

FOUNDATIONS

A Strategy for Implementing *Foundations*

There are several ways to implement the *Foundations* program in your congregation. This article outlines a five-year strategy. Future bulletins will consider other alternatives.



Foundations is structured around four key themes: *Peace*, *Hope*, *Joy*, and *Love*. These themes provide many opportunities to talk about important issues, both at a faith level, as well as, at a practical level. Each theme was developed as a stand-alone conversation and, therefore, each serves as a fine entry point for participating parents. It is not necessary then to organize multiple groups to work through different portions of the *Foundations* material at the same time.

YEAR ONE: Faculty Development and Program Planning

- During year one the school faculty will engage in a ten-session, Bible-based study written by John Kolander. Plan about forty-five minutes for each session. Sprinkle the sessions throughout the school year. These conversations will lead faculty members to wrestle with questions about their school's overall mission, its philosophy, climate, culture, curriculum, teacher training, policies, etc. The sessions may also include pastors, staff ministers, school board members, officers of the congregation, etc. As a result of these ten conversations, participants should generate a handful of clearly stated internal goals for their school.
- An ad hoc "Foundations Committee" should also be formed at the beginning of this first year in the program. The program leader will need to decide the size and make-up of this committee and should be prepared to assist and encourage the committee members in their work. The ad hoc committee should give attention to marketing the program to parents, organizing a calendar, and providing the necessary materials to participants. The committee may also discuss ways for using the *Foundations* program to impact other areas of the congregation's ministry program such as those ministries that reach out to the general community with the gospel.

YEAR TWO: **Peace**

- Year two will mark the introduction of the *Foundations* program to school parents and members of the congregation. This year will focus on the *Peace* theme. Initiate the year with a Christian education Sunday. The pastor can use the prepared sermon study for *Peace*. Invite children (or parents, or children and parents together) to prepare a song specially written for the Peace theme.
- In years two through five of the program, parents and Christian educators are invited to participate in a series of conversations that will be scheduled during the

school year. Each year contains seven highly focused conversations (about one a month). The length of these group conversations will vary, but they should generally not exceed 30 minutes. Discussion questions appear at the end of each chapter of the *Foundations* book. A guide for discussion leaders is included in the suite of *Foundations* materials.

[NOTE: All four of the *Foundations* themes begin with a conversation that will resonate with parents. The initial discussion for the Peace theme, for example, addresses a universal concern among parents that their child will be attending a school that offers a safe and secure learning environment. They might express their concern like this: “I want my child to learn in a peaceful setting—one that is free from conflict, threats, or bullies.” The Peace theme ultimately leads participants into a discussion about the peace that passes all human understanding—a peace that only Christ can give to us.]

YEAR THREE: **Hope**

- Repeat the same pattern that was used for Year Two.

[The seven conversations structured around the Hope theme begin with a common concern that parents might express in this way: “I hope my child will succeed in school and in life, and be able to contribute to society.” The conversations ultimately lead participants to consider the hope we have in Jesus’ resurrection—the sure hope for life everlasting.]

YEAR FOUR: **Joy**

- Repeat the same pattern that was used for Years Two and Three.

[The first of seven conversations under the Joy theme deals with the commonly expressed parental concern: “I just want my child to be happy.” It ultimately leads parents and Christian teachers to talk about how Christians appreciate and celebrate God’s blessings.]

YEAR FIVE: **Love**

- Repeat the same pattern that was used for Years Two, Three, and Four.

[The final year begins with a discussion based on the commonly expressed concern: “I want my child to attend a school where he or she will be loved by teachers and friends.” The seven conversations will ultimately lead parents and teachers into a discussion about God’s great love for us.]

- During this last year in the five-year cycle, the ad hoc committee should consider future planning that builds on what the *Foundations* program has accomplished.