

Kids' Ministry Training Video 8: Involving Parents

The family (or household) is the primary faith community for all ages, and yet all too often churches, and children's ministries, assume the responsibility for kids' faith development. Research shows that young people who continue in lifelong faith generally either come from homes where faith is modelled, or have close relationships with spiritual "mums and dads" within the church.

Our goal as children's ministry leaders should always be first and foremost to involve and empower parents as they disciple their children.

Empowering Parents at Home

- ❑ **Resources.** Suggest books, websites and articles that may help parents in their important role in the home. Our website (baptistcfm.org.au) has links to some of our favourites. Recommended Bibles, devotionals and apps which can be used at home are also helpful.
- ❑ **Courses.** Consider running a parenting workshop, such as *The Parenting Children Course*, or *Parenting Toolbox*. These give parents many tools for raising children at home.

Supporting Families in the Church

- ❑ **Teaching Series.** Whether your services are for all ages, or you have age specific programs, from time to time it's helpful to have teaching series which span all ages. Opportunities for faith conversations in the home are raised when children, youth and adults are learning the same thing.
- ❑ **Events.** Making dedications meaningful; organising camps that families can attend together, and including parents in rites of passage (e.g. baptising their own children) highlights the primary role of the parent in spiritual formation.

Partnering with Parents

- ❑ **Communication.** Communicate clearly and often with parents about what is happening in the kids' program. Some churches organise "take-home" sheets; while others send home "pre-papers" which highlight what will be happening in the kid's program the *next* week. This model can help parents take primary responsibility for discipleship, with the church coming in second to support.
- ❑ **Feedback.** Talk with parents, hear their experiences and seek their input. They know their kids best, and can provide helpful insight when they are invited. An invitation to speak into the kids' ministry also creates buy in from the parents and they will partner when they feel included.

Further Reading

It Takes a Church to Raise a Parent: Creating a culture where parenting for faith can flourish Rachel Turner

Spiritual Parenting: An awakening for today's families Michelle Anthony

Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions George Barna

Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in your Kids Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark

Questions for Your Team

- Do we communicate that family is the primary faith community in the way we speak and act, or do we inadvertently send the message that the church is responsible for discipleship?
- What resources have we, or could we, recommend to parents?
- How do we mainly communicate with parents? Through letters, emails, conversations or take-home sheets? Is this working? Is our communication clear and frequent enough?
- Do we seek feedback from parents, or do we make all the decisions?