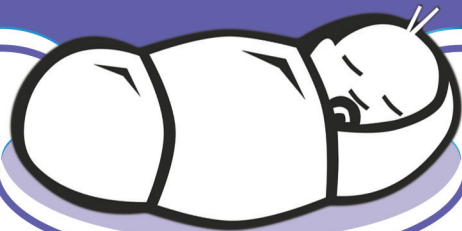


Welcome Baby

Program

A Complete Guide for Establishing
and Operating the Welcome Baby
Program in the Local Church



by Kay Kuzuma, Ed. D.

Welcome Baby Resource Manual

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About this Manual

The *Welcome Baby Resource Manual* is designed for use by pastors, church leaders, parish nurses, and Welcome Baby coordinators in establishing and operating the Welcome Baby program in local churches. This document provides a complete description of the program and a list of supporting materials needed for its basic operation. Additionally, this manual describes other possible church resources that can supplement the Welcome Baby program.

About the Author

Dr. Kay Kuzma, a renowned child development specialist and author of many books on parenting and family relationships, is also the founder and speaker of Family Matters Ministry. She is dynamic, energetic, and enthusiastic about promoting healthy family practices and practical parenting techniques.

She has been seen and heard around the world on her regular Family Matters radio feature and weekly TV series. She has also made numerous guest appearances on such programs as NBC's Today Show and TBN's Joy Program.

With more than 25 years of teaching experience at UCLA, California State University Northridge, La Sierra University, and Loma Linda University, Kay has applies her expertise to helping parents with newborns.

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Preface

In the early 70s I read about an experimental program in Denver, Colorado that sent nonprofessional women to visit families who were considered to be high-risk for child abuse. The rates of abuse were significantly lowered by these periodic visits.

In the 90s a similar study was done in Hawaii with the same findings. When visitors were sent to periodically break the isolation and resulting frustrations of these parents (of whom it was projected that 18 percent would abuse their children), the rate of abuse became less than one percent!

These are modern-day illustrations of the truth of the biblical concept that we should be our neighbor's keepers. For the children's sake, we must be involved in the lives of others. It's our Christian duty to help meet the needs of young families and care about what happens to them.

For more than 20 years the idea had been in my mind to develop a set of monthly newsletters that church members could deliver to parents of newborns, offering them a social network of support, information, and resources to meet their newfound needs.

At last, with the help of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, ASI (Adventist-Laymen Services and Industries), and other dedicated individuals who saw the need, plus the graphic design talents of Fred Knopper, editing by Bennie Roesel, and consultation and translation by Ada Gardia, Family Matters was given the opportunity to develop this dream. Its called *Welcome Baby*.

It is my prayer that *Welcome Baby* will make a difference in the lives of those parents and children who receive the visits and newsletters, and in the lives of those who are fulfilling the gospel commission, "Go ye into all the world..." by taking *Welcome Baby* to their neighbors and friends.

Kay Kuzma, Ed.D

Chapter 1

Getting Started

What is the Welcome Baby Program?

The Welcome Baby program is an outreach tool for friendship, support, and witnessing between church members and parents of newborns. It consists of 12 newsletters—a simple, nonthreatening opportunity for friendship evangelism.

Welcome Baby can be used by church members or parish nurses to provide information and nurture to new parents in the church and in the community. No matter the audience (members or nonmembers), the information provided in the newsletters and new opportunity for friendship can make a significant difference in the lives of others.

Parents of newborns are more willing to make lifestyle changes than at any other stage of their lives. There is no better time to introduce these families to the advantages of a healthy lifestyle, a strong social network of church friends, and the transforming power of God’s love.

How Does the Welcome Baby Program Work?

This program should be simple.

- Draft a simple, straightforward greeting card or letter to the new parents, inviting them to receive the newsletters.
- Send or deliver the first newsletter of the *Welcome Baby* series (you might also include a small gift of choice, such as a small blanket, pair of booties, etc.).
- Continue sending or delivering the newsletters each new month of the baby’s first year.

This program is very effective. Parents are usually eager for practical information that will make their lives with Baby easier, more fun, and more rewarding. The newsletters are written in a concise and interesting manner by an internationally recognized authority on child development and parenting.

Order Welcome Baby Newsletters

This complete set of newsletters includes everything you need for establishing and operating a Welcome Baby program in your church. The newsletters are written for all new parents, but will be particularly meaningful to parents having their first baby. Each set includes enough newsletters to distribute to ten families for one year.

English Set (10 per package) #805005

Spanish Set (10 per package) #805006

Available at

www.adventsource.org or 402.486.8800



How to Get Started

Try this easy 10-step method to get the Welcome Baby program started in your church.

- 1) Present the Welcome Baby program to your church. Make announcements from the platform.
- 2) Encourage a commitment from your church members to contact at least 10 families.
- 3) Ask church members to be Welcome Baby Partners and visit at least one family with a newborn. A Welcome Baby Partner is a person or family that delivers the newsletters and builds a bond with the new family.
- 4) Create a team of church members that can participate in other ways, such as helping with the cost of ordering newsletters, making gifts for the newborn and family, providing wnames of new parents, etc.
- 5) Obtain names and addresses of parents of newborns. Here are some ideas:
 - a. Birth announcements in local newspapers, especially in smaller communities. If the family's address is listed in the phonebook, a casual, nonthreatening first contact can be made.
 - b. Contact a childbirth educator and see if you can pass out Welcome Baby enrollment information at prenatal classes.
 - c. Leave information cards at physicians' offices, midwife offices, or with leaders of breastfeeding support groups. (Obtain permission first, of course!) Interested parents can submit their information on their own free will.
 - d. Contact adoption agencies, asking permission for them to distribute enrollment information to families who adopt a newborn.
 - e. Relatives, friends, and acquaintances of church members.
 - f. Automatically enroll each church member that is expecting a baby. A Mentoring Family could be assigned to deliver the newsletters to these families.
- 6) Give each Welcome Baby Partner the following:
 - a. A Welcome Baby newsletter packet.
 - b. A copy of this manual.
 - c. Stationery or other materials for writing notes to the families of newborns.
 - d. A small gift to give to the family during the first visit (optional).
 - e. Ask each Partner to report back to you any interesting contacts. These can be shared with other church members to encourage them to participate in the program.
- 7) Have a few copies of the newsletters available in the church office so members can become familiar with the material.
- 8) Recruit new Partners on a monthly basis by keeping your church members informed about the progress of the Welcome Baby program through personal testimonies of the Partners, bulletin announcements, or church newsletter articles.
- 9) Encourage church members to introduce Welcome Baby families to church resources that may be helpful to them, such as a baby dedication service, Beginner Sabbath School classes, Vacation Bible School (for older children), and parenting or health classes, if they are available.
- 10) Ask the congregation to continue to pray for the contacts being made through the Welcome Baby program.

Chapter 2

Tailoring Welcome Baby to Your Church and Community

Welcome Baby is a flexible program. It can be used by one person in the church, or a team of individuals that coordinate the contacts and develop meaningful resources for the parents. The following background information will help you plan how to best implement the program in your church.

Purpose and Target Audience

The Welcome Baby newsletters are written for all new parents, but they are particularly meaningful to parents:

- Having their first or second baby
- Who have at least a high school education
- Are very busy
- Have at least one parent employed

These newsletters are designed to:

- Influence parenting styles
- Introduce parents to local church resources
- Be read by both parents
- Provide a subtle and general Christian foundation, so as not to offend the parents' current religious convictions (the focus is on character development, not religion)
- Be easy to read with short, interesting, and informative articles presented in an upbeat and attractive format
- Be carefully researched and updated periodically

The basic values presented in the Welcome Baby newsletters are:

- A parent's primary commitment should be to the family.
- Marriage is foundational to the concept of a family.
- Father and mother should share childcare.
- Babies need love and positive attention, which can't be given without spending time together.
- Parents need a social support network and should reach out for help when they need it.
- Every parent is capable of abusing a child if frustration mounts.
- Parents should provide a safe, stimulating environment for the baby, and meet his or her developmental needs.
- Gentle methods of child rearing can be better than a hardline approach

Welcome Baby Training Seminar

If you have an organizational plan that includes introducing Welcome Baby families to a wide variety of church resources and/or if you will be visiting families who might have special needs, you may want to hold a training seminar for Welcome Baby Partners. Equip them with appropriate tools and information for offering meaningful service to these families.

Community Need

National statistics indicate that each year, 16 babies per 1000 people are born. 25 percent of these babies are born to single mothers. There are 328 cases of child abuse per 10,000 people, and the average age of a child being abused is seven years old. However, the majority of debilitating or life-threatening abuse occurs in the first year.

Many of the families represented in the above statistics suffer from:

- Lack of information and resources
- Lack of family and friendship support
- Lack of church fellowship

These needs can be met through the Welcome Baby program. The two major familial needs for new parents are:

- Information for better understanding the developmental needs of a newborn, and of effective parenting skills
- Friendship for new parents. After a baby is born, parents can often experience isolation. This can lead to frustration and child abuse or neglect.

Seeking to meet these needs, Welcome Baby can provide the following opportunities for outreach.

The Opportunity to Help in a Time of Need

In Hickman, Nebraska, Jeff and Barb Paeas just had their fifth child. Neither of them had any family or close friends in the area. Shortly after the birth of the baby, Barb became ill and had to be taken to the hospital. It was snowing that evening, and the driving conditions were hazardous. Who would take care of the children? A quick call came to Jani Rexinger, the Welcome Baby Partner, connected with Jeff and Barb's family. She came to their home to watch their children while Jeff took his wife to the hospital.

The Opportunity to Make Friends and Break Isolation

In the Walla Walla, Washington area, a single mother of newborn twins was selected to be part of the Welcome Baby program. Upon noticing the lack of baby things in her small apartment, the Welcome Baby Partner asked if anyone had given her a baby shower.

"No," she replied.

"Would you mind if our church gave you one?"

The young mother's face lit up. More than 30 women came to her shower, bringing two of

everything. One of the women attending even offered to come to her house and spend a couple hours each week doing anything that needed to be done—or staying with her babies while she ran errands. Another woman offered to babysit if the mother could bring her twins to her house. A few months later, the mother asked if this woman could babysit one Friday night. When she explained that she would return very late, the woman said she would be happy to keep the babies all night and take them to the Beginners program at church the next day. The she invited the mother to come to the fellowship meal after church to pick up the babies.

She agreed, and was greeted warmly by the women who had attended her shower. The mother began asking questions about the beliefs of the church and wondered if she could start attending.

The Opportunity to Introduce Others to Church Resources

In Cleveland, Tennessee, Joe Kinser, a young father who was being visited and given the Welcome Baby newsletters, developed a serious heart condition. Since his father died young from the same problem, Joe suddenly became very interested in a healthy lifestyle. This gave the Welcome Baby Partners an opportunity to invite Joe to Health-Fest, their church’s weeklong outreach program in Chattanooga, where he was introduced to a healthy Adventist lifestyle and was a guest at a vegetarian banquet that featured Dr. Ben Carson as a speaker.

The Opportunity to Witness to Others

In Bennet, Nebraska, the church members make handmade quilts to take as a gift during the first Welcome Baby visit. After the first visit to a mother whose name was found in the paper, the mother was so overwhelmed with gratitude that she called the Welcome Baby Partner.

“I didn’t have a chance to tell you about my birth and delivery,” she gushed. “I almost died, and so did my baby. I prayed to live, promising God that I would find a church to raise my baby in, and to get involved and make some Christian friends. You were the first people who visited me since I’ve been home. I think God is telling me something!”

The Opportunity to Invite Families to Church

Arden and Yvonne Brion visited some new parents who had once been interested in their church, but had become discouraged because of some criticism. Arden wrote: “We showed Craig and Beth the Welcome Baby newsletters and gave them the entire package. They were impressed! Your program gave us the opportunity to invite them back to church with their baby—and they accepted!”

Limitations

The Welcome Baby newsletters are not meant to take the place of information given in pediatrician’s office or by other health professionals.

Issues relating to unwed parents or single-parent families, as well as divorce, remarriage, or stepchildren, are not addressed in the basic newsletter series. Also to note, some cultural or disability issues will need additional information or support than the basic newsletters offer.

Welcome Baby Participants

Although the Welcome Baby program can be successful in a small church without an organizational plan, large churches may wish to develop an organizational structure. In that

case, your program may have the following participants:

- **Welcome Baby Coordinator:** The administrator of the program who is responsible for obtaining the names of new parents and their child(ren), and recruiting and training Welcome Baby participants.
- **Welcome Baby Partners:** Church members who are willing to spiritually nurture a family with a newborn by sending them a note of introduction (allowing the family the option to participate or not) and delivering the 12 monthly Welcome Baby newsletters for each month during the baby's first year.
- **Welcome Baby Prayer Partners:** Church members who are committed to praying for a Welcome Baby Partner and the families that Partner visits.
- **Welcome Baby Supporters:** Those who are willing to financially support the Welcome Baby program, or who contribute supplies or information for use by the Partners.

Where Does the Welcome Baby Program Fit Into Your Church Structure?

Welcome Baby can be housed by various departments of the church, depending on who is interested and how the program will be executed. For example:

- **Community Services:** When housed in this area, volunteers often make quilts or other baby items for gifts, offer a children's clothing exchange, and help families who have special needs.
- **Women's Ministries:** The focus of the Welcome Baby program is usually more geared toward a mother's needs. When housed in Women's Ministries, endeavors such as breastfeeding programs, playgroups, women's Bible study and fellowship groups, and a mother-mentoring program can be planned.
- **Family Ministries:** Seminars and workshops for families are usually planned and presented through this department.
- **Children's Sabbath School:** Leaders in the children's divisions can sponsor the Welcome Baby program with the goal of visiting all church families who have newborns, as well as reaching out to inactive members and encouraging them to return to church. They can also seek to make friends with those who aren't members.
- **Adult Sabbath School:** Many Bible study classes support special mission projects. Welcome Baby is sometimes adopted by one or more classes as their mission outreach program.

Welcome Baby Can Be Used in Multiple Ways

Although the Welcome Baby program was designed for use by churches as an outreach to the community, it has successfully been used in a variety of ways:

- Friends and relatives purchase the newsletter packet as a baby shower gift.
- Schools or daycare centers sponsor Welcome Baby and either send the newsletters or have school staff deliver them to the homes of the new parents.
- Business and medical offices can run their own Welcome Baby distribution program to their clients or patients that opt in.
- Hospitals can send the newsletters to parents after they deliver a baby. Hospital volunteers can visit the new parents and deliver the newsletters on a monthly basis. This is a great way to increase awareness of the service you are providing for families in your community.

Chapter 3

Evangelistic Potential

Welcome Baby As Evangelism

Welcome Baby should be an important part of the evangelistic outreach of a church. Here are a few excellent reasons to include this program in your church's evangelistic endeavors:

- Welcome Baby seeks to meet the needs experienced by young families.
- Right after a baby is born, parents are most receptive to lifestyle changes.
- Becoming friends with these parents can lead to opportunities to invite them to church, evangelistic meetings, and other church events/resources.
- Visits are natural occasions for personal witnessing.
- Friendly, helpful contacts will help develop trust between the new parents and the church members.

Because of the evangelistic potential of this program, it is recommended that the Welcome Baby program be established in a church for a significant number of months before a major evangelistic crusade. The program could be initiated with these evangelistic goals:

- To reach every family in the community with a newborn
- To develop a friendship with each family
- To help families form a social network of church members
- To offer church resources as a service to families
- To spiritually nurture families and lead them to Christ

Monthly Newsletter Theme and Coordinated Church Resources

In order to encourage families to visit and become involved in your church fellowship, the Welcome Baby materials have been designed to highlight the church resources and services offered by your congregation.

Each month there is an article in the center of the newsletter that focuses on a topic in which the church may have related resources to offer. If your church has materials that may be meaningful to the parents of newborns, be sure to alert the Welcome Baby Partners. Or, if your church conducts events on healthy living or family fun outings, you could alert the new parents of these events when the newsletter focuses on a related topic.

Here is a list of the monthly themes covered in the 12 Welcome Baby newsletters, as well as some ways to involve additional church resources:

- 1) Care of Newborns
 - Partners can compile a list of any community groups, such as lactation support, kids' programs, moms' groups, etc. Or perhaps your local church offers some of these support opportunities.

- 2) Sources of Information
- 3) Exercise
 - Does your church offer an aerobics exercise group or walking group?
 - Church recreation and athletic events can also be meaningful at this time.
- 4) Baby Dedication
- 5) Support Network
- 6) Meeting Baby's Needs (as well as older children)
 - Clothing exchange
 - Toy exchange
 - Church programs for kids
 - Vacation Bible School
 - Children's clubs (Adventurers, Pathfinders, etc.)
 - Church school
 - Day care
 - Homeschool information
- 7) Baby's Social Awareness
 - Does your church offer a playgroup or moms' group? This is also a good time to talk about children's Sabbath school classes.
- 8) Nutrition and Health
 - If your church conducts health seminars, you could invite the family to attend.
 - Encourage the family to enjoy the church's fellowship meal if they need a break and would like to try some healthy food.
- 9) Break Time for Parents
 - Encourage church members to compile a daycare and babysitting registry, as well as creating a list of willing church members who could help with childcare needs.
 - Encourage the family to attend the church fellowship meal.
- 10) Family Satisfaction
 - Invite the family to any marriage enrichment seminars, marriage encounter events, or parenting seminars.
 - Daycare registry
 - Babysitting registry
- 11) Dealing with a Mobile Child
 - Playgroups can be helpful in giving a child a positive play environment, as well as the opportunity for exercise.
- 12) Character Development
 - Introduce the family to Bible story books, children's programs at church, or list the positive children's programming currently on radio, TV, or the internet.

Resources That Make Your Church Family Friendly

No church can offer all the resources a family could use during the course of their child-rearing years, but here are a few ideas of some programs your church may be interested in offering to better meet the needs of families in your community.

- Bible study and home fellowship groups
- Stay-at-home moms enjoy Bible study groups held during the day when they

can bring their babies along and enjoy the fellowship of other mothers. Parents may also enjoy participating in a weekly home fellowship group that meets in the evening.

- Lactation consultation and/or classes
- One of the most urgent needs experienced during the first couple months after a baby's birth is support and practical information on breastfeeding. Because of this, some churches allow a classroom or the fellowship hall to be used for local La Leche League meetings (a nationally-recognized breastfeeding support group for mothers).
- Some churches have parish nurses or specially-trained lactation consultants who can offer lactation information and support.
- Children's clothing exchange
 - o One of the greatest needs of families with babies is finding clothing to fit their fast-growing bodies. This resource allows parents to exchange outgrown clothing for sizes they currently need.
- Church library
 - o If your church already has an established library, make sure it has an adequate supply of printed, audio, and video resources on parenting (especially focusing on infancy and early childhood), as well as married life.
- Church programs for children
 - o Children's church
 - o Vacation Bible School
 - o Your Story Hour
 - o Children's clubs (Adventurers, Pathfinders, etc.)
 - o Daycare
 - o Church school
 - o Homeschool information
 - o Registry of church members willing to babysit or provide daycare
- Health, exercise, nutrition, and cooking school programs
 - o Community families may enjoy participating in such organized activities as
- Group aerobics classes
- Jogging, walking, or cycling groups
- Church recreation and/or athletic events (volleyball, basketball, baseball/softball, etc.)
- Cooking classes
- Health fairs
- Health screenings (blood pressure, cholesterol, etc.)
- Parent support group
 - o Parents who attended birthing classes often appreciate the continued support and information they might receive from a parents' group or mothers' group, which would meet regularly for fellowship and education (whether a guest speaker, video presentation, discussion facilitation, etc.)
- Parent education seminars
 - o Special seminars for parents (either by guest speaker or by video) can be offered as needed. For information on seminars your church can present, visit adventistfamilyministries.com.

Baby Dedications

In the Welcome Baby newsletter for the fourth month, the concept of a baby dedication is introduced. And when a pastor performs a baby dedication for a family that doesn't belong to that church, the parents tend to view that pastor as their own spiritual leader. Therefore, as an evangelistic outreach, it is suggested that Welcome Baby families be invited to have their babies dedicated.

This service should be a meaningful event in the lives of the new family. It can be used as an opportunity to acquaint the family with other families in the church who have babies the same age, and it can be a good time to showcase any resources on raising children to develop a Christ-like character.

In order to facilitate this, Dr. Kay Kuzma has published various books that are referred to as baby dedication materials.

- *Memorable Baby Dedications: A Sourcebook for Pastors and Leaders.* This resource gives pastors 24 sample dedication services and several creative ideas for making the event memorable for the family. As a unique feature, this resource come with a free CD-ROM pastors can use to easily develop and personalize these services.
- *Memorable Baby Dedication Songs: 26 original baby dedication songs written especially for dedication services listed in Memorable Baby Dedications.* Music composed by Linda Holland to the poetry by Kay Kuzma.
- *In Praise of Children—Poems and Quotes: A delightful treasury of poems and quotes that are ideal for use in baby dedications, home dedications, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Grandparents' Day, and other family celebrations.* This book makes a beautiful gift to the family after their baby is dedicated.

Expanded Beginner Sabbath School

The Beginner Sabbath school division (birth to three years) will be the entry point for most Welcome Baby families into the basic program of the church. Leaders should be open to restructuring their programs, if necessary, to better meet the needs of these families while they continue to meet the needs of the church members.

In addition to providing spiritual concepts and principles in an attractive, relevant manner to young children, this program could also meet the following needs of parents:

- Social interaction with other parents of children close in age
- Present information not only about spiritual values and concepts, but about Christian child-rearing principles

Have a Welcoming Committee

Greet each family as they arrive in the church parking lot. It is important that families receive a special greeting before they come into the church. New individuals feel apprehensive when they don't know where to go. This special attention would help each family feel more comfortable.

Make sure to greet each person, and offer a nametag (it helps if regular members wear nametags each week, as well). Visitors can receive a special tag indicating the town in which they came from. Identify Welcome Baby families in some way, so that regular members will take a special interest in them.

Provide Family Fellowship Time

The Beginner program could start 30 minutes early, including a family fellowship time for families to get acquainted with one another. This is especially important for the following reasons:

- Many parents who are mostly home with their children are eager to converse with other adults. If there is not a time for social interaction, it will happen anyway—but during the program. With parents sitting close by each other, it is hard to resist the opportunity to talk!
- Parents need to form a social support system. This is the perfect gathering for introducing these parents to others in the same demographic.
- Parents coming for the first time feel hesitant when they don't know anyone and they don't know the program. If they form an acquaintance before the program begins, they will feel more comfortable.
- Serve food. Getting children ready for church can be a stressful and hectic experience. Many families end up leaving the house without breakfast. And even if the children eat, many parents don't. And food is one of the best socializers!

Parental Discussion Opportunities

Whether built into the Beginner program, or at another set time (preferably while the young families are already at the church), provide a 20-30 minute period for a facilitated discussion on parental concerns. To encourage involvement, a chapter of a book can be assigned in advance, or a leader can develop a topics list and schedule.

Follow-up Activities

At the close of the Beginner program, families should be invited to the church service. The pastor's sermon topic or other noteworthy service features should be announced.

- Each Welcome Baby parent should receive an invitation to the fellowship meal, if your church offers one.
- Each Welcome Baby parent should receive at least one invitation to a social event from a member of the Beginner program. This could be a group gathering for a meal, an afternoon hike, or a family game night.
- When parents attend for the first time, they should sign a registration card requesting an address and phone number so regular contact can be established and they can be invited back.

Chapter 4

A Successful Welcome Baby Program

The success of the Welcome Baby program in your church will depend on three factors:

- One or two individuals who believe in this program and are willing to promote and sustain it on a regular basis.
- The pastor(s)' acceptance and support of the program as a vital part of the ministry of the church.
- The support of the church family in recognizing the value of this program and praying for it.

Welcome Baby is not just another witnessing program to be implemented by the church until the next new thing comes along. It is not just a series of evangelistic meetings that take place and then conclude. When your church decides to implement the Welcome Baby program, it will be an ongoing commitment to families that can grow over the years.

This is friendship evangelism—touching people's lives and meeting their needs as Christ would. The seeds your church members sow among families during their baby's first year may not take root until years later, when that child is ready for school and the family sees the advantages of church school. Or it may not be until the teen years, when the family remembers the well-trained youth who babysat their newborn. By observing the children and youth in your church, families may wish for the same experience for their kids.

So is your church family ready for a long-term, ongoing witnessing program? Are they ready to work together to meet the needs of young families in your community? The Welcome Baby program has the potential of impacting many departments of your church, such as the children's educational program, the adult Bible study program, the family life department, discipleship groups, and evangelism. That is why it is so important that the pastor is enthusiastic about the evangelistic potential of Welcome Baby and that your church leaders are in favor of its implementation.

Too many witnessing programs are passed down from church hierarchy to the local church level, and then the pastor and a handful of enthusiastic souls try it out. When the pastor is transferred, or when these dedicated workers either burn out or move on to different projects, the program falters and dies. Since Welcome Baby involves a commitment of someone to visit or send out materials regularly for a full year, it is imperative that the involved individuals are excited about the potential of this program and are willing to stick with it. The reputation of your church will suffer if the program is started but not continued.

George Barna's book, *The Frog in the Kettle: What Christians Need to Know About Life in the Year 2000*, reads:

“In today's marketplace, people are critical and unforgiving. They have high expectations, and they give an organization only one chance to impress. In this type of environment, a church would be better off doing a few things with excellence than many things merely adequately.”

So how can you make sure that Welcome Baby is not just another “adequate” program? How can you ensure its excellence?

1. Seriously pray that God will prepare the way for a united, committed spirit among your church family for the support of Welcome Baby.
2. Share the Welcome Baby program with the church leaders and get their cooperation, or start a pilot program with a few dedicated individuals willing to visit families, then bring the results of your trial program to church leaders and ask that they approve the continuation of the program.
3. Carefully and prayerfully select the Welcome Baby coordinator. This could be a job of the nominating committee. If the Welcome Baby program is “housed” in another church department, the director of that department will most likely serve in an advisory role to the Welcome Baby program, rather than an administrative role. That director will have programs other than Welcome Baby for which he or she is responsible. Gender is not important when selecting the Welcome Baby Coordinator. What is important is the Christ-like spirit and working relationship that the coordinator can establish with the other participants. This coordinator must be a team player and a gifted administrator.
4. Encourage your church to develop new resources and services for families that the Welcome Baby parents will find interesting and useful, such as seminars and support groups.
5. Since the Welcome Baby program will meet a vital need within your community, you may want to network with other churches or community service programs, such as an adolescent pregnancy program or child abuse prevention program. You will find community interest and a cooperative attitude will open doors for potential church outreach.
6. Encourage church members to be “kid-sensitive.” Dr. Carl George of Fuller Theological Seminary says that being “kid sensitive” is a key factor in the fastest-growing churches today. When a potential new member walks in the door, you want them to be immediately aware that children are important in your church. They should see an attractive nursery, quality programming for children, and children included in the service.
7. Don't be discouraged with the comprehensive nature of the Welcome Baby program. Start small. Making friends with a few parents and providing them with the Welcome Baby materials is better than not doing anything!

Chapter 5

Recruiting Welcome Baby Partners

The Welcome Baby program will only be able to reach as many families as your Welcome Baby Partners can visit. That's why the ongoing recruiting and training of new Partners is an important part of a successful Welcome Baby program.

Initial Recruitment When the Welcome Baby Program is Starting

- Present the Welcome Baby program to the congregation multiple times. Also try promoting it to different Sabbath schools or prayer meetings. Make it easy for people to sign up to help.
- Hold an introductory meeting for members interested in helping. After a brief description, allow time for questions or suggestions.
- Advertise to recruit Welcome Baby Partners. Use the bulletin board, bulletin, or church newsletter to continue promotion of the program and provide sign-up information.
- For an additional method of attention-getting and recruitment, try a direct-mail approach. Send commitment cards to members that might make good volunteers or Partners for the Welcome Baby program.
- Share inspiring experiences. The more the congregation knows of the good that is being shared, the more inspired they will be to help.
- Disciple the new Welcome Baby Partners. Make sure they feel supported and equipped to do this very important job. They may require some mentoring at first.
- Invite other parents of young children to become Welcome Baby Partners. Perhaps some families that have been blessed by receiving the newsletters and friendship can return the favor and help another family.
- Encourage leaders of other church groups, such as Home Bible Fellowship or a 55+ group, to encourage their members to participate and support Welcome Baby.
- Use Sabbath school or Bible study time to give testimonies.
- To interest others, consistently publish the number of eligible families for Welcome Baby support, and indicate the needed amount of Partners for reaching these families. Have commitment cards readily available.

Conclusion

The Welcome Baby program is being successfully used by churches across North America. Welcome Baby is effective because it meets the felt needs of young families at a time in life when they are most willing to make lifestyle changes. This is the time when many young families remember their childhood church experience and decide to give the church a second chance. Welcome Baby also offers a network of support, information, and resources to meet their needs. Thank you for making the commitment to assisting new parents with the important challenge of raising children in today's society.