

Family Ministries Survey 2022



INSIGHT AND ANALYSIS

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Seventh-day
Adventist Church™

Family Ministries Victoria

BRIEF

When I started as the Director of Family Ministries for the Victorian Conference, it was a relatively new position, and the job description I was given about the role reflected this. Ministering to families was, and is, something that is very important to our Church, but the role needed further exploration and expansion. What does Family Ministry actually entail within a Conference perspective, and how do you resource such a department?

As exciting as it was to dream about the future of the department and set goals, the first step had to be to understand the needs of the Conference I was called to serve. Who were the families in the Victorian Conference, and what were their concerns and needs? Instead of guessing or assuming, I wanted to ask them myself.

And thus was born the Family Ministries Survey 2022.

The survey was done using surveyplanet.com and was sent through all available online channels within the Conference for anyone living in Victoria to complete. It took an average of 6 minutes to complete, and there were prizes offered randomly—one for every living arrangement category. If you would like to see a copy of this survey, please visit <https://vic.adventist.org.au/families>

The goals that I wanted to achieve from this survey were to:

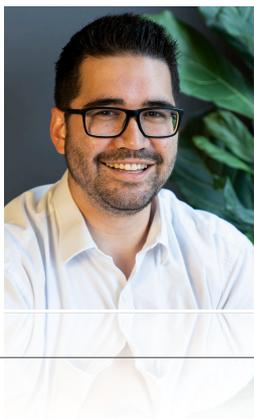
1. Know the demographic of the Victorian Conference better;
2. Understand and prioritise the needs of the Conference for resourcing purposes, and;
3. Have a quantifiable reason for the need of the Family Ministries Department.

The following report will attempt to achieve all three.

Please note, however, that this is by no means a comprehensive report. Rather, consider this as a launching pad for further work that needs to be done in the future.

It is my goal for the Church to better understand the needs of the people that it serves, so it can more effectively use its time and resources, and I believe that families need to be that focus right now. I pray this report will convince you of the need for strong families and spiritual homes.

“The happiness of... churches depends upon home influences. Eternal interests depend upon the proper discharge of the duties of this life. The world is not so much in need of great minds as of good men [and women] who will be a blessing in their homes.”
- Ellen G White, *Adventist Home*, pg. 37



Daniel Brunt

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When this survey was administered in 2022, Daniel served as both an Associate Pastor of Wantirna Church, as well as the Director of Family Ministries.

He has degrees in Psychology and Theology, and has a passion for using science and the Bible to further people's relationship with Christ.



SUMMARY OF SURVEY

N = 146.

Members Victorian Conference = 11,462

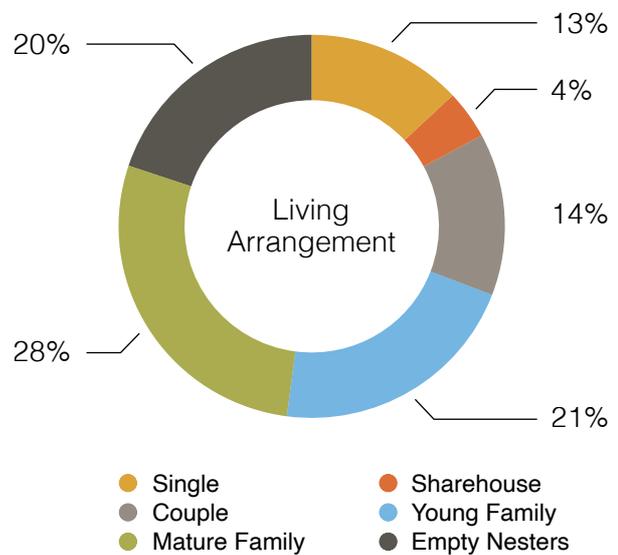
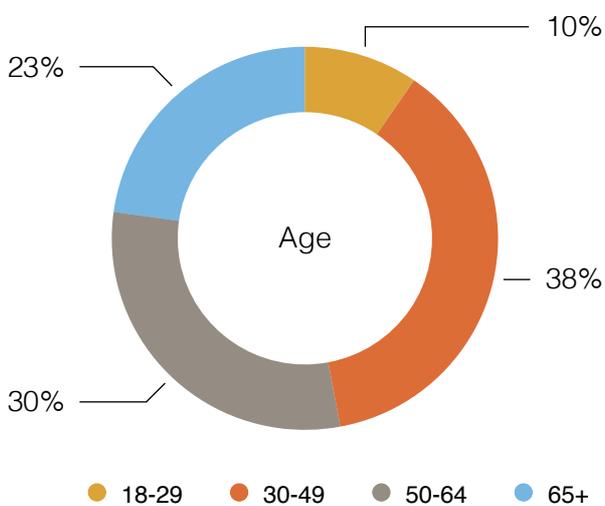
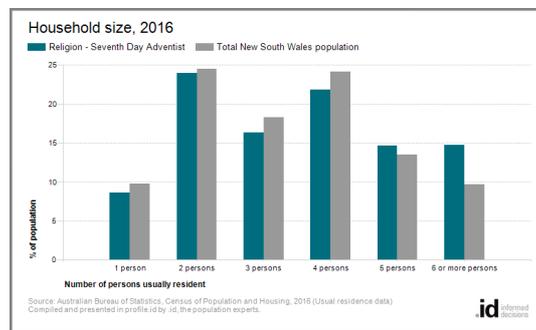
Median household number for SDA's in NSW (2016) = 3.056

Assuming each participant is representing a family - Adjusted no. families = 3752

Representative percentage (sample size to represented population) = 3.9%

Confidence Level - 95%, Margin of Error = 3.12%
(A good margin of error for surveys is 4-8% at 95% confidence level (pollfish.com))

Administered by online survey using surveyplanet.com



MOST REQUESTED RESOURCES

One of the more important questions was number 20, because it allows the Family Ministries Department to prioritise the needs of the Conference to what is most wanted from the individuals within the Conference.

Below are the choices that were presented, in order from most requested to least.

Activities	
Bible Study Resources for Families	67
“Worship Box” resource for family worship	52
Online family resource centre	50
Video series showcasing different worship styles	39
Marriage enrichment seminars	36
Workshops on financial planning	35
Podcast interviewing family life experts	30
Men’s Ministries	28
Workshops on online safety for parents	19
Singles ministries	19

Other Recommendations

- Couples Camp with seminars on marriage as well as men and women separately. It can be hard to go to different seminars separately during the year, be nice to have it all in one go.
- Seminars for teens/young adults/pre-marriage and having specialists on drugs, sex, careers, relationships, etc...
- Social justice initiatives for families to participate in.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A TREND TOWARD RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF MINISTRY IN THE HOME, RATHER THAN MINISTRY WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH OR CONFERENCE-WIDE.

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IT COULD BE SUGGESTED THAT PARENTS ARE SEEING THE NEED FOR EMPOWERING THEIR SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE IN THE SAFETY OF THEIR OWN HOME, RATHER THAN OUTSOURCING IT TO ANOTHER PROGRAM OR EVENT BY THE CHURCH.

OUTCOME QUESTIONS

With any collection of data, participants need to answer particular questions to have any meaning and usefulness. Below are the outcome questions that form the base of the results section.

This is where we find correlation, patterns, and ultimately answers to some of the more useful and important questions that naturally form with this kind of data.

Questions	No.
Do age groups prioritise different worship elements?	1 + 20
Does culture determine worship frequency in the home?	3 + 11
Does culture determine worship type in the home?	3 + 14
Does Adventist generation affect your childhood worship frequency?	5 + 11
Does Adventist generation allow you to be more open to more resources?	5 + 16
Does childhood worship frequency affect your church attendance as an adult?	6 + 12
Does going to church affect your worship frequency?	6 + 13
Does childhood church attendance affect the children's church attendance?	9 + 10
Does childhood worship frequency affect the children's church attendance?	9 + 12
Does worship frequency in the home affect children's church attendance?	9 + 13
Does childhood worship frequency affect current worship frequency	12 + 13
Would giving resources allow worship become better for you?	16

LIMITATIONS

It is important when looking at the results to understand the limitations of the data. No body of data is 100%, but there were a few gaps in this current survey that may skew the data, and any potential future studies could address. They are as follows:

- The cultural breakdown was not representative of the the population, with 69% identifying as White/Caucasian.
- Only 10% of the participants were in the age group of 18-29. This may have been because the survey was advertised as a "Family Survey".
- Although hard to pinpoint locations due to the anonymity of survey, most tended to come from Melbourne City. May have missed out on a rural demographic.
- In the question "Does Adventist generation allow you to be more open to more resources?", 1st Generation Adventists were more open to new resources (54%), compared to 3rd Generation Adventists (41%). This is both a limitation to more established Adventists, but also an opportunity to the newer converts to the faith to provide support and help.

RESULTS

The results shown below are not a full collection of the raw data, but rather results that are somewhat significant to the questions asked. This is why in some cases, there are certain categories and/or numbers omitted. The most significant results I have written more about in the highlights section below.

Do age groups prioritise different worship elements?

Podcast -

-18-29 - 38%, 30-49 - 24%, 50-64 - 17%, 65+ - 15%

Worship Box -

-18-29 - 8%, 30-49 - 51%, 50-64 - 37%, 65+ - 25%

Online Resource Centre -

-18-29 - 23%, 30-49 - 53%, 50-64 - 32%, 65+ - 18%

Video Series -

-18-29 - 23%, 30-49 - 39%, 50-64 - 24%, 65+ - 15%

Workshop Safety -

-18-29 - 8%, 30-49 - 20%, 50-64 - 10%, 65+ - 8%

Marriage Enrichment -

-18-29 - 31%, 30-49 - 41%, 50-64 - 20%, 65+ - 8%

Men's Ministries -

-18-29 - 8%, 30-49 - 29%, 50-64 - 20%, 65+ - 10%

Bible Study -

-18-29 - 10%, 30-49 - 67%, 50-64 - 42%, 65+ - 28%

Singles -

-18-29 - 15%, 30-49 - 20%, 50-64 - 7%, 65+ - 10%

Does culture determine childhood worship experience?

Pacific Islander - 89% Yes

White - 60% Yes

Does culture determine worship type in the home?

Music -

-White - 84% No

Singing -

-Black - 80% Yes, Asian - 73% Yes

Scripture -

-Black - 100% Yes

Media -

-White - 64% No, Latin - 100% No

Praying -

-White - 65% Yes, Pacific - 66% Yes, Asian - 87% Yes

Devotional -

-Black - 80% Yes, Asian - 87% Yes

Game -

-White - 97% No, Asian - 93% No, Pacific - 89% No

Does Adventist generation allow you to be more open to more resources?

1st Generation -

-46% no, 54% yes

2nd Generation -

-46% no, 54% yes

3rd Generation+ -

-59% no, 41% yes

Does Adventist generation affect your childhood worship frequency?

1st Generation -

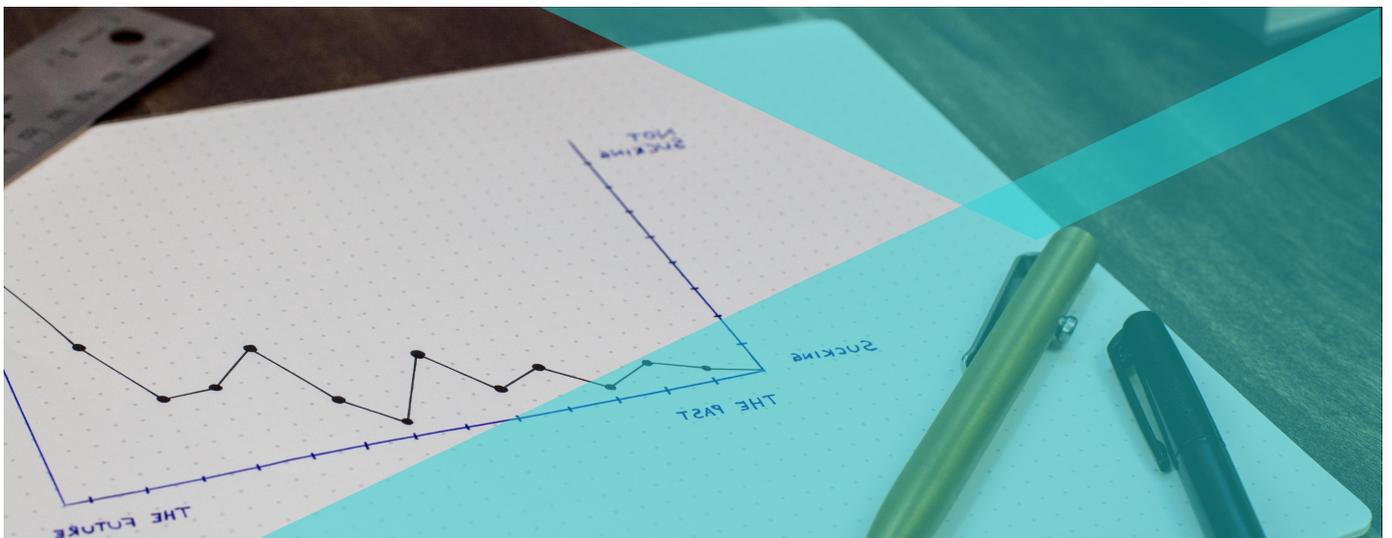
-78% no worship, 22% yes worship

2nd Generation -

-27% no worship, 73% yes worship

3rd Generation+ -

-26% no worship, 74% yes worship



Does childhood worship frequency affect church attendance as an adult?

Attend Church Every Week -
-Every day - 20%, Few week - 21%, Once week - 18%, Hardly Ever - 3%
Attend Church Once or twice a month -
-Everyday - 39%
Attend Church Occasionally -
-Few week - 29%

Does going to church affect your worship frequency?

Attend Church Every Week -
-Always - 24%, Few - 23%, Once - 23%, Infrequent - 17%, Never - 6.7
Once or Twice -
-Infrequent - 54%
Occasionally -
-Never - 43%
Never -
-Never - 75%

Does childhood church attendance affect the children's church attendance?

Children still in the church -
-Parents went every week - 75%
Children in different denomination -
-Parents went every week - 80%.
(40% of this group had another sibling who had left church entirely)
Children not in church but still believe -
-Parents went every week - 76%
Children no longer believe -
-parents went every week - 50% ***

Would creating more resources enhance your current worship experience?

Yes - 46%, No - 53%

Does childhood worship frequency affect the children's church attendance?

Children attend church now -
-Parents have worship at least once a week - 98%, hardly ever had worship - 2%
Children left church and God -
-hardly ever had worship - 100%

Does current worship frequency affect current children's church attendance?

Never have worship (currently) -
-10% - still in the Adventist Church, 90% Not in any church
Infrequently have worship (currently) -
-68% - Still in the Adventist Church, 32% Not in any church
Worship once a week (currently) -
-72% - Still in the Adventist Church, 22% Not in any church
Worship few times a week (currently) -
-67% - Still in the Adventist Church, 25% Not in any church
Worship everyday (currently) -
-86% Still in the Adventist Church, 7% Not in any church.

Did worship at home in the past determine you worship now?

Hardly Ever (when a child) -
-Once a week (now) - 40%
A Few Times (when a child)-
-Never (now) - 4%
Everyday (when a child) -
-Never (now) - 12.5%



HIGHLIGHTS

Worship Experience

89% of Pacific Islanders reported to have had worship when they were children. Only 60% of White/Caucasians reported to have had the same.

84% of White/Caucasians reported not having music as a part of their current worship.

80% of Black and 73% of Asians reported having singing as a part of their current worship.

78% of 1st Generation Adventists reported having no worship when they were a child. 26% of 3rd Generation Adventists reported having no worship when they were a child.

Of those who don't currently do worship, 75% didn't answer how often they worshipped as a child.

Of those who currently worship once a week, 75% responded that their childhood worship was either once a week or a few times.

Of those who currently worship a few times a week, 61% responded that their childhood worship was also a few times a week.

Of those who currently worship every day, 61% responded that their childhood worship was also every day.

Connecting Church & Worship

Those who reported not having any worship currently, 10% are still in the church, 90% no longer attend any church.

As shown in *fig. 1*, with those who reported currently going to church every week, there was an even distribution of worship frequency as a child. Only 3% hardly ever had worship as a child.

Those who reported currently going to church once or twice a month, 54% have infrequent worship currently.

Those who reported currently going to church occasionally, 43% don't have worship currently.

Those who reported not going to church currently, 75% don't have worship currently.

Parents who never attended church when they were a child, 69% of their children are still in the church, 31% don't go to any church.

Parents who only sometimes went to church, 58% of their children are still in an Adventist church.

Resourcing

Only 15% of the 65+ age group were interested in podcasts. The 30-49 age group made it one of their highest requested resources.

More than half of the votes for resources were for parent-lead bible studies, an online resource centre, and a worship box.

Current Church Attendance vs. Childhood Worship Frequency

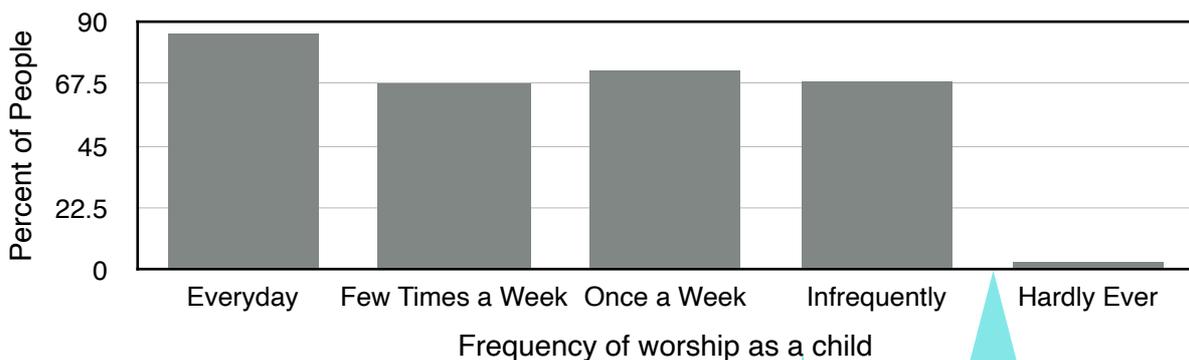


Fig 1. Comparing those who attend church every week currently with their childhood worship frequency

CONCLUSION

In Jewish culture, one of the most important customs is the “Shema”, which is also found in Deuteronomy chapter 6. As it starts with loving God with all your heart, it continues to list the ways you do this in verses 7-9: teach them to your children, talk about it in your house, when you walk, when you lie down. Paint it on your hands, your eyes, and the doorposts and gates of your house. It seems as though God saw that loving God started in the home, and without living this love first inside your gates, you were almost certain to fail.



From the data that was collected in this study, I have found that the numbers have indeed confirmed this.

Facts such as:

- Worship frequency in childhood tends to follow through to when they become parents themselves.
- Worship at home tends to reflect church attendance.
- Those still attending church now, 97% had worship at least once a week when they were a child.
This means it doesn't matter what worship is like, or even how often, you just need to do it!
- Parents who only sometimes went to church when they were a child, more than half of their children are still in the church. But parents who hardly ever had worship when they were a child, 100% of them have left the church and their faith.
- In all of the cases BUT worshipping every day were there children who had left the faith entirely. Only with the parents who have worship every day is there 0% of the children leaving their belief in God.

The final piece of this picture I would like to show is shown below in *fig 2*, showcasing the power of childhood influence on parents and their own children's faith. In the children that still have an active faith in God (go to an Adventist Church, go to a different denomination, and still believe but do not attend), 75% or more of the parents both went to church every week and/or had worship every week.

In addition, in all three of those categories almost 100% of those parents had worship at least once a week when they were children.

But what is quite startling is not in the children that have an active faith, but in those who no longer believe. Half of the parents of those who no longer believe went to church every week as children themselves, but none of them had worship every week.

This stark contrast shows the importance of family worship as a child, far more than simply attending church, as it has long-term ramifications not only on the 1st generation, but the 2nd (and maybe even future) generations to come.

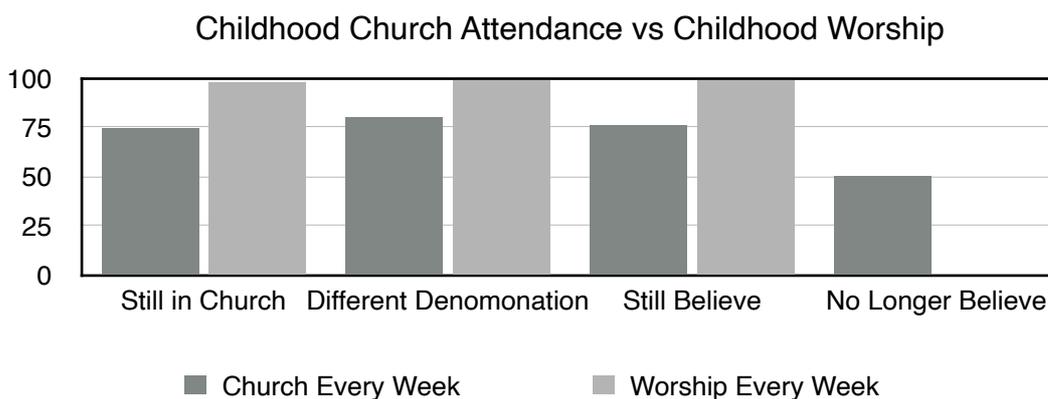


Fig 2. Comparing parents church attendance & worship frequency to their children's current faith experience

IMPLICATIONS & FURTHER ACTION

Although this study has many limitations that I have mentioned above, it is in line with many greater studies that have been conducted in this field over the last few decades. It is my intention that the Victorian Conference is indeed in need of greater empowerment and resourcing for families in the home, especially post COVID-19.

As stated in the “Most Requested Resources” page, the top three requested resources all had to do with empowering families to become spiritual hubs. Considering most other departments within the Conference focus on church life on Sabbath, it is the job of the Family Ministries Department to resource and empower parents to become the spiritual mentors at home, so that the local church can flourish.

If we are truly a Church that wants to grow evangelistically, then we need to truly employ the discipleship model and teach 1st generation Adventists how to have worship at home. As we have learned, 75% of 1st generation Adventists did not have family worship when they were young, and this is a simple way to close that gap and strengthen the next generation.

And for those 2nd and 3rd generation Adventists who may have been blessed to have that upbringing, there is still growth that can be achieved in this space. This group may need to be encouraged and taught of the importance of worship in the home, and the ramifications of this simple practice on their own children in the future. Showing that worship in the home can be even more important and impactful than church attendance may build a more intentional and resilient set of families within the local church, and may even carry the winds of change for how we view and practice church for the better.

This report is hopefully the catalyst for change in the direction and focus we should take as a community, as a Conference, and as a Church

FAMILY MINISTRIES HAS A UNIQUE AND POWERFUL ABILITY TO BYPASS THE WEEKLY CHURCH SERVICE, AND RESOURCE FAMILIES IN THEIR OWN HOMES.

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THERE IS AN EVEN GREATER NEED FOR SPIRITUAL HOMES IN THE WORLD WE LIVE IN, AND IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THE DATA REFLECTS THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP AT HOME, IN MANY CASES MORE THAN CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

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MORE EFFORT AND RESOURCES NEED TO BE DIRECTED TO FAMILIES IN THE HOME IF THE CHURCH WANTS TO GROW HEALTHY AND NATURALLY.

STRONG FAMILIES MAKE STRONG CHURCHES.