



FAMILY STUDY GUIDES HANDBOOK

A GUIDE FOR CONGREGATION IMPLEMENTATION

This document is an overview of the Deuteronomy 6 Youth Instruction project being implemented in United Church of God congregations. The Handbook was designed to help congregations get started with the “parents first” model concept for youth instruction.

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UNITED CHURCH OF GOD



Deuteronomy 6 Model Handbook

A Guide for Congregation Youth Instruction
Implementation

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This handbook has been designed as an overview and guide for the Deuteronomy 6 model for youth instruction that is being used in many United Church of God congregations. It can help congregations get started with the “parents first” model concept for youth instruction.

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UCG Vision Statement

The UCG Vision statement explains that we must be a church that is guided by the Holy Spirit and joined and knit together by what each member supplies. Deuteronomy 6 clearly places the primary responsibility of “supplying” godly knowledge and understanding to our youth upon the parents. This Deuteronomy 6 project is intended to support and assist parents with the moral and spiritual development of their children and involve the entire church in the process. It is our duty to support parents in teaching youth to develop their full godly potential--which is their calling into the Body of Jesus Christ and the work of the Church--while learning that God's spiritual laws are practical ways of living. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 & 11:19-21; Psalm 34:11; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

Deuteronomy 6 Model Overview

Purpose:

Deuteronomy 6:6 {AMP} *And these words which I am commanding you this day shall be [first] in your [own] minds and hearts; [then] :7 You shall whet and sharpen them so as to make them penetrate, and teach and impress them diligently upon the [minds and] hearts of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.*

- 📖 **Youth Instruction responsibility belongs to the parents and begins in the home.**
- 📖 **Youth Instruction includes all children from birth until leaving home.**
- 📖 **Youth Instruction is supported and reinforced in our church programs and culture.**

Parents:

Shift responsibility for teaching about God to the parents, 24/7. It is not just at church during “Sabbath School.” Parents are responsible for teaching their own children about God and His principles.

- 📖 Parents can teach in the moment. Biblical principles are most effectively taught “in the moment” as life happens. (Deuteronomy 6:7 ...*when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*)
- 📖 Parents know their own children and how they can learn best.
- 📖 Parents can teach to their own children’s grade or knowledge level.
- 📖 Family studies are intended to tie biblical concepts to everyday life.

Local Congregation:

The United Church of God desires to provide a positive environment for growth. Involving all members of the congregation can help to do this. Some key things:

- 📖 A local congregation can become more “*joined and knit together*” if everyone is aware of current topics of instruction that are being taught to our youth. It is encouraging to parents and young people if they know that all are interested in their spiritual welfare. Members can even be invited to attend Youth Instruction meetings and discussions.
- 📖 Work to build parent and youth instructor-facilitator’s “**teaching**” expertise.
- 📖 Local programs, studies and topics can easily be tied to monthly Youth Instruction topic (clubs, Bible studies, youth instruction and studies, sermonette/sermon speakers). The topics are Biblically based, doctrinally sound and designed for practical application to all of our everyday Christian lives.

Implementation Process

How do we implement a “D-6” model in our congregation?

1) **Pastor Involvement.** It is important for the pastor to have a good understanding of the Deuteronomy 6 “Parents First” model and how UCG is using it to frame Youth Instruction. This model emphasizes first the importance of parents solidifying and increasing their knowledge of God, and then helping their own children internalize God’s ways.

2) **Do a Needs Assessment.** Start with these kinds of questions:

- What is the current understanding of shifting to a D-6 “Parents First” Model for Youth Instruction?
- Is there currently a Sabbath School program in place and how is it working?
- What are the families’ commitments to Youth Instruction?
- How many children are in the congregation?
- What are their ages? (Remember—this model includes all youth from birth to out-of-the-home.
- What is your current facilitator-instructor and parent teaching expertise?
- What resources do you currently have available to use?
- What are your meeting facilities like and times available?

Key things to consider:

- ✓ Identify a key person(s) who can “lead” or take on the project for the congregation. This person needs to have a passion and desire to make it work! There are a lot of parents out there who are very excited about this project and are willing to help.
- ✓ Identify the first area to focus on. Take small steps to begin with rather than trying to do everything at once.

3) **Set a meeting with parents, leadership, and other interested members.**

- Discuss the need to shift from traditional Sabbath School program to a D-6 “Parents First” Model for Youth Instruction. What are the benefits for parents and their children? How will the whole congregation benefit?
- You can show or use the following from the initial “launch” of the D-6 program in 2014.
 - ✓ GCE presentation introducing D-6 from 2014:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D56DH5F7cCI&index=12&list=PLIHmLSKYShCy9gV60HqFMYbNwgZuQ6O7b>
 - ✓ Seminar on D-6 Model from 2014:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p61ghDXW92w&feature=youtu.be>
 - ✓ Develop your own D-6 introduction using PowerPoint slides from Schreiber’s presentation.
 - ✓ Review the UCG Family Education Webpage. Information and resources can be found here: <https://www.ucg.org/members/family-study-guides>

Decide on an implementation timeline.

Suggestion: Begin your actual program after the Feast of Tabernacles, but start preparing a couple of months beforehand to put needed things into place.

4) Discuss with your families the topic of study.

- What is the study topic that the parents would like or is most needed by the parent group?
- The UCG 2019-20 current topic of study is ***The Armor of God***. The monthly Family Study Guides define the Armor of God as a set of spiritual tools that God provides us with to fight for Him. We evaluate why we need the Armor of God in our daily war against Satan. Each month we identify the parts that make up the whole Armor of God, which defends us in our daily lives. The Guides help children to internalize God's ways into their own lives, using God's thinking as ways to make decisions in their lives. The Guides have lots of possible questions and scenarios to help start rich family discussions.
- If your congregation has not started the Deuteronomy 6 program, it might be beneficial to review previous Family Study Guides. Access the past and current Youth Instruction Family Guides here: <https://www.ucg.org/members/family-study-guides>

5) Develop a timeline and implementation plan.

- When will you start your congregation's Youth Instruction program?
- What will be topic of study?
- Who are your facilitator-instructors?
- Will you have formal instructional times at church? If so how will they be structured? (i.e. numbers of times, amount of time, format)
- How will this plan be shared and implemented? Develop a communications process. (When will parents and others receive family study guides; announcements; how distributed?)

Once your plan is developed:

1. How will you involve and connect the whole congregation to the D-6 Youth Instruction Model?

Whenever possible help connect and support the other UCG youth and family programs: United Youth Camps, Feast of Tabernacles, etc.

2. How will you build in growth opportunities for raising the levels of "teaching" expertise in parents, facilitators, leaders in church, and speakers?

3. Within your Implementation Plan, have 3 month, 6 month, and yearly program assessments. This should include all stakeholders. This helps everyone to see progress or any needed program adjustments. Ask these kinds of questions:

- ✓ How is it going? What do parents say? What do facilitators say about how the children are learning and doing? What does the data say?
- ✓ What changes might need to be addressed or adjusted? When do changes need to be made?
- ✓ Who is involved with the changes?
- ✓ What different results are you expecting with this change/adjustment?

4. Finally, don't forget to share results and celebrate before going on to the next year!!!

Some General Questions and Answers

1. We don't have enough children to start a Youth Instruction Program. How is this relevant to the congregation?

If there is even one child and one parent or grandparent, the lessons can be taught and the principles applied. If there are a few more, even better. Children in small congregations with few or no others in their age category need even more involvement and closer connection to the Church as a whole. Knowing that they are learning the same things as their peers in other church areas can be encouraging. If sermonettes or sermons are given related to the topic of the month, and the message brings out points of the lesson, the child will perk up and listen. Children want to know that the adults care about them what they are learning. Get creative on an implementation for small numbers.

2. Our parents are not involved in teaching their children about God. How can we change that culture?

The adage "you can lead a horse to water, but can't make him drink" certainly applies to Youth Instruction. If a parent chooses not to have their child participate, the child suffers. Some parents have chosen not to participate in "Sabbath School" either. However, if a parent is sending their child to the review lessons on the Sabbath with the other kids, often peer pressure sets in. The child may go home and ask the parent why they have not studied the lesson. We have seen most parents step up their home studies so their children will be better able to participate. Instructors can help by setting up youth instruction time to focus on discussing what families have learned so families observe the need to prepare and teach their children before review lessons. Additionally, instructors communicating positive results to parents and families after a lesson encourages families to become more involved. Unfortunately, some parents insist that "it's the Church's job to teach my kids!" and refuse to take the responsibility needed to make the D-6 program work effectively. But is it wise to revert to a "Sabbath School" only model to enable wrong thinking? Do we support or supplant our parents?

3. We don't have any teachers or talented members in our congregation who could teach youth lessons. How can we change that?

The Family Study Guides web-page will on occasion have resources for instructors with tips and strategies for teaching children. These things can help develop the skills of an interested adult. Depending on your demographics, you can get creative. One congregation had two single mothers each with a boy. Each Sabbath the boys had an "adopted" parent, grandparent, uncle, or aunt. On a rotating basis this "adopted" person or couple had the child sit with them at services, and would review a youth lesson with them after services. It helped these single mothers and helped the children become a part of the congregation.

4. Everyone is busy with lots of responsibilities and no one can take on another project. What do you suggest we do?

The fact is, once this program gets started, it gets easier. Parents will be able to access the family studies online and teach their children. Instructors will gather the children together on the Sabbaths that work for your congregation's schedules. Make sure the congregation has access to the lessons and encourage speakers to involve themselves in the topic of the month, as it is relevant and appropriate.

5. Without Sabbath School format, will we lose concepts such as Sabbath School graduation and recognition ceremonies, awarding Bibles, etc? What are your thoughts about that going forward?

Implementing the D-6 process does not eliminate Sabbath School or Teen Study lessons. The intent is for the emphasis to change so that these things support and augment family studies, not replace them. End-of-year celebrations, reviews, skits, awards, etc. are still an important part of youth instruction and are encouraged.

6. When will the family study guides be available and how can we get access?

See "Resources" below.

2019-2020
The Armor of God Family Study Guides
Lesson Objectives

Objectives:

- Define the Armor of God as a set of spiritual tools that God provides us with to fight for Him.
- Evaluate why we need the Armor of God in our war against Satan.
- Identify the parts that make up the whole Armor of God, which helps us defeat Satan in our daily lives.

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 6:11 *Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. (NLT)*

- 📖 **Belt of Truth:** Satan is known as the Great Deceiver. He is a master at lying, so we need to be trained in the Truth. The Belt of Truth [**John 17:17** *Sanctify them by your word. Your word is truth*] helps us defend against Satan's lies.
- 📖 **Breastplate of Righteousness:** The Breastplate of Righteousness protects our hearts. Righteousness is the state of being "right with God" through obedience—and by His forgiveness of our sins. God's commandments define righteousness (**Psalm 119:179**). It is striving to keep sin out of our hearts.
- 📖 **Shoes of the Gospel of Peace:** All warriors need to be prepared to run or move forward in battle when called upon to do so. We need to have Shoes of the Gospel of Peace so we can keep moving towards the Kingdom of God, and practice Godly ways. We always need to have on the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace so we can be prepared to share the Good News with anyone who needs to hear it.
- 📖 **Shield of Faith:** Sometimes we sin because Satan finds a weakness in our armor and He aims well. The Shield of Faith moves to cover those weaknesses when we don't have the knowledge or strength to face a situation. Our shield will never fail because God is always faithful to us
- 📖 **Helmet of Salvation:** Salvation means to be saved or delivered from something. The Helmet of Salvation protects us from thinking ungodly thoughts by helping us think the way Jesus Christ thinks. It helps us focus on God's goodness to deliver us into His Kingdom. (**Psalm 107**).
- 📖 **Sword of the Spirit (Word of God):** The Sword of the Spirit—the Bible—guides us into a Godly way of living. It helps us to be proactive in fighting Satan by cutting straight to the core of a matter and uncovering the truth (**Hebrews 4:12; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5**).

We should put these pieces of armor on every day, which will transform us into a "good soldier of Jesus Christ" (**2 Timothy 2:3**).

Resources

- ✓ During 2019-20, the monthly Family Guides are available on the UCG members webpage or you can go to the “Dropbox” link: [UCG D-6 Family Guides](#)

- ✓ All past and present Deuteronomy 6 topic series can be found here: ucg.org/members/family-study-guides

- ✓ 2014 GCE Plenary session given by Randy & Kay Schreiber—can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D56DH5F7cCI&index=12&list=PLIHmLSKYShCy9gV60HqFMYbNwgZuQ6O7b>

- ✓ D-6 Seminar video presented in Phoenix East congregation can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p61ghDXW92w&feature=youtu.be>

- ✓ You may also contact the Schreibers directly in this manner:
 - Randy Schreiber - randy_schreiber@ucg.org or 480-235-3981
 - Kay Schreiber – azkays@hotmail.com or 602-909-8189

An overview of the launch and implementation of the D-6 process in the NW Phoenix Congregation

We met as a group (all parents, instructors, and other interested) at the beginning of year to discuss and come to consensus on which topic is most needed for the yearly study. This is our Youth Instruction study topic.

- The parents wanted a study into the Fundamental Beliefs of UCG and God’s Doctrines as the first topic. Since then we have studied into The Ten Commandments and the Fruit of the God’s Spirit. These Family Study Guides are on the UCG Family website.
- Monthly Family Study Guides are designed and prepared for the yearly topic theme
- The guides are designed to build foundational basic biblical concepts for the parents. The guides are not written for the children, but for parents as guides to teach their own children.
- Each family receives the Family Study Guide at the first of the month
- Families have Bible studies using the Guides and other resources
- Mid-month 15 minute “Compass Check” lesson at church services
- End of month Summary Lesson with instructors
 - ✓ Selection of instructors (when possible: 1 experienced, 1 new, an observer)
 - ✓ Debrief after lessons to see how it went
 - ✓ Quarterly *Family Connections Newsletter* which gives teaching tips and tricks
 - ✓ Quarterly meetings with all parents, instructors, and congregational speakers for discussion on how the process is going and helping to build expertise as a group

General things we learned from our process in NW Phoenix:

- ✓ You need a couple of people to carry the torch and keep it going.
- ✓ Pastor needs to stay informed and involved. Take the lead on asking parents and others how things are going and what their family is learning.
- ✓ Have a variety of ways to collaborate and involve a broad group of your congregation in the development of the plan and the process.
- ✓ Build your implementation framework for change that works for your parents. Find out what parents ask for and need to study.
- ✓ Be flexible. There is no “one size fits all” model. The ongoing assessments will help to see if there are adjustments needed.
- ✓ Share resources and access with your whole congregation. These are not just for parents or instructors.
- ✓ Take small steps. It takes time to shift thinking in a positive way.
- ✓ Building success takes time and persistence. Keep at it.
- ✓ Share with parents the success and growth that you will see.

From The NW Phoenix Youth Instruction Team