



# Drive Faith Home™

## CHURCH STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Many churches struggle to implement practical strategies to reach and disciple busy families. These key measures are based on best-practices identified by an alliance of leading churches as summarized in the attached article.

## YOUR CHURCH'S ASSESSMENT

Answer the questions on page two to score the current reality at your church.

### REACH ASSESSMENT

- 3-6** We struggle to effectively reach families in our community and need help with the right content and tools. *Don't despair! We can help.*
- 7-11** We are making some connections with families in our community but need help with optimizing our content and tools. *Let us show you how to best optimize what you have!*
- 12-15** We effectively reach families in our community! *Great job! Ask us how to add free google ads to your strategy.*

### DISCIPLESHIP ASSESSMENT

- 10-25** We are just starting and/or struggling to effectively implement a workable strategy for moving families at our church to be intentional at home. *Don't give up! We can help.*
- 26-40** We are moving forward and have started to change and/or implement initiatives to move families at our church to be intentional at home. *Keep going! Let us show you the latest tools.*
- 41-50** We have effectively implemented practical strategies for family discipleship at home and see families regularly engage these strategies. *Great job! Ask us how to use the new low-cost, simple implementation tools going forward.*

Learn more at [DriveFaithHome.com](http://DriveFaithHome.com)

Honestly assess your church's present reality in each category. Then total your scores.

### Scoring Scale

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

## REACHING BUSY FAMILIES

### NEW FAMILIES VISIT US

We have a steady stream of young families visit and engage with our church each week.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### LOCAL FAMILIES FIND US

When local families search felt-need topics online (e.g. marriage or parenting challenges) they tend to find our church as the source of support and guidance.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### SEARCH ENGINES LIKE US

We incorporate family-oriented content and structure our web metadata to show among the top results when local families search felt-need topics.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

**Total REACH Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCIPLING BUSY FAMILIES

### EMPOWER A VISIONARY CHAMPION

We have clearly established which senior leader is responsible for keeping family discipleship objectives on the entire team's radar screen.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### "TWO-DEGREE" STRATEGIES

We effectively start small and build momentum over time rather than try to change everything all at once or chase the latest ministry program fad.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### ESTABLISH NEW MEASURES

We have introduced simple measures beyond attendance and finances to stay focused on family-centered strategies and drive improvement.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### USE EXISTING TIME SLOTS

We use the existing time-slots and ministries to strengthen families rather than creating additional programs and events to engage families.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### SUPPORT EXISTING VISION

Our family-ministry model builds on the existing church vision without competing with or trying to change the existing strategy.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### "HOME LENS" FOR ALL

Every area of our church applies a faith-at-home lens to what they already do instead of creating additional or separate programming.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### CULTURE OF INTENTIONALITY

We effectively find ways to communicate the priority and equip the practices of family intentionality as a part of our church culture.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### CUSTOMIZATION IS KEY

We consistently provide tools for every family life-season, regardless of the ages of children, marital status, or special circumstances in their home.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### INVEST IN TOOLS FOR FAMILIES

We include a portion of our regular budget to invest in tools that make it easier and more likely families will become intentional at home, beyond budgeting for programming and curriculum when they are on our campus.

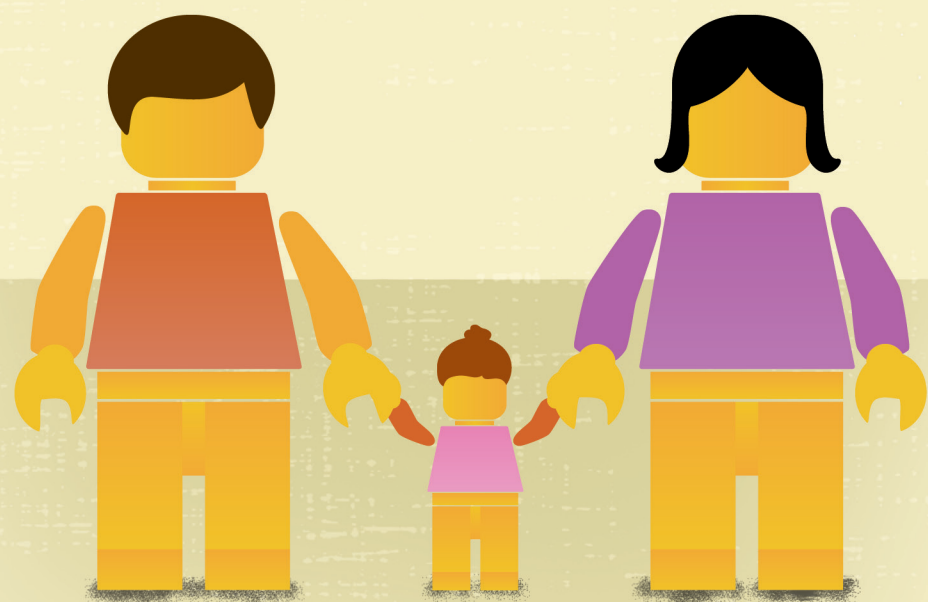
1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

### GIVE VISION FOR THE HOME

We give families a vision of what success at home means and repeatedly call them to commitment and intentionality.

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

**Total DISCIPLE Score:** \_\_\_\_\_



BY KURT AND OLIVIA BRUNER

# BEST PRACTICES IN FAMILY MINISTRY

Collective wisdom from innovative leaders

## The senior pastor calls a meeting to discuss an exciting new vision for families in your church.

As one who has demonstrated a passion for kids, you eagerly anticipate the dialogue because you've felt like a "voice crying in the wilderness" when it comes to the need to engage parents in the faith passing process. You have quoted the statistics that most kids raised in church reject Christian faith by the time they become adults. You've insisted that the problem is not what's happening at church but what desperately needs to happen at home. But until now you have been unable to gain traction with senior leadership. Maybe this will be the day your dream becomes reality. Maybe others will finally come to realize that the home is the primary context for faith formation.

Thirty minutes later, you leave the pastor's office with mixed feelings. The good news: You've been asked to drive a church-wide strategy for families. The bad news: You've been asked to drive a church-wide strategy for families. Now what? It's one thing to identify a problem. It is quite another to be handed a blank sheet of paper and be given the daunting task of creating a workable solution.

Over the past decade, more and more senior pastors have realized the church needs to inspire and equip families if we hope to turn the tide of declining faith in the next generation. More often than not, they look to the children's and student ministry teams to take the lead. Translation: On top of the endless challenge of recruiting children's ministry volunteers and preparing curriculum, you must also figure out how to engage Mom and Dad in the spiritual formation process.

## Building Momentum

Where does one begin? In 2007 a network of leading church leaders began a dialogue on how to create a culture of intentional families. The Strong Families Innovation Alliance gathered several times per year to discuss the problem of declining faith in the next generation and to create innovative strategies for turning the tide. The Alliance included senior pastors, executive pastors, children's pastors, student pastors, small group pastors and others from a wide range of church traditions. It included some of the largest mega-churches in the nation all the way down to churches with a few hundred in weekly attendance. Every member of the Alliance was an active practitioner in a local church, wrestling with the weekly realities of ministry while trying to advance strategies that might make a difference.

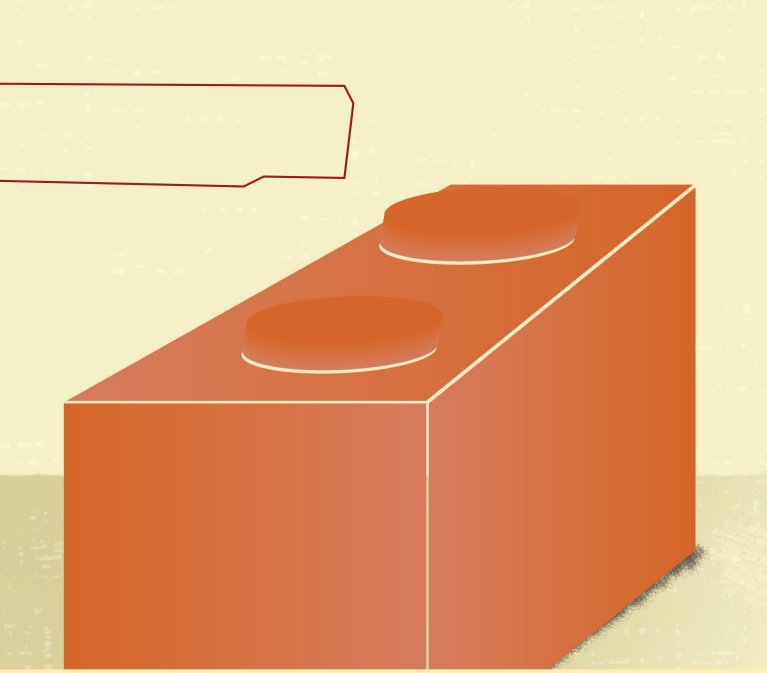
During the first two Alliance gatherings, we discussed the present reality and explored best practices among churches for creating a culture of intentional families. The same steps are vital for any local church leader trying to build momentum.

### STEP ONE: CLARIFY PRESENT REALITY

Start by honestly assessing current perceptions within your church. Commonly identified trends include:

#### Family Ministry = Children's Ministry

Unfortunately, when church leaders hear "family ministry" they typically limit their thinking to "children's ministry." As a result, very few develop high-level strategies to drive marriage or parenting intentionality. ►



What gets measured gets done. Introduce simple measures that will keep you focused on family-centered strategies and drive continual improvement.

#### Marriage Ministry = Annual Event

Similarly, when church leaders hear “marriage ministry” they tend to think of an annual retreat or event rather than an ongoing strategy for building God-honoring marriages.

#### Best Case = Secondary Priority

Most church leaders acknowledge that family-oriented ministry is a second or third tier priority in their church.

#### Worst Case = Off Radar Screen

Many churches don’t even have a value statement about the home, so programs driving family intentionality are completely off the strategic radar screen.

#### Need = Integrated Strategies

While many churches have created isolated programs for families—often in the form of life-stage classes, which separate rather than integrate family faith experiences—what we need are integrated strategies that will create an ongoing culture of intentional families.

Research indicates that the decline of strong families means we are swimming in different water than in the past. Even the more conservative estimates tell us we are becoming a nation of unbelievers as fewer people associate themselves with any form of Christian faith. Be careful to use only credible studies, since many over quoted reports lack veracity. The situation is bad enough without overstating the numbers, such as: most self-described unbelievers in this country are former church kids. Only about half of those who attend church with their parents remain active believers as adults.

Most churches affirm the priority of faith at home, but they struggle to develop workable strategies. Ask your leadership team to honestly assess which of the following best describes the present reality in your church.

**Just Starting.** We are just beginning to craft a vision for families in order to get these issues on our leadership team radar screen.

**Moving Forward.** We have begun changing existing or creating new programs that will move family from a third tier to a second or first tier emphasis.

**Full Throttle.** We have launched a senior leadership team initiative with the goal of developing an integrated strategy for driving faith into the home.

#### STEP TWO: DISCOVER BEST PRACTICES

The Strong Families Innovation Alliance identified ten components that are essential to building a customized strategy for church-driven, family-centered redemption. Consider these the ten “Lego piece” shapes essential to any model.

**Empower a visionary champion.** If everyone owns it, no one does. Make it clear which senior leader is responsible for keeping spiritual formation at home objectives on the team’s radar screen.

**Establish new success measures.** What gets measured gets done. Introduce simple measures that will keep you focused on family-centered strategies and drive continual improvement.

**Build upon existing church vision.** Do not compete with or criticize the existing vision. Build upon it to drive family-centered strategies. Don’t call the church to change everything, but to make everything more effective.

**Build into the existing church calendar.** Include experiences on the church calendar that will move people toward greater intentionality, rather than try to squeeze them in as exceptions or special events. The more “auto-pilot” your family emphasis game plan, the easier it will be for everyone.

**Use “home” lens.** As a priority, every area of the church must own the family ministry vision. And, every department and program needs to apply “faith at home” lenses to what they are doing, rather than creating another program competing for attention and resources.

**Define success and call families to commitment.**

Give families a vision of what success at home means and repeatedly call them to commitment and intentionality.

**Foster a culture of family intentionality.** Find ways to communicate the priority and celebrate the practice of families becoming intentional.

**Customization – one size won’t fit all.** Every family is unique due to their life-season, ages and number of children, marital health, and special circumstances. Provide tools that make it easy for families to customize.

**Invest in tools for families.** Just like we invest in curriculum for Sunday school, we need to invest in tools that will make it easier for families to do the right thing.

**Two degree strategies.** A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow. It is better to start small and build momentum than try to change everything all at once or achieve complete buy-in from all sectors.

Using these ten “Lego piece” shapes, Alliance churches went on to create a variety of models that fit their unique needs.

#### Keep It Simple

Some strategies are more difficult to implement than others. Intergenerational services, for example, often involve logistical challenges and can face resistance from age-segmented ministries that have an existing agenda. That’s why it is often best to start with low-lying fruit—strategies that will reach the greatest number of people with the fewest leadership headaches.

At Lake Pointe Church, for example, we recognize that most people will only give the church one or two time slots per week—usually a worship service and small group. Asking them for a third time slot (i.e. a Saturday morning parenting workshop), dramatically decreases the percentage of the congregation that will participate. Because our goal is to create a church-wide culture of intentionality, we decided to leverage “main-street” ministries to accomplish two simple strategic objectives.

**MAKE IT EASY** for families to do the right thing with “bite-sized” ideas for marriage and family intentionality.

**MAKE IT MORE LIKELY** that families will become intentional with periodic campaigns that inspire them to create a plan for the next 120 days.

As you consider your next steps, we encourage you to glean from the collective wisdom of other innovative leaders by downloading a free executive summary from the Strong Families Innovation Alliance at [www.DriveFaithHome.com](http://www.DriveFaithHome.com). You can also view video clips highlighting best practices from a growing network of church leaders. ❧

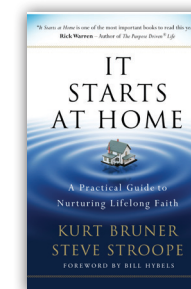
Most of us are called to worship God through the intimacy of marriage and the blessing of children. So we must understand Christian teaching on the purpose and priority of the home summarized as follows.

**SHOW CHRIST** - Every marriage is intended to be a masterpiece reflecting THE marriage between God and His people. (Gen. 1:27, Gen. 15, Jer. 3, Eph. 5:22-33, Rev. 21:9)

**RAISE BELIEVERS** - Those blessed with the gift of children are called to disciple the next generation as life’s greatest priority. (Ex. 20, Deut. 6, Psalm 78:1-8, Eph. 6:1-4)

**BE JESUS** - A strong Christian family is where The Word becomes Flesh and Blood as we conform our lives to the image and example of Christ. (John 1:14, Phil. 2, I Tim. 3, I John 3:16)

Excerpt from *It Starts at Home* by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope. Learn more at [www.DriveFaithHome.com](http://www.DriveFaithHome.com)



Kurt and Olivia Bruner work with Lake Pointe Church where they host HomePointe, an integrated strategy for creating a culture of intentional families. Kurt is the Pastor of Spiritual Formation and author of several books including *The Family Night Tool Chest* and *It Starts at Home*. Olivia is the author of *The Minivan Years* and serves as a volunteer leader in children’s ministry. The Bruners have four children.



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## Next Steps...

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**Easter@Home:** Give your families more than bunnies and candy to celebrate the true meaning of Holy Week

**Rekindle Your Marriage:** Great ideas for couples to draw closer to one another

**Intentional Parenting:** Fun ways parents can engage their children and teens at home, including...Parent/Teen Movie Chats, Mealtime Conversations, Bedtime Blessings, Family Activities

**Intentional Grandparenting:** Creative ideas for grandparents to engage and invest in the next generation.

**My Faith Path:** Age-specific strategies for parents to shape the faith of their children