



To find out more about
Scripture Union
New Zealand (SUNZ)

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THRIVE is a ministry of Scripture Union New Zealand (SUNZ).

Scripture Union began in New Zealand in 1880 with a focus on helping children and young people read the Bible. Since then, the movement has grown to include camping, groups in schools and communities and a wide range of training opportunities.

Our vision:

We support churches to help children and young people discover Jesus and become life-long disciples who serve the world around them.



We are indebted to Terry Williams and Here2Stay for help in developing this resource
here2stay.org.au



SUPPORT

There are a range of resources available to support you.

SUNZ

- Workshops to dig deeper into each strategy
- Additional articles, research and reading
- WAY2GO Children's Ministry Training
- Camps: a great way to invest in 'Peak Experiences'
- YouthServe: a community based serving programme
- Intergenerational Church Camp facilitation
- Exodus Prime: young leadership development

www.sunzbreakthrough.org.nz/thrive
www.sunz.org.nz/thrive

Denominational Support

- Check with your denomination as to the support they can offer. They often have training, mentoring and resources available.

Here2stay.org.au

- This is the website for the Australian initiative on which THRIVE is based. It has a range of articles and videos.



COMMUNICATE

Communicate with the whole church:

Once your plans are underway, communicate with the whole church. A common sense of ownership is an important aspect of bringing about change. This may be through your newsletter or bulletin, from the front of church, or over a cup of tea after church one Sunday.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER:

- The eight strategies work best when they are woven together.
- They are strategies not a programme .
- They help create the right environment for faith to grow, but the Holy Spirit makes faith grow.
- This process is focused on children and young people, but it applies to all ages.
- It's a whole-church responsibility. It takes us all working together.
- It can be the small things that make a great difference over the long run.
- Change takes time.

GUIDELINES FOR A THRIVE WORKING GROUP

This booklet is a follow-up to the THRIVE whole church facilitation. It is designed to be used by a working group to determine your next steps.

Create a working group:

- church leadership or elders, a small group with representation across generations and groups in your church *or* a small group who are passionate about faith formation with children and young people

Purpose of the working group:

- Gather together and summarise the conversations from the whole church THRIVE consultation
- Determine common threads and themes that emerged
- Discern which faith formation strategies would be a priority for your church to focus on
- Begin to form a strategy and plan to make this happen
- Be champions for this change
- Ensure that the rest of the church is communicated and consulted with





DISCERNMENT

REFLECTION ON THE THRIVE FACILITATION

As a working group, your first role is to:

- Gather together and summarise the conversations from the whole church THRIVE consultation
- Determine common threads and themes that emerged

You may choose to begin by discussing these questions together.

Discussion questions:

- How do you think people responded and engaged with the content?
- What follow up conversations have you heard?
- Were there any particular highlights or concerns?

CREATE A PLAN

This may involve *one or all* of these. The amount of investment of time and resources is decided by your church, depending on your capacity, time frame and area of focus:

Celebrating what is working well:

Develop ways to celebrate and tell the stories of where faith is flourishing in your church community. This can be powerful and inspiring.

Strengthening what already exists:

How can you add some of what you have learned into existing ministries and programmes to strengthen them?

Creating something new:

Start a new project! Focus on one or two of the key THRIVE strategies and develop something new. Some things to consider:

- Who will make it happen?
- What resources or funding will you need?
- What is your purpose and has this been communicated to everyone involved?
- How will you involve the community as well as the church family?
- What is manageable?
- When will you review your project?



PLANNING

COLLATE YOUR IDEAS

Once you have identified one or two strategies begin to collect up any ideas you have about how to address this strategy. Brainstorm on a whiteboard, get out paper and pens, or select one person to take notes.

REFLECTIONS ON THE EIGHT STRATEGIES

Use the information you have gathered from the consultation (notes taken, posters with stickers on them, and any ongoing conversations you may have had) to reflect on these questions. You may like to use the grid on pg 6 to record your findings.

Read through the descriptions of the eight THRIVE strategies on pg. 8-11 if you need to refresh your memory.

Discussion questions:

- Which of the strategies has your church identified that you are doing well in?
- Which of the strategies has your church identified that you are doing, but could strengthen?
- Which of the strategies has your church identified that you would like to focus on? (This may be that it is an area of weakness or concern, or it may be for other reasons).

Strategy	Celebrate areas we are doing well in	Strengthen existing ministry	Focus on an area of weakness or priority
Encounters with God			
Family and Whānau			
God's Big Story			
Intergenerational Connections			
Mentoring			
Peak Experiences			
Positive Peer Communities			
Serving Others			



Children and young people naturally like to be together and have fun. Positive peer communities can be places to challenge each other, to encourage one another and to problem solve and discuss issues relevant to the group. Peer groups can be a safe place to discuss questions of faith and share experiences.



Serving others is an opportunity to work together in ways that emphasise God's care of creation, compassion for humanity and concern for justice. Through serving others we demonstrate Christ's love, and worship of God through action. Serving others gives our children and young people the opportunity to respond with compassion to the things that concern them. Any of us who have served in a team will know that serving others also builds deep relationships, often across generations, in ways that can impact our faith for a lifetime.



MENTORING

One of the major reasons why people choose to leave the church is because their questions about life and faith have not been answered. That's why mentors are so important. Mentors are those who walk alongside children and young people as they journey in faith. They create a safe environment for questions, and show genuine care and concern.



PEAK EXPERIENCES

A peak experience complements the regular activities that take place within your faith community. It can be a planned event or a camp that provides a wonderful and positive encounter with God. It can also be unplanned, a place where God shows up and something happens that grows and challenges you in your faith journey. Peak Experiences are usually seen as a positive experience, but sometimes peak experiences can come out of challenges and even tragedy too.

From your discussion can you identify one or two strategies that could be a priority for the next 3, 6 or 12 months?

Eight Strategies to Help Faith Thrive



ENCOUNTERS
WITH GOD

Faith formation is about knowing God, not simply knowing about God. It is about relationship. We grow in our faith through the everyday aspects of life such as regular Bible reading, time in prayer or a walk in the park. Faith formation happens when children and young people meet with God in ways that are frequent, meaningful, and personal.



GOD'S BIG
STORY

Every part of the Bible can be understood in the context of one storyline; God's Big Story. This story reveals to us who God is and how God acts in the world. It is also a story that tells us who we are, as individuals but also as a community. We meet God in the words of the Bible as we explore it together, and on our own.



FAMILY/WHĀNAU

The family is the main place where children and young people shape their values and develop their view on the world. This is especially true for faith formation. When we talk about family we include our immediate family, those who live under the same roof as us, or the interconnected web of relationships that form extended family networks.



INTERGENERATIONAL
CONNECTIONS

Faith grows when the generations are together and relationships between different ages are valued. Wisdom and experience can be passed on. New perspectives and fresh approaches can be offered. All ages benefit from this. According to Kara Powell and the Sticky Faith research team, '... being involved in intergenerational worship and relationship was one of the variables most highly correlated to young people's faith.'