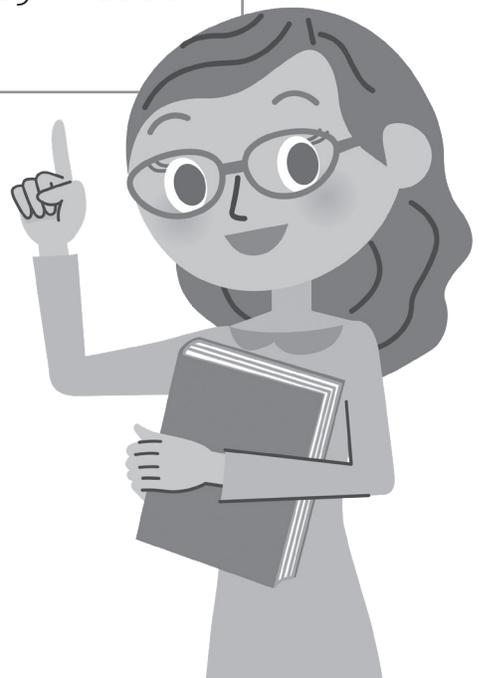


# Family Network Tips and Program Ideas

The Family Network meetings should be in a setting where parents are relaxed and comfortable. With larger groups, nametags may be helpful. Your leadership group can decide what should be included in the program but here is a suggested program.

1. Have fruit juice, hot drinks, crackers and dip, or a healthy sweet (such as sliced fruit) available as parents enter.
2. Begin with prayer and a short devotional. (Discuss Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and how the Family Network can be helpful to parents and guardians in following these instructions.)
3. Take time for an icebreaker to help parents know and feel more comfortable with each other.
  - a. Ask parents to find someone in the group they do not know well.
  - b. Interview this person to learn about one reason why they are proud of their family.
  - c. Allow time for individuals to share with their group what they discovered.
4. Parenting presentation (see the next page for ideas).
5. Announce the next meeting time and topic.
6. Close with prayer.

Make the first meeting special. The first meeting needs to grab the attention of everyone who comes so they make it a priority to come to the next meeting. You also want for parents and guardians who didn't make it to the first meeting to hear about what they missed and plan to come to the next meeting.



# Family Network Tips and Program Ideas

## IDEAS FOR ACTIVE FAMILY NETWORK MEETINGS

Here are a few activities which may be used instead of, or in addition to, a lecture.

1. Invite a panel of experts (older parents who can share their parenting stories or experts in parenting fields) to discuss the topic. Begin with some questions that will launch a general discussion of the topic. Then allow parents and guardians to ask specific questions. (These may be written beforehand or asked spontaneously.)
2. Have a book study group. Choose a good book on the topic and assign one to three chapters to be read for each meeting. At the meeting, discuss what you have read and how it applies to the families.
3. Show a video and discuss it.
4. If you use a lecture format, provide illustrations (use PowerPoint, pictures, or objects), handouts, examples, etc. Try modeling or demonstrating the suggestions you present.
5. For parents who are comfortable with each other and discussion-oriented, try a support group format. This is less structured and focuses on sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences. It may focus on a particular topic and use some of the follow-up activities suggested on the next page.
6. If you cannot find a knowledgeable individual to speak on a specified topic, you may choose to do it yourself. In this situation, read all you can find on the subject, then share what you have learned and tell how it worked for you. Finally, do a follow-up activity together.
7. Go together to a special parent event offered in the community.



### Looking for a great program for your Family Network meetings?

*Help! I'm a Parent* is a series of 10 programs presented by experts in different areas of parenting. Each video segment is 30 minutes and a facilitator's guide is included to direct discussion. *Help! I'm a Parent* sets are available for parents of kids from birth through age seven and ages eight through twelve.



Learn more at [HelpImAParent.org](http://HelpImAParent.org) or order the complete kit at [adventsource.org](http://adventsource.org).

# Family Network Tips and Program Ideas

## ACTIVE LEARNING AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Use icebreakers to help the group feel comfortable with each other. Allow five minutes to learn everyone's name, OR have small groups invent a "group résumé," compiling résumé information, such as schools attended, years of professional experience, positions held, professional skills, hobbies, family, talents, etc., for all the parents/guardians in the group.
2. Give parents and guardians an opportunity to practice what they have learned by roleplaying. Assign parents or guardians to take the role of mother, father, child, etc., showing what they would do in various situations, based on what they have learned.
3. Provide a bibliography. Show some books and materials which parents might find helpful.
4. Brainstorm solutions together. Present a problem or question and write as many solutions as possible. (Don't critique the ideas when you're brainstorming, just write them down.) You might try asking the first person who gives an idea to call on someone else to give their idea, and so on.
5. Introduce an activity by doing a poll. Ask the group several short answer questions and keep a tally of the results. (Example: "How many of your families eat supper together every day?")
6. Provide a worksheet, such as an outline, for parents to fill in during the lecture or by looking in a Bible or other book.
7. Build a recipe book of ideas together, sharing different ways of addressing an aspect of family life.
8. Go on a field trip.
9. At the beginning of the meeting, divide everyone into small groups of six to eight. Have each person write on an index card a question about the topic and then pass the card to the right until each member of the group has seen each card. Have participants read the questions and put a checkmark by the ones that interest them most. The small groups then share their most popular questions with the rest of the group.
10. Try a "fishbowl." Place six to eight people in the center of a circle with the rest of the parents and guardians seated in a larger circle around them. The center circle discusses the topic while the rest look on. People may occasionally exchange places.
11. Assign thought or application questions to small groups. Then mix up the groups and have each person report to their new group what the small group came up with.
12. Ask individuals to summarize to a person sitting near them what they have learned.
13. Provide case studies (specific examples) for attendees to discuss.
14. Use a suggestion circle. Choose one person to briefly present a problem or question to the group. Go around the circle, allowing each parent/guardian to make a short suggestion or to pass. (Offer to have someone write down the suggestions.) After each suggestion, the focus person should simply thank the person for offering a suggestion. (No one else should comment.) When each person has had an opportunity to make a suggestion, give a second chance to those who passed.

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Emphasize prayer at every meeting. It will make more of a difference than everything else put together. Pray in pairs, small groups, silently, in sentence prayers, etc.

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# Family Network Tips and Program Ideas

## WHERE DO I FIND PRESENTERS?

Make sure to use the ministry leaders in your church. The Family Network, rather than competing, should enhance all of the church's ministries. Programs should be offered as a joint effort, and you will want to promote each other's activities. These leaders could be included as presenters:

- Home and school leader(s)
- Family ministry director
- Pastor
- Women's ministry director
- Stewardship director
- Church school staff

There are many places to find speakers. Start by looking within your local community: doctors and other health professionals, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, teachers, principals, experienced parents, nutritionists, college professors, and pastors. One important thing to note: If you decide to bring in presenters from the community make sure they understand that this is a Christian group and their presentation must be based on biblical principles.

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### **As you are planning your topics, make sure to include subjects and materials for:**

- Single parenting
- Blended families
- Children with disabilities

Even though these topics may not be chosen by a majority of parents, there will be parents who benefit from these topics. Other parents may have needs based on their cultural background, level of education, or knowledge of English. Be aware of these needs and structure topics, titles, and activities that will appeal to them.

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# Family Network Tips and Program Ideas

## PROGRAM IDEAS

- Healthy Lunches
- Bullying
- Guiding Entertainment Choices
- Family Finance
- Social Media and Kids
- Teaching Kids About Sexuality
- Positive Parenting
- Time Management
- Respect is for Everyone
- Leading Your Child to Christ
- Raising Kids Who Really Care
- Teaching Kids About Prayer
- Making Christian Standards Make Sense
- Physical Development: Growing Healthy Kids
- How Children Differ: Temperament and Personality
- Setting Realistic Expectations
- Discipline as Discipling
- Single Parenting
- Safety Issues in Today's World
- Peer Pressure
- How Your Family of Origin Can Affect Your Family Today
- Enhancing Sibling Relationships
- Growing a Support Network
- Strengthening Family Communication
- Exploring Nature: God's Second Book
- Helping Kids Deal with Prejudice
- Teaching Kids How to Use the Bible
- Positive Sabbath Keeping
- Social Development: Helping Your Child be a Friend
- Teaching Kids About Money
- Play is for Real: Encouraging Healthy Play
- Constructive Discipline: Encouraging Positive Behavior
- How to Thrive as a Non-Traditional Family
- Raising Drug-Proof Kids
- Creative Conflict Resolution
- Styles of Parenting
- Latchkey Kids and Other Child Care Issues
- Keeping Marriage Fresh
- Family Meetings: A Way of Solving Problems and Making Plans
- Directing Your Child's Spiritual Growth
- Fostering a Mission Spirit
- Creative Family Worship
- Teaching About Work and Responsibility
- Preparing Kids for Adulthood in the 21st Century
- Dealing Positively with Negative Behavior
- Nurturing Children with Disabilities
- What You Need to Know About Child Abuse
- Stress and the Family
- Family Bonding: Growing Warm Relationships
- Changing Family Roles
- Taking Care of You
- Encouraging Statements: Words that Make a Difference
- Passing on Christian Values
- Teaching Christian Courtesy
- Growing a Spiritual Life: Involving Kids in Private Devotions
- Teaching Kids to be Faithful Stewards
- Intellectual Development: Learning In and Beyond School
- Nurturing Creativity
- Steps to Independence
- Toys and Things for Kids
- Anger Management for Parents and Kids
- Dealing with Grief
- Technology and Kids