NATIONAL FORGIVENESS WEEK FOR AUSTRALIA

THE BOTTOM-UP APPROACH – A SIMPLIFIED VERSION FOR CHURCHES



The introduction of National Forgiveness Week (NFW) can be approached from several different on-ramps. The Top-Down approach to NFW is complex and requires serious effort and resources to achieve a truly national outcome, still it is quite unachievable. In fact, the local church is the key to the effective rollout of NFW in both the Top-Down approach and in this simplified version.

This simplified and localised version of NFW can be adopted by individual churches and written into their annual calendar. It requires only limited resources, and may eventually evolve into the nationwide event over time.

Most pastors are too busy to involve themselves in organising NFW, so the role can be delegated to an associate pastor or volunteers.

Once church leadership agrees to run NFW the pastor should call for capable volunteers from the congregation to form a small *NFW Organising Committee* to prepare and manage NFW.

A prayer team should also be created as soon as possible to pray for open hearts and a clear pathway as preparations progress.

Suggestions for Individual Churches to run Australia NFW






- The local church is the primary means of spreading the message of one-on-one forgiveness into their surrounding communities. Sitting in churches is a vast relatively untapped human resource. They can only carry heartfelt forgiveness effectively as they themselves have been impacted.

- NFW is to be launched on the first Sunday (proposed dates below), closing on the ensuing Sunday.

- During the week, the congregation is encouraged to search their hearts to forgive those who have offended or hurt them, and to seek forgiveness from those they have offended, hurt, selfishly abused, ignored or overlooked.

- The effect of teaching and practising forgiveness can have widespread beneficial impact because everyone has been hurt and offended; and everyone has hurt and offended others. Everyone can easily identify with the freedom that forgiveness offers because they are both victims and offenders.

- Some free items can be given out. For example, wristbands, lapel badges, *How to Forgive* pamphlets.

- During the ensuing weekdays the local church can take the initiative to bravely venture out into the community to promote relational forgiveness.

Sitting in your congregation are men and women of influence in the community who might open doors to representatives of your church To address a convened gathering within civil establishments.

Such establishments may include …

- Schools, colleges and educational institutions.
- Sporting Organisations
- Government Departments
- Prisons and Corrective Services
- Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Rescue etc)
- Commerce/Industry
- Aboriginal groups and institutions
- Military (Army, Navy, Air Force)
- Clubs and community groups
- Hospitals, Mental Institutions and Palliative Care
- Music, arts, culture and entertainment venues

Pastors and capable lay preachers can, by invitation, can go into these civil establishments to educate employees on the value of practising forgiveness in the workplace and family relationships.

Members of the congregation could be called upon to accompany the pastor to tell their forgiveness stories.

- On the final Sunday, the local church is encouraged to hold a closing celebration in their service, sharing testimonies and praising God for the outcomes of NFW.

Other Suggestions



- Letterbox Drops
- Forgive Story Cards (forgivestories.com)
- Invitations to a movie on forgiveness (eg *Fireproof*).

For more information see …

nationalforgivenessweek.com