

NATIONAL FAMILY SEASON INITIATIVE

MINISTRY GUIDE 2016



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Never before has there been such a critical need for the Christian church in Malaysia to have a concerted and intentional focus on family issues. With rising divorce rates, increasingly fragmented family relationships, difficult economic times that force parents to work multiple jobs, and a technology-satiated culture that increasingly takes time away from face-to-face communications, it is no surprise that more and more of us are living as strangers to the family that we share a home with.

John D. Unwin, a British Anthropologist who has studied 80 human civilizations that have come and gone, pointed out that these civilizations fell within one generation of the fall of the family unit. Once the family goes, everything else goes, including the church.

Able management of the home is one of the important criteria that Paul the Apostle mentions as a necessary trait in spiritual leadership. If the family fragments, what are the implications for church leadership for today and for the future? Can the church today rise up to help inject into family systems the much needed empowerment or boost to go the next mile in God's unfolding Kingdom in this world?

The National Family Season initiative is meant to help churches have some sense of a framework where we, together, as the Christian church in Malaysia, can help contribute something to the strengthening and empowerment of families in Malaysia. As we synergize our efforts, may we see families blossom to become lighthouses in their respective communities, may we see relationships at home restored, as one generation turns their hearts to the other, and may we see homes increasingly marked by the redemptive grace of God.

Dr. Herbert Tan

Chairman
Family Ministries Malaysia

Pastor Matthew Ling

Chairman
NECF Family Commission

Dated: 2nd April, 2016



ABOUT NATIONAL FAMILY SEASON INITIATIVE

The National Family Season (NFS) initiative is a part of the strategic plan of Family Ministries Malaysia and NECF Family Commission to create awareness among the Malaysian Church on the importance of building healthy families.

1. The Goal

Our overall long-term goal for the annual NFS is to see that it becomes an integral part of the yearly ministry calendar of the Malaysian Church.

2. Annual Key Focus

We shall devote one week during the NFS to one key area of the Malaysian family life.

As marriage is the foundation of every family, we will make this the one-week focus in 2017.

3. The Launch

We will be officially launching the NFS initiative in 2017 in July of this year.

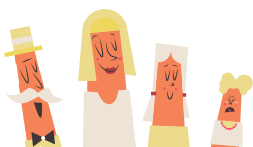
However, we are challenging churches to be pioneers of this initiative by this year. We will support them in the planning and implementation of their NFS 2016 plans, if needed.

FAMILY SEASON PROGRAMMES

1. NFS Programmes

We are proposing the following nationwide programmes for 2016. More details of each are given in Section C below.

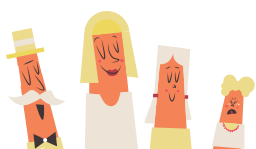
- **Celebrating the Mother's Day and Father's Day** with the focus on biblical motherhood and fatherhood. This could include carrying out related activities before these celebrations.



- **Marriage Week.** With an emphasis on couples making time for each other to build a close lifelong marriage relationship.
- **Family Blessings.** We are using the United Nations' International Day of Families on 15 May to focus on cultivating the culture of setting regular times aside in the home to bless each other through prayers and other means.
- **Local Church Programme.** We are encouraging the individual churches, if they are able to do so, to organise other activities that could further contribute to the building of healthy families in their midst.

2. Church and Home Involvements

PROGRAMME	CHURCH-BASED	HOME-BASED
1. Celebrating Mother's Day and Father's Day	These are primarily held at the church premise.	-
2. Daily family prayers	The church will equip families to carry these out in their homes.	
3. Marriage Week	The programmes may be carried out at church and in the home environment and other environments predetermined by the couples for their 'Marriage Time.'	
4. Family Blessings	The church will equip the families to carry these out in their own homes and challenge them to make blessing their family members a part of their family culture.	



3. The NFS 2016 Calendar

DATE(S)	PROGRAMMES
2-7/5	Daily prayers for mothers via mobile phone messages
8/5	Mother's Day
9-14/5	Daily prayers for specific areas of family blessings via mobile phone messages
15/5	Family Blessings Sunday
16-22/5	Daily prayers for specific areas of family life via mobile phone messages
23-28/5	Marriage Week. Daily prayers for marriage via mobile phone messages
29/5	Marriage Sunday
30/5-12/6	Daily prayers for specific areas of family life via mobile phone messages
13-18/6	Daily prayers for fathers via mobile phone messages
19/6	Father's Day



PROGRAMME GUIDE

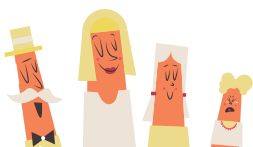
This Guide outlines ideas and relevant resources that we can use.

MOTHER'S DAY

Purpose: Understanding & living out biblical motherhood.

Dates, Programmes, and resources:

DATE(S)	PROGRAMMES & SUPPORTING RESOURCES
2-7/5	<p>Programme: The church sends out daily prayers for the mothers to their members through their various network systems, i.e. multimedia systems and church organizational communication channels.</p> <p>Resources: The participating churches could request sample prayers from us by the end of April.</p> <p>Additional ideas: The church could do the following to prepare the people for the Mother's Day celebration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play a series of video clips on motherhood in the Sundays leading to Mother' Day Sunday. Website references of some of these clips area as follows: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-Gt4QZNPzw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RD0V4Ej-SXQ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHvjTLOtq0U https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRoqk_z2Lgg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQ4TPn8hjl• Preaching a series of sermons on motherhood before Mother's Day.





Mother's Day.

Ideas:

- Preach a sermon on motherhood.
Proverbs 31:10-31; selections from Proverbs on "mother" (or even mothers of faith in the Bible or from life testimonies of old or current, practical ways on how to be a godly mother, etc.).
- To have the children sit with the parents. During service, get husband and children surround their wife/mother to express/speak out their gratitude, ask for forgiveness, bless and pray for their wife/mother.
- Give a small gift (i.e. a rose) during service.
- Preaching should emphasize on 'how to be a godly mother' and not just on theory/head knowledge.
- Family members are encouraged to intentionally spend more time with their mothers for the whole week.
- A certificate 'Mother's Resolution' (list of I do/I will) to be presented to all mothers during service and all mothers will make the resolutions together. Certificates can be signed by mother, spouse and children, pre-signed by pastor.
- Pastor can pray for mothers.
- A lunch for families to celebrate at the church premise.
- 'Who's That Mum?' competition - have mothers put up the baby pictures and have the congregation guess who is who. The one that gets the most number of correct answers gets a prize.
- Web resources.

<http://www.rethinkworship.com/creative-mothers-day-ideas-for-church/>
<http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/announcements/mothers-day-ideas-3/>

FAMILY BLESSINGS

Purpose: Cultivating the home culture of regular mutual blessings
of **Dates, Programmes, and resources:**



DATE(S)	PROGRAMMES & SUPPORTING RESOURCES
9-14/5	<p>Programme: The church will equip the parents and grandparents of each home to carry out a series of activities to prepare for and carry out the blessings during this week.</p> <p>Resources: Please visit http://www.theblessing.com/html/ and follow the 3-step process of what the ministry refers to as the 'Blessing Challenge'.</p> <p>We will produce the Family Blessings Guide for this week.</p> <p>Additional ideas: We welcome the participating churches to come up with other creative ideas.</p>
15/5	<p>Family Blessings Sunday.</p> <p>Programme: These are some ideas on celebrating this Sunday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sermon on family blessings. • Declare this as a Family Sunday with the children sitting with the parents with following activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Setting aside time to pray for the families of the church.</i> • <i>To set a time during the service for parents to pray for blessings upon their children and children for the parents.</i> • Challenge the families to continue to establish the culture of family blessings in the home in the coming weeks. We will provide a Home Blessing guide for this.

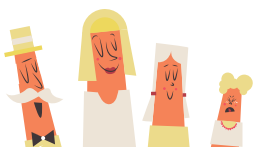


MARRIAGE WEEK

Purpose: Making time for each other to build a close lifelong marriage relationship.

Dates, Programmes, and resources

DATE(S)	PROGRAMMES & SUPPORTING RESOURCES
23-28/5	<p>Programme: The church sends out daily prayers for the marriages to their members through their mobile phones.</p> <p>Resources: The participating churches could request sample prayers from us in the middle of April.</p> <p>Download the power point slides and video clips of Nicky & Sila on The Marriage Course™ and Marriage Time™ from alpha.org/malaysia/familyseason.</p> <p>Additional ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind both husband and wife to set aside a weekly Marriage Time™ and both must seek to protect this time. Remind them to spend time praying with one another on a daily basis and encourage each other with God's Word. • To introduce The Marriage Course™ of Alpha Malaysia and encourage them to sign up for it. Please refer to Appendix A for more information on The Marriage Course™. • To conduct the 'Weekend To Remember' programme of FamilyLife Malaysia. Please refer Appendix B on this.



DATE(S)	PROGRAMMES & SUPPORTING RESOURCES
29/5	<p>Marriage Sunday.</p> <p>Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To teach on 'Making Time for Each Other to Build A Close Lifelong Marriage Relationship (Scripture from: Song of Solomon) • To introduce the concept of Marriage Time™. Please refer to Appendix C for details. • During service, the Pastor could pray for all the couples and for them to pray for each other. • To encourage couples to attend the suggested marriage programmes to further strengthen their marriages.



FATHER’S DAY

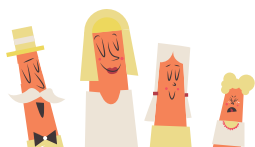
Purpose: To appreciate and affirm fathers that they are a gift from God.
Dates, Programmes, and resources:



DATE(S)	PROGRAMMES & SUPPORTING RESOURCES
13-18/6	<p>Programme: The church sends out daily prayers for fathers to their members through their mobile phones.</p> <p>Resources: The participating churches could request sample prayers from us in the middle of April.</p> <p>Additional ideas: The church could do the following to prepare the people for the Father’s Day celebration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play a series of video clips on fatherhood on the Sundays leading to Father’s Day Sunday.• Some websites you may wish to visit on these are as follows. <p><i>http://honoryourfathertoday.com/videos</i> <i>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DUYIHZsZfc</i> <i>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su6XJgPC9T0</i> <i>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Jpb2_YdxYM</i> <i>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZgmj5ay5Bk</i></p>



DATE(S)	PROGRAMMES & SUPPORTING RESOURCES
19/6	<p>Father's Day.</p> <p>Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preach a sermon on fatherhood. <i>Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:11-17.</i> • To have the children sit with the parents. During service, get wife and children surround their husband/father to express/speak out their gratitude, ask for forgiveness, bless and pray for their husband/father. • Give a small gift during service. • A certificate 'Father's Resolution' (list of I do/I will) to be presented to all fathers during service and all fathers make the resolution together. Certificate signed by father, spouse and children, pre-signed by pastor. • Pastor to pray for fathers. • All fathers are encouraged to intentionally spend more time with their families for the whole week. • A lunch meal for families to celebrate at the church premise. • Other ideas. You may like to visit the following websites for more ideas. http://www.theworldneedsafather.com/ https://dadsfirst.org/home/ http://honoryourfathertoday.com/ http://www.fatherhoodcomission.com/



BUILDING FAMILY PRAYERFULNESS

You may want to use the intervening weeks between Marriage Sunday (30th May) and 13th June to challenge the church members to pray for specific areas of need in the family. The aim is to cultivate a culture of regular family prayer and intercession.

Again, we will make available sample prayers which the participating churches could use for this period.

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Herbert Tan at uncleherbie@gmail.com

and **Pastor Matthew Ling** at matthewling.life@gmail.com.



Appendix A

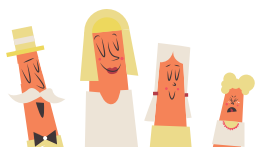
The Marriage Course™

Attend The Marriage Course™ to Further Strengthen Your Marriage!

The aim of The Marriage Course™ is to enable married couples to build a healthy marriage that will last a lifetime. Over eight weekly sessions of two and a half hours each session, couples get to spend time together and find out new things about each other, and new things about themselves. They have the opportunity to talk about issues that have been swept under the carpet in the rush of daily life. They discover what makes their partner feel loved. They have the time to discuss ways they have caused each other pain and discover how to heal hurt. They recognize the sources of pressure on their relationship. Some learn new skills for communicating and resolving conflicts. Others make changes in their lifestyle in order to nurture their marriage and they grow closer to each other in the process.

A couple's privacy is always respected. There is never any group work and no couple is ever asked to share anything about their relationship with anyone other than their spouse. Set in a nice atmosphere where couples are served a candlelit meal and/or coffee, tea and dessert at a romantic table for two while listening to practical talks, played on DVD, along with a couple workbook.

For further information and registration, please log on to alpha.org/malaysia/familyseason or contact Alpha Malaysia, tel: +603-21410279, email: info@alpha.org.my



APPENDIX B

A Weekend To Remember by FamilyLife

<http://www.familylife.com/WeekendToRemember>

At a Weekend to Remember, you and your spouse will:

Enjoy a romantic getaway at a destination of your choosing.

Hear words of wisdom from people who have been in the trenches of marriage.

Apply what you learn in one-on-one projects with your spouse. Positively change your relationship for a lifetime.

The Art of Marriage by FamilyLife

<http://www.familylife.com/theartofmarriage/about>

Marriage, the way God intended it to be, is a true art form. That's why for more than 35 years, FamilyLife has been helping couples understand God's plan for relationships. The Art of Marriage® weaves together expert teaching, real-life stories, humorous vignettes, and more to portray both the challenges and the beauty of God's design.

In The Art of Marriage, over 40 ministry leaders provide biblically-centered teaching while couples who have struggled in marriage openly and honestly share their stories of pain, loss, forgiveness, and grace.

The Art of Marriage is available in three formats: a Friday night/Saturday video event, a single-day live event, and a six-session small-group video series. Additional study on the six topics is also available through The Art of Marriage® Connect Series.

HomeBuilders

Small groups provide a safe place for members to grow in Bible knowledge and learn concepts transferable to their own lives. FamilyLife offers several small-group studies that are both biblically centered and practical to life.

For more info, please check out:

<http://www.familylife.com/smallgroups>

Contact Information

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FamilyLife Malaysia,

Malaysia Campus Crusade For Christ
03-79563610



APPENDIX C

Marriage Time™

Plan and Practise 'Marriage Time™'

The following are some ideas on how to make 'Marriage Time™' happens (extracted from The Marriage Course™ by Nicky and Sila Lee).

- o **Plan Time Together**
 - It doesn't happen automatically. Find the best time for you.
 - Write it in your diaries, eg. Monday evening – "Marriage Time™" or Wednesday lunch time – "Marriage Time™" or Saturday breakfast – "Marriage Time™".
 - If the time needs to be different each week, plan a month ahead, and, if you are very busy, several months in advance.
- o **Prioritise Your Time Together**
 - 'Prioritising Marriage Time™ is constantly the most difficult thing that we struggle to do, but the most important is terms of how it impacts our relationship.' Couple on The Marriage Course™.
- o **Protect Your Time Together**
 - Protect this time from interruptions and distractions such as the telephone, visitors, the television and over-long working hours.

Marriage Time™ Builds Intimacy!

