



# A Family Spiritual Growth Guide

When it comes to spiritual development and perpetuating your faith, the home is God's "Plan A". In Deuteronomy it says,

"Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."  
(Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

The home is where God's values and identity in Christ are learned and lived out. We want to encourage everyone to take responsibility and initiative to make Christ the centre of their individual lives but also within each home. The Church also has a role to play. The Church exists as God's "Plan B" to equip, resource and support individuals, parents and children in their faith journey. We want to help you, as parents, to assist your family in starting or continuing to develop your faith no matter what age or stage your kids are at.

The purpose of this family spiritual growth guide is to help you reflect on the role God plays in your family life and to help you lead your family spiritually. We want to help build a bridge from Plan B (the church) to Plan A (your home) so that your family will be transformed by God and your family will have a transforming impact in your community. As you reflect, create goals and take tangible steps in your faith we hope you will see how God is transforming you and your family and moving you to a more Christ-centred life. You will *never* regret investing in the spiritual development of your family.

## **As you begin, consider the following questions.**

What is your vision for your family?

How do you want to grow spiritually (become more like Christ) as an individual and as a family unit?

- How do you want to see each family member empowered?
- How do you want each family member to become a better decision maker?
- How do you want your family to grow in how they handle conflict with one another?
- What kinds of spiritual conversations do you want to have in your family?
- How do you want to see each family member transformed by God?
- How can you create moments where you and your family are positively influencing one another's lives and the lives of those around you?
- What do you want your kids to remember about how you incorporated God into your life?

These are big questions, but there is no need to worry or stress because we serve a God who wants to walk alongside us and who is ready to empower you, as a parent, to lead your family spiritually.

## Beginning your Spiritual Growth Journey

### 1. PUT GOD FIRST!

Being intentional is important. Creating moments and taking the time to encourage each other spiritually can help grow your family in many areas such as: developing a sense of security, strength, love and hope; creating a sense purpose; developing humility, generosity and integrity, and learning to value others.

In the Old Testament there is a Jewish prayer, called the Shema. It is an encouragement to all believers and says, "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

What does it mean to love God in these ways?

- A. Love God with all of your Heart – reflect on God’s redemption plan for you and your family; recognize God as your saviour and satisfier; commit to aligning your will, desires, passions, affections and perceptions with God’s; talk to God and connect with him in worship and prayer
- B. Love God with all your Soul – decide to allow everything about you as a person reflect your belief that God is Lord over all. Love God with your heart **and** love him by how you talk, what you do with your hands, how you use your talents, how you react to challenges, how you treat others, etc.
- C. Love God with all your Strength – commit to loving God with your resources; it is not just about your physical muscle, but everything that belongs to you – which includes your family, house, tools, electronics, time, etc.; actively participate in things that God smiles on
- D. Love God with all your Mind – continue to learn and grow in your faith by reading the Bible, learning from others and engaging in Christian community so that your thoughts and attitudes begin to align with God’s

There is a story in the book of Mark about a man who asked God to help his unbelief. We can also ask God to help us in areas where we don’t love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. It is important to remember that God wants us to rely on Him and His power – even when it comes to loving Him. As time goes by our love and affection for God can grow. As we choose to love God in these ways, he is simultaneously transforming us, making us more Christ-centred and using our lives to influence those around us.

### 2. IDENTIFY WHERE YOU ARE AS A FAMILY & YOUR FAMILY’S SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

Where you are as a family?

Every family moves through various stages of development – each of which brings its own unique set of challenges and growth opportunities. No matter how your family came to be every family will travel through 5 specific seasons. As you begin to contemplate what action steps to take in order to help your family grow spiritually it is important to recognize your family’s current life-season.

Are you...

- A young couple or couple with no children?
- Family with young children? Pre-teens? Teens?
- Empty nest?

What is our spiritual pathway?

Every family is unique in its personality, values, stories, tastes, loves, strengths or weaknesses. In his book *Sacred Pathways*, Gary Thomas suggests that every individual is uniquely “wired” by God to connect with Him in a special way through a particular “sacred pathway”. He names 9 pathways: Naturalist (connects best with God when out in Creation), Intellectual (when using the mind), Contemplative (through devotion/adoration), Ascetics (through solitude & simplicity), Activist (bringing social change), Enthusiast (when celebrating), Caregiver (when compassionately serving others), Sensate (through the senses), and Traditionalist (through ritual/ceremony & symbol). Some may have a combination of these pathways.

If this is true for individuals, it may be true for families as well! Your family may have a unique way in which it best connects with God. If this is the case, by figuring out what your spiritual pathway is you can better determine what activities will help you grow closer to God as a family, while having fun together!

### 3. TAKE ACTION!

At The Olive Branch we believe, as followers of Jesus, we need to be Belong, Believe, Become and Bless! These fundamental next-steps find a unique expression in your home!

To BELONG means you love and are loved, accept and are accepted, serve and are served. You can do this by interacting and participating in the local church and intentionally cultivate relationships that help one another grow in Christ! Have your kids or teens participate in Kids Branch or Encounter Youth and you, as parents, could join a Life Group. Get involved as a family and meet people! God doesn't want us to be isolated or do life alone. Ask God to help you find friends - second families, that you can do life with and will encourage you on your spiritual journey!

To BELIEVE means to make a faith commitment. Do you believe that the Bible is God revealing Himself and His will to us? Do you believe that there is one God, existing in three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Do you believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, in His death and resurrection, that He is the only mediator between God and humanity and He is coming again in glory and power? Do you believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to work in us and to help us to live a godly life?

To BECOME means to grow as a follower of Jesus. Galatians 5:22-23 says that the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Encourage the growth of these fruits by modelling them and encouraging their development within your children.

To BLESS means to serve and help others as an act of love and kindness. Find ways to show kindness and compassion to others through opportunities within the church or out in the community. When families serve, families thrive! You will grow as a family when you give of yourself and you express God's love to others.

As you develop your family spiritual growth plan and put it into action we believe it will be transformative in your family's life. May you rely on God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit as you continue on this journey and as your family moves through the different stages of development.



# Our Family Spiritual Growth Plan

Growth Season Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Our Family's Current Season of Development is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our Family's Sacred Pathway may be: \_\_\_\_\_

## **BELONG**

experiencing and cultivating Christ-centred relationships

What are 1-2 specific ways you'll seek to enjoy deeper BELONGING in your family over the next 90 days?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **BELIEVE & BECOME**

pursuing spiritual transformation via God's Word & spiritual practices

What are 1-2 specific ways you'll focus on spiritual growth in your family over the next 90 days?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **BLESS**

express acts of kindness or compassion toward others

What are 1-2 specific ways you'll BLESS more deliberately in/through your family over the next 90 days?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Our Family is Committed

When it comes to growing in Christ and living out our faith in Him, we commit – in God’s strength – to do this at home. We will seek deeper belonging, to believe and become as we pursue spiritual growth, and to purposefully bless others.

Together, we will help each other and hold each other accountable to achieve the goals we have chosen – not legalistically, but lovingly – in order that Christ may be fully formed in our hearts and relationships.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...

as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!”

Joshua 24:15