



# HOW TO...

## talk to your pastor about the first thousand days

Tips on what to say to inspire your church leaders to see the great opportunity the church has, to give children a strong start to life.

So, you have attended Sikunye's **The Church & Early Event** and you are stirred to see the whole of your church strengthen and care for families. You might want to start a First Thousand Days team, or perhaps you already have one. We believe that pastors and church leaders should be aware of any new activities aimed at families in the church in this unique stage of life, and that it is crucial that a team serving in the church has the blessing of the leaders, and do not 'run ahead' of the leaders or do things without their permission. It may feel like it slows things down in the beginning, but it is essential that your church leaders are aware and bought into the teams and plans. But perhaps your pastor is not in agreement or does not know about the importance of the first thousand days. So, how do you have a conversation with your church leader to tell him/her about the opportunity your church has in being part of writing a new story for the future of South Africa?

You might know your pastor very well, or perhaps you are new to the church. You might have a range of leaders that you want to talk to. You might have a good relationship with the wife of the pastor, and that could be a good place to start a conversation. Wherever you find yourself, we want to share some tips from what we have learned from others who have shared the big idea with their church leaders.

### articles to read

To help you out here are links to articles that we believe will help you speak on the topic and inspire your leaders as to why the church is uniquely positioned to support and create loving connections with families. You may print these out to give to your leaders to read.

- [South Africa's Great Potential](#) – a blog on the big idea and the opportunity it presents

- [Parents First](#) – a blog sharing how essential it is to focus on the parents for the child's wellbeing
- [In the absence of the village mothers struggle most](#) – a blog sharing the great need there is for communities to be surrounding mothers, fathers and caregivers.
- [Giving all children a strong start to life](#) – a brochure with more information to share with your pastor

## videos to watch

These are some inspirational videos to get your leaders thinking – they may also be used in your church setting if you want to activate your church. We have found that sending them over WhatsApp is a good way for people to watch and get inspired.

- [What can the church do?](#) – a promotional video for The Church & Early Life workshop. Send your pastor this link and encourage him/her to sign up and attend the workshop. Here is the [event page](#) where you can register
- [The Bay City Church – The First Thousand Days](#) – an 8min story of how God is leading one local church in serving families in new ways.
- [Why Good Foundations Matter](#) – 4min look into brain architecture and the unique growth in that age
- [If it takes a village to raise a child: build your own](#) – a 3min TEDx talk on building one's own village of support
- [Still face experiment](#) – a 2min look at a profound experiment demonstrating how we are all wired for human connection
- [Resources](#) – the Sikunye resources page with a range of videos and documents to help you grow your awareness and share with your church leaders

We hope that these links and tools will help you to encourage, inspire and activate your church leader(s). Use these resources, your own stories and your passion to draw church leaders on board. Please do let us know if there is anything else you are wanting or needing to activate your church pastor, and please do encourage the pastors to attend [The Church & Early Event](#) and commit your church to be a First Thousand Day-friendly church (FTD-friendly church). [Send this link](#) to him/her to read more about this

## what do pastors want to know?

As you have found already, Sikunye's The Church & Early Life webinar connects three things together:

- The importance of the First Thousand Days – the science behind this incredible window of time for baby's development
- What the Bible says about young children and families
- How the church is positioned and equipped to make a significant difference for families and children.

We have found that many pastors know very little about the importance of the First Thousand Days. Many have shared with us, "We just didn't know!" Once someone recognizes how crucial this stage is, they often ask: "What has this got to do with me?" And that is why we share on how the church is perfectly positioned – and doesn't have to add budget or expenses to serve families.

In conversation with your church leader, share your passion and excitement about the opportunity – and be sure to share the incredible opportunity that exists in baby's development. You don't need to present the whole of The Church & Early Life event – simply invite them to the next event – registration is on our [website](#).

### **Key tips in having this conversation:**

- Share how passionate you are about this topic;
- Share a couple of key things that stood out to you personally from the webinar;
- Share a couple of easy-to-get-started ideas of helping families in your context;
- Share how Sikunye offers training and support for churches who have committed to becoming First Thousand Day friendly churches;
- Focus on opportunity and potential, not shame for not doing something earlier;
- Send a personal invitation to The Church & Early Life event

Your pastor, church leader or ministry leader will have natural questions about who Sikunye is, what other churches are part of the network and so on. You might not be able to answer all of them – that is ok. Help connect enough information to get them interested enough to attend a Sikunye event – where normally those kinds of questions are answered.