



HOW TO...

Win your congregation over to being an FTD-friendly church

Watch the [recording](#) of the Practical Workshop hosted by Sikunye, discussing how you can win over your congregation to being a First Thousand Day (FTD)-Friendly church. Here you can listen to church leaders speak about how they won over their congregation (look at 17min and 34min in the video)

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO WIN OVER YOUR CONGREGATION?

The church is ideally positioned, equipped, and mandated to be the most impactful player in the First Thousand Days (FTD). In a time where lack of responsive, nurturing caring is the biggest problem in South Africa, the church can be the greatest agent of healing in our communities. The church has the potential to create modern-day villages that surround and strengthen all parents and caregivers, as there are things that local church communities are already doing that could be used to build loving relationships with families in the FTD of life. But this cannot be done by one person in your church. To be a modern-day village around families, it needs the whole church. You can grow your congregation's awareness and sense of ownership around this stage of life. You can help them see the part that they can play in growing greatness in your church and surrounding community. It will profoundly change the capacity of parents to provide the responsive care that their little ones need for future flourishing.

IDEAS AND RESOURCES TO HELP YOU WIN YOUR CONGREGATION OVER:

- [Know who is in your church](#) – reaching out to and supporting families in the FTD is not a one-person job. Winning your congregation over forms the modern-day village, not just a team. Explore the gifts, strengths, and experiences of your congregants to find the ways in which everyone can support and love families inside and outside your church – this is a missional opportunity (reaching out to welcome new families that need community and care). Use this [tool](#) to help you
- [Prayerfully discern what your church can do](#) – becoming FTD-friendly will look different in different churches. This step is all about prayerfully discerning, along with others in your church, what you can be and do to ensure loving connections are formed around families in your church. Pray with your ministry leaders and congregation, to sense what God is leading you into. Pray through the six ways a church can be [FTD-friendly](#), with your congregation and context in mind

- [Grow your awareness and understanding of FTD](#) – for you to inspire your congregation, you will need to share information with passion and vision. Grow your awareness and understanding in the key points about the importance of FTD and why your church has an important role to play in seeing all children thrive. Look at our [website](#) for resources to help you with this
- [Develop an 'elevator pitch'](#) – is a short motivational story that has impact to make the person you are talking to want to hear more – picture having the time it would take you to get into an elevator and go to another floor to “pitch” to another person why your church is FTD-Friendly. It is like being a sales agent. What is your elevator pitch to your congregation? Check out this [tool](#) and below are some steps you can take to help you win your congregation over to being an FTD-Friendly church
- [Speak Up](#) – as pastors you have a trusted voice in your community and people listen when the pastor speaks. This can be used to inspire people, challenge them, and send them into serving families in your church and around your church. Having grown your awareness, use existing moments of preaching and teaching to share the opportunity of the First Thousand Days. Use this Sermon guide and [baby dedication script](#), and watch this [video](#) to see how you too can speak into FTD in your church. Declare that you are an FTD-Friendly Church using these [posters](#) and other resources found on our [website](#)

WHAT CAN A CONGREGANT DO?

- [If your pastor is not yet on board](#) – have a look at our [resource](#) to help you encourage your church leadership to see the importance that they play in seeing South Africa's children thrive. You can invite your pastor and ministry leaders to our next [The Church & Early Life](#) event

WHAT IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY YOUNG FAMILIES IN YOUR CHURCH?

- [Think about how you as a church can be missional](#) – create a space that families feel welcome and cared for, whether that is in a Sunday service or a mid-week activity. See what as individuals and as a church you can do to engage families in FTD in your space

Like no other, the church has the capacity and mandate to connect and care for parents and caregivers so that they, in turn, can provide responsive care for their little ones. In leading your community towards being FTD-friendly, you are helping everyone live out Jesus' encouragement...

“And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5)