jim Brackett, p. 23, Review & Herald, 2006. See also [www.seven-secrets.org](http://www.seven-secrets.org).)

## TRUST

By now, you may have come to realize that you need help to improve your health and live in harmony with the NEWSTART principles.

Perhaps you have been trying to improve your lifestyle, but you realize that your efforts to change the habits that may have impaired your health have been fruitless. Have you considered that the power to change may need to come from without rather than within?

For some people, the changes that need to be made are only small ones, but for others the changes may seem insurmountable. Regardless of the changes that need to be made, achieving good health (and maintaining it!) may best be accomplished not by “trying” to make the changes, but by “trusting” that the changes can be made. Lasting change can only come when you realize how ineffective your own efforts have been to fight the disease or the habits that have brought on the disease.

For example, if you are fighting obesity and have developed high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes, then the first step to recovery is to realize the dire situation in which you find yourself—a situation of sickness that can lead to death. Maybe your doctor has already warned you of an impending stroke or heart attack. When this realization of the gravity of your situation sinks in, you are headed in the right direction. The next step is to develop trust. But trust in what? Some addiction recovery groups say to put your trust in a higher power. Here at NEWSTART, we believe the only Higher Power that is worthy of our complete trust is God, the Creator of the universe, our forever Friend.

Paul, the great writer in the Bible, stated his trust in God like this: “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24, 25). Paul realized the battle was not his, but Christ’s. He realized his own helpless condition—his sickness, if you will. When you come to this point, then you are on the road to recovery—on the road to a NEWSTART! When you recognize that some of your past habits may have contributed to your sickness, then it’s time to “trust.” Trust in the deliverance offered by Jesus Christ. Trust in the power of a God who created you—a God who loves you, and who even died for you. When we feel we cannot change our bad habits, then trust that God can! Hand over control and trust in His power to give you the strength to make the right decisions. The result? Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Paul again expresses his trust in God this way: “Casting all your anxiety upon Him for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Anxiety (or worry) is a state of mistrust and has led to many dire and evil consequences from drug addiction to suicide. It can cause high blood pressure, heart disease and even cancer. Resentment, hate, and anger cause anxiety. Anxiety and resentment may indicate a lack of the necessary trust that leads to a peaceful and content existence (see Matthew 6:25–34). Anxiety is gripping our nation due to natural disasters, economic insecurity, broken families, and social deterioration. This is the time to cast your anxiety upon God and trust *Him*. Won’t you consider giving Him a chance to show you what He can do? He’s waiting to give you strength and comfort like you’ve never had before.

(From “NEWSTART Lifestyle Club” at [newstartclub.com/resources/detail/trust](http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/trust))

**INTO MY HEART** (Sing for Joy, #125)

*Verse 1:* Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus;  
Come in today, come in to stay, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.

*Verse 2:* Out of my heart, out of my heart, shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus;  
Shine out today, shine out always, shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus.

**I'VE GOT PEACE LIKE A RIVER** (He Is Our Song, #87)

*Verse 1:* I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river in my soul.  
I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

*Verse 2:* I've got love like an ocean, I've got love like an ocean,  
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.  
I've got love like an ocean, I've got love like an ocean,  
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.

*Verse 3:* I've got joy like a fountain, I've got joy like a fountain,  
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul.  
I've got joy like a fountain, I've got joy like a fountain,  
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul.

**LET US COME TOGETHER** (Praise Time, #16)

Let us come together, praise the name of Jesus. All you people of the earth come and see.

Let us come together, praise the name of Jesus. All you people of the earth come and hear.

Joy is like the sunshine, and it's raining down upon us.

Joy is like a golden crown. Let us come together, praise the name of Jesus.

Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap] Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap] Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap]

Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap]

Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap] Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap] Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap]

Hal-le-lu-jah! [clap, clap]

**GIVE ME THE BIBLE** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #272)

*Verse 1:* Give me the Bible, star of gladness gleaming, to cheer the wanderer lone and tempest tossed,  
No storm can hide that peaceful radiance beaming, since Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

*Refrain:* Give me the Bible – holy message shining, Thy light shall guide me in the narrow way.  
Precept and promise, law and love combining, ‘till night shall vanish in eternal day.

*Verse 2:* Give me the Bible when my heart is broken, when sin and grief have filled my soul with fear;  
Give me the precious words by Jesus spoken, hold up faith’s lamp to show my Savior near.

*Verse 3:* Give me the Bible, all my steps enlighten, teach me the danger of these realms below;  
That lamp of safety, o’er the gloom shall brighten, that light alone the path of peace can show.

**NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD** (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #495)

*Verse 1:* There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God,  
A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God.

*Refrain:* O Jesus, blest Redeemer, sent from the heart of God,  
Hold us, who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God.

*Verse 2:* There is a place of comfort sweet, near to the heart of God,  
A place where we our Savior meet, near to the heart of God.

*Verse 3:* There is a place of full release, near to the heart of God,  
A place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God.

**MORE ABOUT JESUS** (Sing for Joy, #38)

More about Jesus I would know, more of His grace to others show;  
More of His saving fullness see, more of His love who died for me.

*Refrain:* More, more about Jesus, more, more about Jesus;  
More of His saving fullness see, more of His love who died for me.



## BEING A WITNESS FOR CHRIST

### How to Witness Without Embarrassing God

I gave up on witnessing. It's not that I wasn't grateful for the salvation I have through Jesus. I was grateful and really wanted to tell others about His love and how He changed my life. I took classes on how to share my faith. I memorized scripts. I learned proof texts and how to answer objections. Yet in spite of my best intentions, my efforts failed miserably.

Something that should have been a natural, free-flowing exchange was stiff, awkward, and mechanical. Mine was not a winsome witness. People were put off, and God must have been embarrassed at my misrepresentation of Him. Traditional methods of evangelism just didn't seem to match my personality and spiritual gifts. I was like David wearing Saul's armor. Did I really have to be pushy, insensitive, or confrontational to be an effective witness?

Later, as a pastor, I learned that only about 10 percent of my church members were comfortable sharing their faith using traditional methods. Many of them also gave up on witnessing.

Why would God require a particular model for witnessing and then equip so few of His people to use it successfully? I wondered. I have since discovered a different approach to witnessing, or as I call it, evangelism. If you are ready to build up the kingdom of God, here's how to get started:

**Make Yourself Available.** In the morning, before you start your day, yield yourself to God, and ask Him to use you to impact others for His kingdom. God will always answer this prayer.

**Be Yourself.** God can and will use you just as you are. Don't let personal imperfections and lack of training prevent you from being His witness. Seek training, but if you have a relationship with Jesus, you already know enough. God provides on-the-job training.

**Start With Acquaintances.** Don't concentrate your efforts on strangers. Begin sharing with the people you know. Each of us has a mission field among our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Build on your established relationships, good will, and rapport.

**Minister to Needs.** There can be no impact without contact. Start connecting with the people you know and minister to their needs. Small acts of service and simple gestures of kindness have a bigger impact than spiritual eruptions. We earn the right to share our faith with people when we serve them with no strings attached. We must first minister to people with our hands and ears, and then with our mouths.

**Initiate Spiritual Conversations.** As the spirit leads, use the person's needs, or world or local events, to initiate spiritual conversations. Simple and sincere phrases like "I am praying for you," "God loves you and so do I," or even "God bless you," can open doors for further conversation. Watch for moments of receptivity, and then share a thought—not a sermon.

**Invest and Invite.** God doesn't merely call us to share our faith but to share our life. Don't look for quick results or shortcuts; make long-term investments in people in

order to better their lives. Then spiritual inquiry will be awakened and opportunities to invite friends to church, evangelistic meetings or to join a small Bible study group will arise. Be sure to attend with them and offer to give them a ride. Afterwards, grab a snack and talk about it.

True evangelism is not merely proclaiming a message of good news but also being a warm and loving embodiment of that good news. When this is accomplished with intercessory prayer, miracles will happen, hearts will soften, people will accept Jesus, and God will be glorified.

*\*This article originally appeared in the April 2007 issue of the Columbia Union Visitor and is reprinted with permission. Frank Bondurant is Assistant to the President and Visitor correspondent for the Chesapeake Conference.*

# CELEBRATING YOUR MARRIAGE

## 1. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_

### a. Daily \_\_\_\_\_

When do couples kiss? (list as many as you can think of; e.i. to say hello, etc.):

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### b. Undivided attention

\_\_\_\_\_ minutes each day

\_\_\_\_\_ evening each week

\_\_\_\_\_ day each month

\_\_\_\_\_ weekend each quarter

List other ideas on how to spend those thirty minutes each day to celebrate each other and your relationship:

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### c. Remember when. . . memories of the past

## 2. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_

### a. Put \_\_\_\_\_ on your Calendar

## 3. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_

### a. If this were our last \_\_\_\_\_ together. . .

### b. \_\_\_\_\_ your own marriage.

**4. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_**

- a. Honor your \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Coupons

**5. CELEBRATE YOUR MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_**

- a. Anniversaries
- b. Birthdays
- c. Special \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Write a poem, love song, or love letter
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ to your spouse all over again, but in a different way
- f. 50 Ways to \_\_\_\_\_ Your Lover

**6. CELEBRATE YOUR \_\_\_\_\_**

- a. Celebrate your spouse's \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Make a list of all you like and \_\_\_\_\_ about your spouse.
- c. Celebrate Your \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOURCES**

Craig, Bryan. *Reclaiming Intimacy*. (reprinted in Signs, January 2010)

Kreidman, Ellen. *The 10 Secon Kiss*. Random House: New York, NY. 1998

## RESOURCE I WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

### **Celebrating a Wedding Anniversary, By Anna Lynn Sibal**

In this day and age when getting a divorce is just as common as getting married, celebrating a wedding anniversary has become more important. The longer a couple has been married, the more special each anniversary becomes. The passing of each anniversary makes the vows that couples make when they wed more meaningful, especially that part of the vow that says "Till death do us part."

The way people celebrate a wedding anniversary varies depending on which country they live in and their own traditions surrounding the occasion. In the western world, the first, the fifth, the 10th, the 15th, the 20th, the 25th, the 50th and each anniversary following that are often celebrated lavishly. But it ultimately depends on the married couple how they wish to spend their wedding anniversary.

### **Traditional and Modern Wedding Anniversary Gifts**

Couples celebrating a wedding anniversary are customarily given specific gifts corresponding to the number of years they have been married. According to historians, this custom is a carry-over from the Middle Ages, wherein people believed that tokens given after a certain number of years of a couple's marriage are supposed to bring more luck to the couple. Aside from being tokens of good luck, each gift also represents the irreplaceable investment that the couple has made on each other while they are married.

Here is the list of traditional and modern anniversary gifts as compiled and popularized by the Chicago Public Library:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Modern</b>	<b>Flowers</b>
1st	paper	clocks	carnation
2nd	cotton	china	lily of the valley
3rd	leather	crystal, glass	sunflower
4th	linen, silk	appliances	hydrangea
5th	wood	silverware	daisy
6th	iron	wooden objects	calla lily
7th	wool, copper	desk sets	freesia
8th	bronze linens,	lace	lilac
9th	pottery, china	leather goods	bird of paradise
10th	tin, aluminum	diamond jewelry	daffodil
11th	steel	fashion jewelry	tulip

12th	silk	pearls, colored gems	peony
13th	lace	textiles, furs	chrysanthemum
14th	ivory	gold jewelry	orchid
15th	crystal	watches	rose
16th		silver hollowware	
17th		furniture	
18th		porcelain	
19th		bronze	
20th	china	platinum	aster
21st		brass, nickel	
22nd		copper	
23rd		silver plate	
24th		musical instruments	
25th	silver	sterling silver	iris
30th	pearl	diamond	lily
35th	coral, jade	jade	
40th	ruby	ruby	gladiolus
45th	sapphire	sapphire	
50th	gold	gold	yellow roses
55th	emerald	emerald	
60th	diamond	Diamond	

(<http://www.allweddingideas.com/wedding-anniversary.shtml>)

**RESOURCE II**  
**MARRIAGE PROPOSAL IDEAS - CLASSIC, ROMANTIC AND FUN**

**Romantic Marriage Proposal Ideas.** Here is our list of the most romantic ways to propose.

- Cook her a romantic dinner for two, decorate the table with nice china, candles, cloth napkins, etc. Propose sometime during the dinner.
- Take her out for dinner at your favorite restaurant and arrange with the waiter to write "Will you marry me again?" in chocolate sauce on the rim of her dessert plate.
- Rent a limousine. Propose to her in the limo on the way to or from your special evening. Be sure to bring sparkling cider to celebrate.
- Rent your favorite romantic movie. Make it special with homemade popcorn and her favorite movie treat. Tell her you want your own happy ending by proposing as the credits roll at the end.
- Give her three roses: Tell her one represents the past, one represents the present and the last one represents the future.
- If you enjoy sailing, go for a sunset sail and propose at sea. Remember to bring some food and sparkling cider for a toast.
- Is she a traditional gal? Arrange for a family dinner, propose again at the table.

**Marriage Proposal Ideas Don't Have to be Classic to be Romantic, so Have FUN!**

- Go for a hot air balloon ride and propose as you're watching the sunset. Make sure you bring food and sparkling cider and celebrate with a toast.
- Send her on a treasure hunt. Provide clues all over town to your favorite spots or just around the house. The last hint should lead her to you, sparkling cider, and a greeting card.

Adapted from (<http://www.danforthdiamond.com/marriage-proposal-ideas/>)

**RESOURCE III**  
**50 Ways to Woo Your Lover**  
By Gregory J.P. Godek

So you want to do something special for your beloved, but you're stumped for ideas. Whether you want a gesture that's creative, outrageous, affordable, quick or classic, we've got the answer.

**Creative**

Looking for some fun ways to add romance to your relationship? Try these creative romance tips:

1. Give your lover a dozen roses -- and do it with a creative twist. Give eleven red roses and one white rose. Attach a note that reads: "In every bunch there's one who stands out -- and you are that one."
2. Fake a power outage at home. (Loosen the fuses or throw the breaker switches.) With no TV to tempt you . . . with no computer to occupy you . . . with no furnace to heat you . . . you pretty much have no choice but to get out the candles, huddle around the fireplace and be romantic!
3. Get your partner a wristwatch. Inscribe it with: "I always have time for you."
4. Attach a \$100 bill to a Victoria's Secret catalog, along with a note to him saying, "You choose."
5. Identify that one pivotal event that brought the two of you together. Celebrate that event every year.
6. Practice even-day/odd-day romance: On even days it's your turn to be romantic, and on odd days it's your partner's turn.
7. Following a bubble bath you've prepared for her, wrap her in a towel that you've warmed up in the dryer.
8. Write your partner a love letter or poem on one sheet of paper. Glue it to thin cardboard, cut it up into puzzle-shaped pieces, then mail all the pieces. Or, mail one puzzle piece per day!
9. Remove all the paper strips (that say "Kisses" on them) from a couple hundred Hershey's Kisses. Fill a jewelry box with them. Wrap 'em up and present them to your partner. Write a certificate explaining that the slips are coupons redeemable for one kiss each.
10. Doesn't your partner deserve a trophy for being the "World's Best Lover"? Trophy shops have a wealth of ideas waiting for you. Just think of the romantic possibilities of plaques, medals, ribbons, nameplates, certificates and banners. And they all can be personalized, engraved, lettered or monogrammed.



## Outrageous

To make a big impression, consider these outrageous romance tips:

1. Visit a karaoke bar and surprise your lover by getting up and singing "your song" to him/her.
2. Kidnap her! Blindfold her. Drive her around town until she's thoroughly lost. Then reveal your destination: Her favorite restaurant, or maybe a romantic inn.
3. Make a GIANT greeting card out of a big cardboard box, (such as the type used to pack a refrigerator).
4. Does your partner love M&M's? Fill a one-gallon glass jar with them as a gift.
5. Want to jazz up the presentation of a special meal? Buy a little hunk of dry ice from a local ice house. Put it in a bowl of water and place it on your serving tray. You'll create wondrous, billowing white clouds!
6. Call your partner from work, every-hour-on-the-hour, just to say "I love you."
7. Slow-dance at a restaurant -- when there's no music playing. (\*\*\*)
8. It's romantic -- but commonplace -- to eat dinner by candlelight. So here's a change of pace: Eat breakfast by candlelight.
9. Take your lover on a surprise two-week vacation to Paris.
10. Many couples have "His" and "Hers" matching towels, but here are some other ideas: "His" and "Hers" matching silk pajamas, motorcycles, T-shirts, overnight bags (have them packed at all times), jack-o'-lanterns at Halloween, rocking chairs, Porsches, heart-shaped tattoos, Christmas tree ornaments, tennis rackets, beach towels.

## Affordable

Short on cash but big on love? Try these affordable romance tips:

1. Spend the entire day watching romantic movies.
2. If you'd like to spend a romantic summer night making wishes on falling stars, mark the second week in August on your calendar. The earth passes through the Perseid meteor belt around August 12 every year, which usually results in spectacular meteor showers for two to three nights.
3. Buy a lottery ticket. Give it to your partner with a little note attached: "I hit the jackpot when I married you!" (\*\*\*)
4. Pick flowers for your partner from the side of the road.
5. Write a short note to your lover that's spread out over several postcards, then mail the cards one at a time. You'll build anticipation for the romantic conclusion on the final postcard. (Maybe deliver that last one in person.)

6. If you're not much of a writer, create an audio love letter. Sit down with a tape recorder and just talk to her for ten minutes. Then giftwrap it and mail it to her.
7. Don't just go out to a movie on Saturday, like always. Call your partner from work on Wednesday and formally ask for a date. (\*\*\*)
8. Call a local radio station and request a special love song to be dedicated to your partner. Make sure he or she is listening!
9. Make a custom certificate for your lover. (You can get blank certificate forms at a stationery or paper store.) Here are some suggestions: A certificate "For Putting Up With Me Over the Years," an award for "The World's Best Wife," a ribbon "For Hugs & Kisses Above and Beyond the Call of Duty."
10. Mail your partner a Rolodex card with your name and number on it. Write on it: "Your instant resource for love. Call when lonely."

### **Quick**

If you don't have as much time as you'd like for love, try these swift but sweet romance tips:

1. Write "I love you" on the bathroom mirror with a piece of soap.
2. Place a little love note or poem under the driver's-side windshield wiper of his or her car.
3. Every once in a while, kiss her hand with a flourish. Note: The proper way to kiss a woman's hand is to lower your lips to her hand. You don't raise her hand to your lips.
4. Have "your song" playing on the stereo when your partner returns home from work.
5. When out together in public, wink at your partner from across the room.
6. On your partner's birthday, send a thank-you card to his/her mother.
7. Unplug the TV. Put a note on the screen saying, "Turn me on instead."
8. Make a toast to one another every time you hold a drink. Make eye contact. Take turns making the toast. Whisper it.
9. Get the whole "family of products" in the fragrance of her favorite perfume (bath powder, soaps, cremes, candles, etc.)
10. Call your partner from work for no other reason than to say, "I love you."

## Classic

Looking for a tried-and-true method for declaring your love? Consider these classic romance tips:

1. Spread rose petals all over the bedroom.
2. What could be more classic than a fine gold locket with your photo inside? (Maybe a photo of the two of you.)
3. Bring home one small, unexpected gift each week.
4. Write a classic, romantic, passionate, handwritten, heartfelt love letter. Most adults haven't written a love letter since high school. (Why not? Have we lost our youthful idealism, or have we just gotten lazy?)
5. When traveling, give your partner a bouquet of roses; one rose for each day that you'll be away. Attach a note that says something like this: "These three roses represent the three days I'll be away from you. They also symbolize the love, joy, and laughter we share together."
6. Say "I love you" at least three times a day.
7. Guys: Surprise her by performing one of her chores for her. (And not something easy like carrying the groceries in from the car, but something that requires some time and effort -- like cooking all the meals over a weekend, or cleaning the entire house.)
8. Ladies: Send him a letter sealed with a kiss. (Use your reddest lipstick.)
9. Hold hands.
10. On your yearly romantic checklist, make plans for Valentine's Day -- well in advance!

From 1001 Ways to Be Romantic

(<http://www.rd.com/living-healthy/50-ways-to-woo-your-lover/article12676.html>)

## SERVICES OF PASTORS AND THE CHURCH

### PASTORAL SERVICES

Pastors are ordained as shepherds of the church to nurture and guide. Though there are some variations in the types of services provided to members by the pastor(s), the following are typical of most ministers of the gospel. Talk with your pastor to discuss any these services.

**Baptism** affirms joining the family of God, and sets one apart for a life of ministry in the church and community. Around the 5th grade children may begin thinking about giving their hearts to Jesus. Studies for children and adults are available to all who are interested.

**Child Dedication** is a beautiful way for parents to bring their children before the Lord, much as parents brought children to Jesus to receive a special blessing. Infants and young children can be dedicated in this Sabbath morning service.

**Funeral Services**, memorial services, and graveside services are provided to families of the church who suffer the loss of one of our members. Pastors may be available to assist with services for relatives and non-members.

**House Blessing** is a special prayer service often requested by couples who purchase or build their first home, or whenever they purchase or move into a new home. It is a service to invite God to bless the love, unity, and spiritual growth of the family living there, and to be a witness to the neighborhood of the saving love of Jesus.

**Prayer for the Sick** and *Anointing Services* is based on James 5:14, 15, which encourages members to invite the elders of the church to pray for the sick and anoint one with oil in the name of the Lord. This is not a last rite, but often conducted for serious physical illnesses.

**Wedding Services** are provided to couples who want to unite their lives in holy wedlock. It is a spiritual celebration entered into with solemnity. Your pastors require couples to participate in pre-marital counseling before the service date is set.

**Counseling** to individuals and couples is provided on a short-term basis to persons struggling with marital problems, crisis, parenting issues, grief recovery, and other personal issues. Long-term counseling is provided through referrals to competent Christian counselors in our community.

**Home Visitation** is conducted by the pastors in homes of members with an emphasis on shut-ins, the ill, and those needing spiritual encouragement. Because of the size of some churches, pastors may not visit every home every year. Church elders and other members also conduct visitation on behalf of the church. Members may request a visit in their homes at any time.

**Hospital Visitation** is also provided, most often by pastoral staff and elders, to each member whether to celebrate the joy of a new birth or in the event of an illness or injury. Family members and friends are encouraged to notify the pastor or church office when a member is in the hospital.

### SERVICES OF THE CHURCH

**Sabbath Worship** services are conducted every Saturday, usually following Sabbath school in the morning. The fourth commandment calls us to remember the Sabbath day. Coming together

for Bible study, song, giving of offerings and fellowship on a regular basis builds up the heart of every believer.

**Communion Service** is a quarterly occasion during Sabbath morning worship that is a solemn, heart-searching service. It is also marked with joy over remembering Christ's death for our sins and the anticipation of meeting with Jesus again. All members are encouraged to receive the blessing from attending this service and the Ordinance of Humility (foot washing service) preceding.

**Sabbath School** is a time for every member to deepen their understanding of Scripture, a time to pray together, and a time to think of ways to reach out beyond our church. Children's classes are provided for every age group. Many churches provide several adult class options.

**Prayer Meeting** and small group Bible studies are provided to nurture members in their walk with Christ during the week, between worship services. Some groups meet in members' homes. Topics of study cover a wide range. Prayer for individuals needs and the church are encouraged.

**Church Fellowship** meetings are often held for members to become more acquainted with one another and encourage each other. These social meetings often happen in the evenings and members are welcome to bring non-member friends and family.

**Church Potluck** (Fellowship Dinners) occur after worship services in many churches. Members and guests are encouraged to enjoy the fellowship of a vegetarian meal. Since guests are not providing food, members are asked to bring a little more so everyone can be served.

**Church Business Meetings** are conducted a couple times a year to provide an opportunity for every member to hear reports on the work of the church and provide a voice and vote on the future direction of the church. All members are encouraged to attend.

**Church Board Meetings** are held on a monthly basis to guide the leaders of the church in the spiritual nurture of all, evangelism, upholding our doctrinal purity, upholding Christian standards, membership changes, finances, care of property, and coordination of departments. Members may choose to attend unless the board votes to have a closed meeting on particular issues.

**Christian Education** is a high value in the Seventh-day Adventist church and many local churches have an elementary school in which children may attend. Sometimes a cluster of churches share the responsibilities of the church school. The Adventist church also provides high schools (both day academies and boarding academies) along with colleges and universities to train youth for a life of service to God and others.

There are many other ministries and services in your local church. Contact your pastor or a church leader to learn more about what is available.



Research shows that between 30 and 50 percent of new members who are baptized do not stick to the church. They fall away. Sometimes we notice only after it has been several months or even years. What happened to them? Where did they go? Why did they leave? And, most importantly, what could we have done to help them stay connected to God's family?

*Welcome to the Family* will help you integrate newly baptized members into the local congregation. It involves inviting the entire church, including new members, to attend one program per week over a period of six weeks. These sessions will work like glue to bond people to the church.

Each 90-minute program begins with a fellowship meal and music, followed by a time of learning about health, spiritual and church dynamics, and, most importantly, family and relationship issues. Reproducible handouts for each session are included in this manual.

Sessions include:

- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Love Works
- Parenting
- Growing in Christ
- Celebrating Your Church Family

Improve new member retention by hosting a *Welcome to the Family* program in your church and helping all members build friendships, strengthen family bonds, and improve their relationships.

AdventSource

