



Growing Families Australia

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Reaching our nation one family at a time

Inside:

- Middle Years... what & why
- Leaving a legacy
- Book review
- The Chicken Story...
- People are important
- And more...

Keep us up-to-date!

- Are you changing your email?
- Have a new telephone number?
- Planning to move in the next few months?

We would love to know your new details so we can keep you informed & connected with the Growing Families family! Email us on enquiries@gfi.org.au

Key Principle - Preparation for the Toddler Years - Visit 1

The guiding principle remains "Begin as you mean to go" Don't focus on gaining ground, but rather focus more on not losing any ground.

Unpredictability is something that is unfortunately very predictable but your daily routine will help you persevere.

Concrete examples speed up the process of understanding.

Context is what allows you to achieve freedom in the decision making process without compromising your long-range goals or objectives.

One of the greatest gifts parents can pass onto their children is a beautiful and ongoing demonstration of love for each other.

Merry Christmas



Greetings from "the NOST"

May the Lord bless you and keep you and your families this Christmas. We trust that you will all have the time to celebrate the real reason for the season—*Jesus*.

Love to all your families

*Robyn & Andy Hamdorf – Michelle & Peter Foote
Alicia & Geoff Bongers*



GFA Christmas Hours

The GFA office will be closed from Friday the 21st December for the Christmas period and will reopen on Wednesday the 2nd of January 2013

Christmas Specials

Every order placed in December will receive a 10% discount. So, if you are still deciding on Christmas presents or need something extra, why not have a look at the GFA store.

If you still can't decide, how about a gift voucher so your loved one can choose for themselves. Please contact the office via email at sales@gfi.org.au or **08 8322 3770** and we will arrange to post a gift certificate to you.

Gods Promise

Although things are not perfect
Because of trial or pain
Continue in thanksgiving
Do not begin to blame
Even when the times are hard
Fierce winds are bound to blow
God is forever able
Hold on to what you know
Imagine life without His love
Joy would cease to be
Keep thanking Him for all the things
Love imparts to you
Move out of "camp complaining"
No weapon that is known

On earth can yield the power
Praise can do alone
Quit looking at the future
Redeem the time at hand
Start every day with worship
To "thank" is a command
Until we see Him coming
Victorious in the sky
We'll run the race with gratitude
Xalting God most high
Yes, there'll be good times and yes
some will be bad, but...
Zion waits in glory... where none are
ever sad!

Re-Thinking CHRIST-mas



When was the last time you thought about what you do at Christmas and why? There are so many traditions that have evolved over the years, and sometimes we forget why we do what we do. It reminds me of the journey Michelle & I first took with parenting over 12 years ago. We had many parenting “traditions” based on how we were parented, but it wasn’t till we started rethinking them in the light of the Bible (through the GFI courses) that we realised some of our traditions were “man-made”. Principles like wise in their own eyes, first time obedience, other centredness, and the priority of marriage, forced us to change our parenting traditions in light of God’s Word – thank you Father!

So are you willing? To go on a journey of re-discovery about the principles behind Christmas? For our family, the journey has brought us closer to Jesus, putting more of Him into CHRIST-mas and less of the world into X-mas.

Before we start though, a few tips (funnily enough, they apply equally to parenting J). First, start with principles in Scripture and then move to the practical. Otherwise you can get caught up in legalism ie “what” with no “why”. Second, every family is different. Pray for wisdom about what is right for YOUR family, and give others freedom to be different from you. And third, this is a journey. Start with a few traditions this year and move onto others next year. Otherwise it can be overwhelming ie too much change at once.

Here are a few traditions you might like to start the journey with.

Santa

When children go up to Santa, what’s the one phrase you heard over and over again? “Have you been good?” In other words, you only get presents if your

behaviour has been up to scratch. And yet that is the exact opposite of why Jesus was born at Christmas.

Verse: Romans 5:8 “*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”

Principle: Christmas needs to remind our children of the truth that we can never earn God’s gift of salvation. It was paid for by Jesus death because we were incapable of being “good enough”.

Example: Pray about how much focus you need to give to Santa, if any at all.

Busyness

With end of year activities and preparations for Christmas, it is without doubt the busiest, and sometimes the most stressful time of the year. Often the real meaning of Christmas gets lost amidst all the hustle and bussle.

Verse: Luke 2:19 “*But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.*”

Principle: Make regular time during this season to pause as a family to ponder what Christmas is about.

Example: There are some great Advent stories that provide a daily opportunity to ponder. One we use is called “Jotham’s Journey” – it’s a trilogy. You can buy them at www.koorong.com.

Nativity Scene

While we are all very familiar with the picture of wise men and shepherds gathered around baby Jesus in a manger, we rarely take time to remember that his first coming was only “part 1” of the story. Part 2 of the story is His second coming when He returns to earth to rule and reign forever. Even the familiar Christmas

passage of Isaiah 9:6 connects the two.

Verse: Isaiah 9:6-7 “*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.*”

Principle: Jesus’ first and second coming are closely connected.

Suggestion: When Jesus returns, there will be a great wedding banquet (Rev 19:9). As a family, we get out our best tableware, put on a great banquet, and remember that Jesus is coming back for us.

Presents

Try this test. Give your children a piece of paper and ask them to write down the top 3 things they like about Christmas. I can almost guarantee you that presents feature on the list. And while presents can be a great reminder of the greatest gift of all, the problem comes when the presents become the focus in the mind of the child.

Verse: James 1:17 “*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*”

Principle: The giver is more important than the gift.

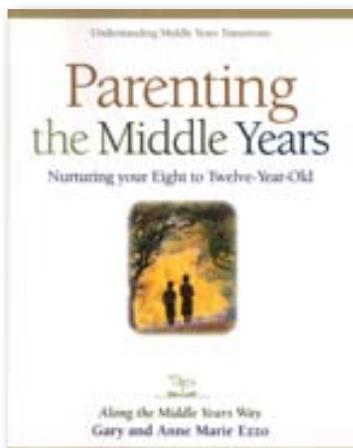
Suggestion: Explore ways for keeping your children’s experience of Christmas more focused on Jesus than presents.

May your Christmas be full of Jesus.

Pete & Michelle Foote
NSW State Team Leaders

Parenting the Middle Years

Nurturing Your Eight to Twelve Year Old



The middle years awaken within a child a sense of fearful adventure in an ever expanding world outside the security and confines of mum & dad. It is the first phase in the transition from dependence on parents to the self-reliance of adulthood.

Therefore this transition must be accompanied by patience, understanding, and plenty of parental faith in the belief that He who has begun a good work in

you will continue it in your children.

Parenting the Middle Years is a logical extension of Growing Kid's God's Way.

There, the prerequisites for this series are established. For example, we are assuming that you:

Are giving your children the moral reason 'why (Chapter One)'.

Are still doing couch time as described in "Right Beginnings" (Chapter Two).

Are speaking your child's love language - "Touchpoints of Love" (Chapter Three)

As a dad, fulfilling your obligations listed in the "Father's Mandate" (Chapter Four).

Are continually developing Godly character both by your instruction and example (Chapters Six through Eight).

Have a handle on the discipline issues facing your children (Chapters Nine through Sixteen).

So why not ask your GKGW facilitator to see if they could run this course for you – or check out www.gfi.org.au and register for a Preparation for the Middle Years course.



Christmas time is often busy, and its in these times we revert to our own primary love language and miss speak it to those closest to us... So let's this Christmas remember that by choosing to speak someone's primary "love language" it is an investment in relationship. No matter how much you love them inside your heart or head, if they can't tell because the way you show it, then their needs are not being met.

So lets quickly summarise the "love languages" (and if all this is news to you - try getting hold of 'The five love languages' by Gary Chapman or participate in a Growing Kids Gods Way class in which it is also covered).

Words of Encouragement

This is a person for whom WORDS are IMPORTANT. Try giving them a call or leave a note saying "LOVE YOU". Don't use unkind words or use the "silent treatment".

Quality Time

This person loves "just spending time together". Try walking together, shopping together - anything together - EXCEPT for watching TV together...

Acts of Service

This person REALLY appreciates a kind act. Try doing some "small or behind the scenes" things - don't make a big deal about doing them. Filling a car with petrol, taking in the washing are good - things that make EXTRA work for that person are bad.

Physical Touch & Closeness

Its not just "hugs & kisses" its being near. If you can do what you are doing anywhere - take it with you and be near her (or him). Don't retreat off to the "shed", "sewing room" or other retreats.

Gift Giving

Bring something home that says - while we were apart I thought of you. Try small treats Caramello Koalas etc are great - cheap and nice for the whole family. The longer you are away the greater the appreciation is likely to be.

"Songs for Growing Kids"



This music CD is a great way to bring home weekly Growing Kids God's Way lessons to your children.

These 15 songs are to compliment your training with the GKGW principles. Song titles range from "My Daddy is so Awesome" to "Interrupt Rule". Your kids will love singing to these fun tunes and will

have Mum and Dad singing along too. It is available from GFA—www.gfi.org.au for \$25.

Reminder:

How about this month during couch time...



Couch time this month is an ideal time to consider how the family is travelling. What GFA course could you enrol in or lead in your area.



Christmas is often a time where we have some time to talk with our children - here are two suggestions that you could consider to proactively be prepared for...

Leaving a legacy

Some thoughts on leaving a legacy... How about reflecting on these thoughts and passages at a family night, couch time or as your walk along the road?

- 2 Timothy 1:5; Timothy, his mum and his grandmother.
- Leviticus 19:32; Rise up before the grey headed ones...
- The most abiding legacy is a strong faith – how are you keeping yours strong
- Grandparents are the link between generations
- “My grandparents are my HERO’s because they can boss my mum and dad :-)”
- Abraham left a legacy...
- Rahab – one great deed
- David – a legacy of love and faithfulness (see Psalm 78)
- We are running a relay – pass on the baton to our grandchildren

As you walk along the road...

Some discussion pointers on what do you get with a relationship with Jesus.

- Rock solid love (Rom 8:35, Jn 3:16)
- Rock solid power (Phil 4:13)
- Rock solid source of guidance
- Rock solid assurance of life
- Rock solid, never to be reversed, pardon



Think about the parable of the house built on the rock and then the one built on the sand.

The Rock is Jesus, the sand is our “wisdom”.

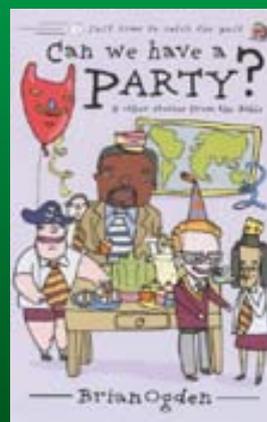
People are always more important than projects



Andre Furmanov

This may sound something obvious but it is harder to do than you might think. It is hard to put people before what might be a carefully planned event or project. There have been times when I have prepared a Bible study, been really looking forward to it and then got to small group and discovered that there was a crisis that we needed to pray for and people needed comforting. So we drop the Bible study. It might be a small group meeting but people’s needs come before convention. This is the Jesus way – it was what he was talking about when he was challenging the Sabbath rules. We have to be so careful that we don’t put our own plans or ideas of how things should be done before the needs of others. This is something I will always carry with me.

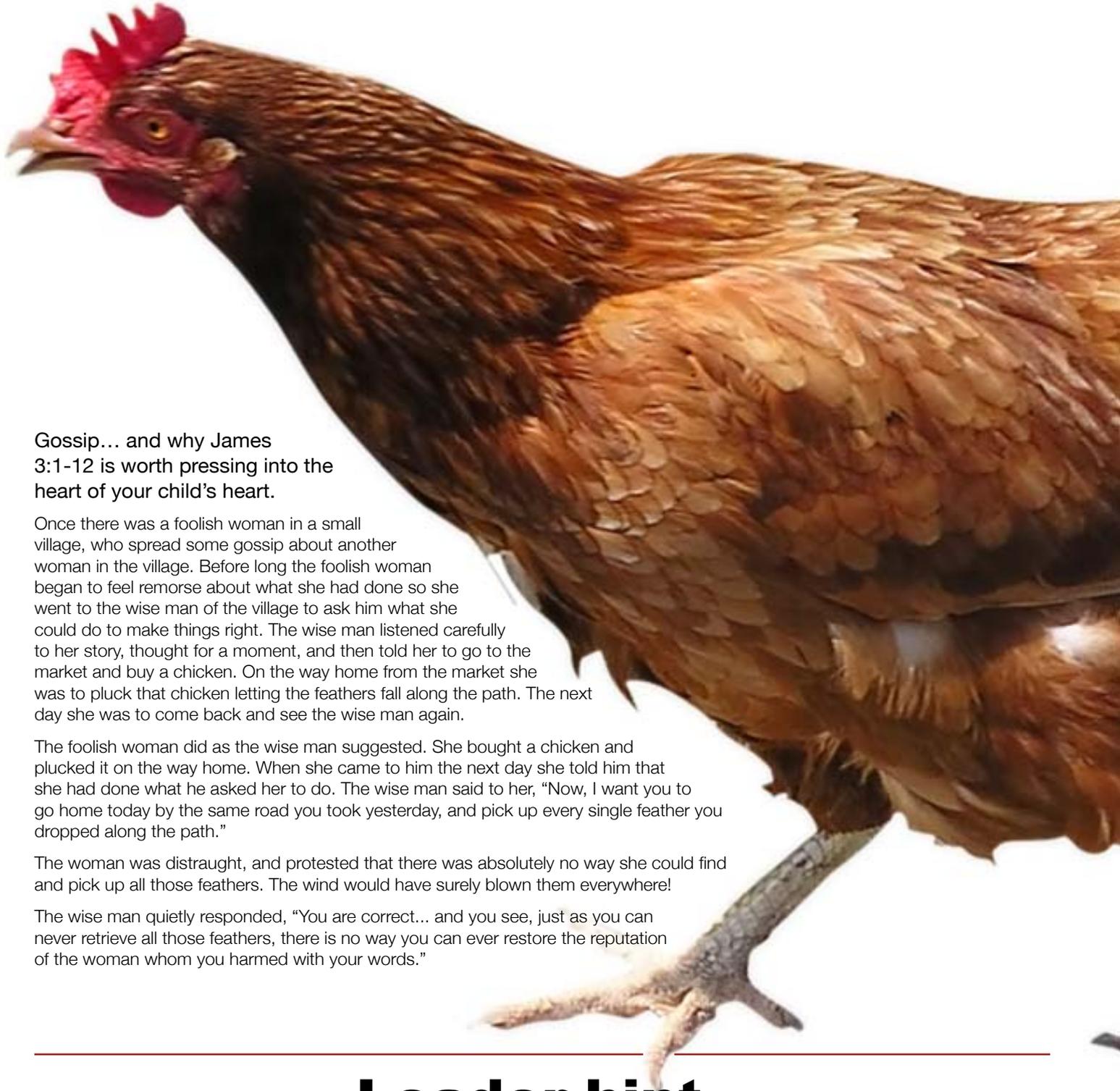
Just time to Catch the Post Series: Can we have a Party?



The children of Class 3G get so caught up with the story of the Lost Son that they want to know if they too can have a party. This book is a collection of Bible stories told in the form of correspondence between contemporary children and Bible characters. It contains five stories, two from the Old Testament and three from the New Testament. Each chapter is placed within the context of the day to day lives of Class 3G at Daisy Hill County Primary

School, giving a different approach to the Bible for 6-8 year olds. This series written by Brian Ogden is available at Koorong for ~\$11.

The Chicken Story – a Tale of Regret



Gossip... and why James 3:1-12 is worth pressing into the heart of your child's heart.

Once there was a foolish woman in a small village, who spread some gossip about another woman in the village. Before long the foolish woman began to feel remorse about what she had done so she went to the wise man of the village to ask him what she could do to make things right. The wise man listened carefully to her story, thought for a moment, and then told her to go to the market and buy a chicken. On the way home from the market she was to pluck that chicken letting the feathers fall along the path. The next day she was to come back and see the wise man again.

The foolish woman did as the wise man suggested. She bought a chicken and plucked it on the way home. When she came to him the next day she told him that she had done what he asked her to do. The wise man said to her, "Now, I want you to go home today by the same road you took yesterday, and pick up every single feather you dropped along the path."

The woman was distraught, and protested that there was absolutely no way she could find and pick up all those feathers. The wind would have surely blown them everywhere!

The wise man quietly responded, "You are correct... and you see, just as you can never retrieve all those feathers, there is no way you can ever restore the reputation of the woman whom you harmed with your words."

Leader hint...

For experienced leaders coming alongside families who they feel have the gift of leadership, here are some hints to help you support them.

- There are many people who are afraid to commence leading classes because their children are not perfect. Our children are not perfect – this gives us great material for the class for others to learn from...
- Do walk in humility as required of spiritual leaders.
- If someone asks a question that you don't know the answer – do not be afraid to say "I have not heard that

before" or "I don't know"... let me get some info etc. If you always have to have an answer you will be exposed as not being truthful.

- We are going through GKGW as facilitators to help our family because WE need to be refreshed and reminded. There are times we have had to leave a class to deal with our children and investigate that "strange bump"... that's ok as long as we continue to walk in humility and don't pretend to have all the answers.
- As leaders we all need to remember we are in the process.