



HOW TO EQUIP AND PREPARE PARENTS

Becoming an FTD-Friendly Church

LUNCHTIME CONVERSATION REFLECTION

Sikunye seeks to equip and support churches to care for families in the First Thousand Days (FTD). This reflection is part of a range of Lunchtime Conversations hosted by Sikunye, aimed at equipping churches to become FTD-Friendly.

Listen to audio recording [here](#)

Watch the video recording [here](#)

1 Corinthians 12 v 27 - 31

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts."

HOW DO YOU EQUIP AND PREPARE PARENTS IN YOUR CHURCH?

FTD-Friendly Churches are seeking to enable loving connections by equipping and preparing parents in the First Thousand Days with correct knowledge, practical tools, love and care. This can be done in a formal way (such as delivering a programme or a parenting workshop) or an informal way (such as an older man mentoring a first-time dad or helping mom practice things like changing a nappy).



A good question to ask is:

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN YOUR CHURCH THAT CAN BE REPURPOSED TO EQUIP AND PREPARE PARENST IN THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS?

In your church, God has put various gifts and strengths in congregants. They can play a part in preparing moms, dads, and caregivers. Consider those older fathers who can mentor new dads, grannies in the congregation can encourage and give important information and so on. You might be able to host a specific training course or send out good and relevant information. Parents who feel connected and cared for are better equipped and connected to care for their children; and this has a positive impact on the child's brain growth - with lifelong impact. Some ideas of what you can do in your church are:

- **Expecting parents' course** to prepare mom and dad to remain connected as a couple, focusing on their marriage and how to keep it strong when baby comes.
- **Home-Visiting ministry** to visit expecting and new moms in their homes, connecting with moms to feel supported whilst encouraging dads to engage with baby and breaking the myths in culture
- **Grandparents** to connect with their grandchildren, especially grandfathers – and including the extended family to engage and be involved in the early years of a child's life
- **Older dads or me mentoring young fathers** – this can be done informally or through the Fathers Matters Groups
- **Older women** to walk a journey with young moms
- **Flourish** antenatal and postnatal classes to share the latest and correct information to expecting and new moms
- **Life groups or Bible Study groups** with families with children of the same age: on one week moms meet, next week dads meet, another week it is joint group so that relationships build between the moms, dads and families
- **Moms & tots WhatsApp group or Dads & tots WhatsApp group**



Your church can help parents feel confident and prepared to positively go through this new season of life.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO EQUIP AND PREPARE PARENTS?

FTD-friendly churches do what they can, with what they have, to prepare families in the church and their community to provide the building blocks in a nurturing relationship with their child. This might involve partnering with an organisation to use their material or referring families to that service.

Explore structured formal ways to equip and prepare parents such as:

- Start a formal [programme for fathers](#) like [Fathers Matter Connect Groups](#).
- Run **parenting events** and invite guest speakers to talk about relevant topics, such as [The Parent Centre](#)
- Run an **expecting parents course** to discuss marriage and the arrival of a new baby.
- Offer [Flourish Antenatal and Postnatal classes](#). Find a volunteer in your church to be trained to become a Flourish Host or find a host in your area that you can refer moms to
- Follow [Embrace](#) movement for mothers
- Share quality trusted information:
 - Sikunye's [caring for families](#) page;
 - [Side-by-Side](#);
 - [Messages4Mothers](#);
 - [Do More Parenting](#) Resource page;
 - [How to raise a healthy and happy child](#)



Build parents confidence through informal ways such as:

- Set up a **WhatsApp Group** for new moms or dads for group peer learning and support
- **Share quality trusted information.** (See above)
- **Create spaces for shared peer learning** to take place like a mom's or dad's or an expecting parent's group to connect
- **Journey with new fathers** through involving older men in the church
- **Read blogs, [Afrodaddy](#) and [The Dad Dude](#)**

REMEMBER TO:

- **[Listen to families](#)** and ask them what would help them feel equipped and prepared
- Look at our **[Get Equipped](#)** webpage for upcoming training and resources