

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

(Available to check out from the church library)

Intentional Parenting (by Tad Thompson) provides a clear strategy for parents who want to be intentional about discipleship in the home.

It Starts At Home (by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope) helps parents understand the process of faith formation at home and a practical plan for becoming intentional.

Parent's Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children (by John Trent, Ph.D., Rick Osborne & Kurt Bruner) provides a road map to parents who want to shape the faith of their children from ages birth to twelve years old.

Building the Christian Family You Never Had (by Mary De-muth) offers encouragement and insights to "pioneer parents" who are first-generation believers.

The Blessing (by Dr John Trent) explains a process for creating a strong relationship with and security in our children.

Movie Nights (by Bob Smithouser) offers discussion on 25 broadly varied films including practical ideas, story points, and follow-up activities that will enable parents to have fun talking with their teens about spiritual truths using movies. (This title has sequential copies that can be purchased online).

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

30 Days – Turning the Hearts of Parents and Teenagers Toward Each Other (by Richard Ross and Gus Reyes) A strong, user-friendly 30 day plan between parent and teenager is given to help strengthen the relationship. Committing to at least 10 minutes a night for 30 nights, 30 days can do a world of positive for parent and teenager. Available for purchase in the Student Office.

Just Add Family Kit provides easy-to-use recipe cards containing about one year's worth of ideas for instilling faith into children in the imprint and impression periods. This kit is available to purchase at the Faith@Home Resource Center.

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Faith  Home

Blueprints

Intentional Parenting

Giving a Strong Spiritual Legacy

*From Cindy Leach, Minister to Children
With Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families*

Every believing parent hopes their children will embrace the faith and grow deep spiritual roots. But studies tell us that over half of those growing up in Christian homes will walk away from Christianity by the time they leave the teen years – never to return. Too often, parents “outsource” the spiritual formation of their children to the church. Church is important, but God designed the family as the primary place where faith is nurtured. These principles can help parents become more intentional about their child’s faith.

THE LEGACY PRINCIPLE

The scriptures tell us that what we do today directly influences the multi-generational cycle of family traits, beliefs and actions - for good or bad (Exodus 20:5-6, Psalm 78:5-8). So passing a strong faith to our children begins by having a strong faith ourselves and modeling the gospel in our marriages and relationships. Some of us need to break negative cycles that may have started with our own upbringing in order to launch a new, improved legacy for the next generation.

THE LIKELIHOOD PRINCIPLE

The good news is this: In the context of healthy relationships, children tend to embrace their parents’ values. Proverbs 22:6 tells us that when children learn right from wrong at home under the training of nurturing parents, they tend to adopt mom and dad’s beliefs. While there are no guarantees, kids are more likely to embrace their parent’s faith if they enjoy their parent’s company! That’s part of the reason parents are warned not to “provoke your children to wrath” but rather “bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). A strong relationship with parents is key to a strong Christian faith.

THE LENSES PRINCIPLE

Jesus taught that our enemy’s primary weapon is deception - getting us to believe and live according to lies rather than truth (John 8:44). And when someone is deceived, he or she doesn’t know it! Our children are growing up in a culture that bombards them with lies. An hour or two per week at church is no match for the hundreds of hours spent with media, school, and friends. Nor

can it compete with a child’s fallen nature that often wants to rebel against what is good, true and beautiful. It is the job of parents to equip children with the corrective “lenses” of truth so they can better navigate the deceptive roads of life.

THE LEARNING PRINCIPLE

Our children can only learn what we teach them in a manner that will reach them. In other words, we need to vary our approach based upon their unique personality, learning style, and most importantly, stage of development. Children fall into one of three stages that should guide the methods we choose for discussing our faith and values at home.

1. The Imprint Period (toddler to about age seven)

Small children are all ears. They will believe it because mom or dad said it, much like a baby gosling that imprints itself onto its mother and follows it wherever she leads. Young children soak in what we tell them – so this is an ideal season for teaching them basic Bible stories, memorization, and other building block truths of Christianity.

2. The Impression Period (about age eight to early teen)

During this season, children no longer accept what we say at face value. They may question us, push back, or even argue. During this season, children need to know what we believe. They also need help understanding the rationale behind those beliefs. While more work, this is a positive part of their faith development because it means they have grown past blind acceptance and are ready for deeper understanding.

3. The Coaching Period (early teen to young adult)

Our job changes when the kids enter the coaching period. We can motivate, encourage, challenge and advise. We can’t force feed. We can help them articulate what they believe, challenge their thinking, and remind them of the “basics” they learned during their early years. We can provide a safe environment to wrestle with, even question, the values they’ve learned. Maintaining a strong relationship and frequent dialogue are the key to your influence now. In light of these realities, parents can become intentional about creating and capturing opportunities to nurture the roots of faith in their children.