



# national newsletter

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## Family Gardening

### From Bill and Joan

We really appreciated two weekends with Gary and Anne Marie this month – how encouraging it is to be with this precious couple who are “ordinary” parents, so hospitable, kind and gracious, loyal and giving – we are all blessed to know them and to spread what they have taught us on to others.

We met the baby who was “Made in Australia” – the Young family’s latest edition! Since the Youngs and Neimers visit to Stanwell tops there are so many GFI families here who want to come to Phillip Island 2012!



**I love gardening.** I love lovely gardens full of colourful flowers of all different sorts and sizes and shapes. I especially love the English Cottage Garden and all the lush green lawns and the colours of the flowers and the wonderful scent of the lavers and roses that combine to create a visually scented masterpiece. I enjoy vegetable gardens too, and look forward to working our vege patch at home with my kids as part of our learning together.

I like to think that our family can be likened to a garden - a collection of beautiful people, all different shapes, sizes, personali-

ties, learning styles, gifts and talents, all placed together to grow into a masterpiece of God’s creation.

As parents we can be likened to the gardeners, the one who can enrich and cultivate the soil of our children’s souls, as we train, encourage and guide them in the many different facets of life - character, wisdom, manners, friendships, faith, etc.

We find Jesus talking to His disciples of a garden in John 15:1-4. “I am the true vine and my Father is the Gardener.

He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful ... Remain in

Me and I will remain in you...” Jesus calls us (as parents) to remain in Him and to allow ourselves to be pruned and shaped so we can bear fruit and glorify Him.

As we remain in Christ, He helps us to grow so we can guide, encourage and bless each of our individual children so they can become all that God has called them to be, and in the process, that we too, can grow into all that God wants us to be too.

How is your garden going? As parents are you remaining and abiding in the Vine? Do you feel as if God has been pruning you lately and it is uncomfortable and painful, remember many are the blossoms and fruitfulness from the pruned vine.



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After nine months of scripting, and filming that included 168 individuals, *The Toddlerhood Transition (Parenting Your 18 to 36 Month Old)*, is **now available**. The series, also featuring David and Charissa Scotford, has nine visits, each approx 22 minutes. Preview it at [www.growingkids.org](http://www.growingkids.org).

With this series completed and the workbooks in our warehouse, our major undertaking for 2010 is the completion of the *GIFT* series. Equally important,

but far less demanding is finalizing the *Preparation for Parenting* update.

While most of the *GIFT* series is scripted and near ready to tape, our scheduled calls for good weather throughout spring and early summer, while fully trusting the Lord to oversee the series to its completion.

The new *Prep for Parenting*, with a Spring 2010 release date, is contemporary in its format and features babies being tracked from birth to five months of age.

We remain thankful for your

patience and the prayers offered on behalf of these projects.

As we approach the completion of that which was started in Perth (2007), we have no regrets for taking the extra time and allowing the Lord to teach and lead us every step of the way.

We continually seek and strive to be workmen who can stand unashamed of what is placed before His church and the world.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in Melbourne at the 2012 GFA National Conference.

*Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo*

## The Ezzos write...

# All Around Australia



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Peter Abetz, MLA (and GKGW facilitator) did a 15min presentation in Parliament to support John and Tricia Wieske who have been banned from fostering babies because they "smack" their children! It has caused an uproar – as you may have seen it.

**Please pray that this will have far reaching results and affect positively for biblical parenting throughout our nation.**

Joshua was told to be "strong and courageous" ch 1v6 and that is just what Peter, John and Tricia are doing for the kingdom of God.

John wrote on 11th March "Things are really hotting up here. We had Ch 7 come out and do a story which was on the news last night. Very fair and supportive. It is also on the front page of the West Australian today with our family mug shot.

Go to the Channel 7, ABC and The West websites to get a copy of the interviews

**The Birch Family** are now on the road. They are in Tasmania at present and will be joining us in Broken Hill in May when they have kindly offered to run a program for all the children who will be present for the State Teams Weekend.

Their itinerary is as follows;

<b>April- May</b>	<b>Victoria</b>
<b>May-June</b>	<b>NSW</b>
<b>July-August</b>	<b>Queensland</b>
<b>End August</b>	<b>Snow NSW/Vic</b>
<b>Sept-Oct</b>	<b>SA</b>

They would love to meet you as they explore the beautiful country God has privileged us to live in. Contact them direct: [darrenbirch7@bigpond.com](mailto:darrenbirch7@bigpond.com)



## Children Arise

### CDs

While in Tasmania we met Paul and Janine Targett. They wrote a parenting course called "Growing Children God's Way" (6 sessions) many years ago – they did not know about the Ezzos and GKGW. It was encouraging to realize we are "on the same track". Their material really compliments GKGW. They have done sessions on personality, fear and anger in our children. Janine has written and composed some amazing scripture in song for children to really learn the Word of God. They joined us for the GF camp in Nov 09 and "stole the show"!

To assist children in learning memory verses the Children Arise CDs with a support manual on how to teach the verses is available on the GFA website.

## TASMANIA

Things are exciting down here with two GKGW Classes in Launceston. The Hobart and North west teams are keen to start some soon too. We are really focusing on growing the community at the moment as things have been rather dismembered over the years across our state.

We now have 3 main area teams operating successfully. We've been able to establish new relationships with some great families in the area teams, especially while tripping around Hobart. We are very thankful for the enormous efforts of Bill and Joan in coordinating our new area team 'system' and know they have accomplished a major task.

**Martin & Louise Filleul**

## QUEENSLAND

The Queensland state team is gearing up for another busy year connecting with families all around this great state.

The planning for the state camp and several 'plays in the park' are well underway, both of these are key activities in which we help connect families together.

The newsletters also remain a focus for the team because they enable us to support, encourage and connect families – they are both very effective and well received with great feedback.

**Geoff & Alicia Bongers, Brisbane**

## Marriage Matters



In Perth Phil and Carol Ladner have recognized a need to facilitate a term long marriage course for graduates of GFA classes. The first one will be underway next term with people already enquiring about the next one.

Phil and Carol have been married for 44 years and have two children and 6 grandchildren. They have many years experience in pastoral care and biblical counseling.

For more info of this new GFWA initiative contact Phil and Carol direct on [philcaroll@bigpond.com](mailto:philcaroll@bigpond.com) or T:08 94571664

# All Around Australia



## Broken Hill State Team Leaders Weekend – May 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>.

Representatives from all state teams and associated ministries plan to attend this biennial strategic planning and encouragement event being hosted by the Broken Hill GFA team – the Curtis and Martin families who have been consistently involved with GFA from the first time Gary and Anne Marie visited Adelaide in 1996.

The Curtis' recently visited the Ezzos at Mt Pleasant in South Carolina where, like us and many other Australians, they have experienced the wonderful hospitality and fellowship of this couple who are precious to us all.

We wish to honour the faithfulness to biblical parenting of these isolated families for so many years (including grandpa and grandma John and Judith Curtis).

For 2010, Patrick and I are going to conduct "Reaching the Heart of Teens" in May and July (8 units) and Growing Kids God's Way for parents with 3 to 12 year olds (18 units).

We started the recent GKGW course with zero participants and babysitters. Then God sent 10 families and 5 babysitters and that's how we finished the race. After each lesson, we had dinner together and it was a great time of bonding. At the end of the 18th unit, we had a fantastic celebration and the group wants to continue the fellowship at least once a year. They've requested for another course to benefit other parents to bring up their children in God's way.

**Patrick & Winnie Phoon**  
Blackburn South, Victoria

### VICTORIA



*- cont...* How are your little plants, are they flourishing in their gifts and talents under the supervision and good planning of their gardeners? May you seek the Master Gardener's guidance as you tend those individual ones in your care.

**Kathryn Birch**  
GFA Roving Ambassadors

The Terrific Toddlers DVD is well underway. Mel Hayde hopes to present it to the Broken Hill Team Leaders Weekend in May.

The Terrific Toddlers DVD is to compliment the two books Mel has written. It does not take over from GFI parent/discipleship programs, but complements and will be powerfully effective in reaching out to the unchurched parents of toddlers in Australia.

Mel Hayde had an excellent, very busy weekend in Darwin with the Miles and the GFA families (especially the GEMS ladies) encouraging parents with children of all ages.

She was interviewed on local Christian radio station Rhema FM, spoke to parents and their toddlers at Storytime at the Darwin Public Library, shared her "Toddler to Teen" self-control message at a public meeting at the local university, and encouraged many mums individually and collectively at a mums seminar.



### NORTHERN TERRITORY

On our way to Broken Hill we would like to do some GF ministry calls in western NSW and we will have about 4 weeks. From there, we plan to travel up to Tamworth and Gunnedah to visit a lovely SDA family to help with some toddler issues. We will then go down through Coonabarabran to Dubbo. From there, to the Orange, Parkes, Forbes area and then either head straight for BH or go down to Griffith and Hay and then up to BH. We are flexible about the route we take. *NB: From Broken Hill they plan to take 18mths to visit N.T. and W.A. They await your invitations to encourage you as you nurture your families and reach out to other families in your areas.*

**Ian and Lynn Williams**

### ROVING AMBASSADORS

If you live in any of these areas and would like Ian and Lynn to visit and encourage, get in touch with them direct on [williams@gfi.org.au](mailto:williams@gfi.org.au) or 0411289335.

*P/S: Gary & Anne Marie have seen the new website and are raving about it! KUDOS Marten, Andy, Robyn and Nicky for all the long hours put into this project.*

## National Conference Update

The Victorian Team are in the process of building the website for the 2012 National Conference and will be presenting a preview of it in Broken Hill with the intention to open it up to the wider community soon after that. Once "live", do register and you may start to pay by depositing smaller amounts regularly into the conference account – a great way to save and to make it easier to get ready for the conference at Phillip Island in Jan 2012!

