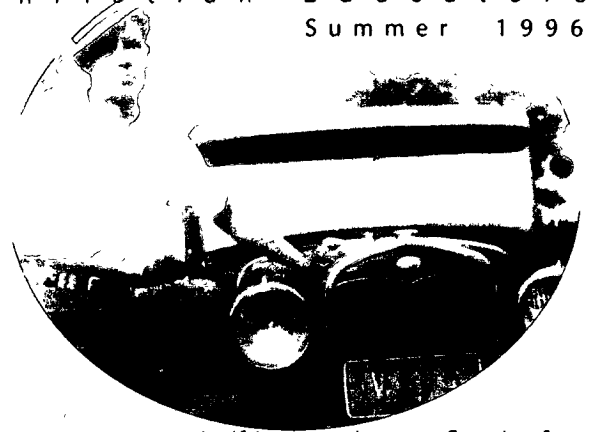


Foursquare National Department of Christian Education

DIRECTIONS

A newsletter for Christian Educators
Summer 1996

DADⁱⁿ the REARVIEW MIRROR



YOUR FATHER'S IMPRINT ON YOUR LIFE

Every father leaves a legacy! The imprint of your father is on your life whether or not you think much about it. More than just a genetic code, the marks of his tire treads, so to speak, are evident whether positive or negative.

But what good does a knowledge of your father's legacy do for you? If your father was a good one, the imprint he left is a model for you to follow. In those ways that your dad was not what you wanted or needed or absent, you have an excellent opportunity to learn from his mistakes and parent your children differently.

This last October our family celebrated Dad's home going. His life had endured age and the effects of Alzheimer's disease. The next day after the funeral, I began the long drive home, towing my father's '64 Chevy pick-up. As the hours and miles rolled by into the night, I glanced back in the rear view mirror and saw the truck. My first thought was, "What's Dad doing back there?" I was overcome with emotion! Dad was no longer around! I thought that night was the longest in my life. It was long, but it was not lonely.

Dad knew a lot about struggling.

I began to remember how careful and considerate he was. We would always have

to leave a half-hour early every Sunday for Sunday school so we would not be late. He felt being late for anything was a "cardinal sin." He was practical in helping those who were struggling; often helping them get a job, a place to live or food for their family. He knew what it was to be on the backside of life.

Dad knew a lot about struggling. His father was killed in a railroad accident two months before he was born. He became the pawn of a custody battle during early childhood and then orphaned at 15 during the beginning of the Depression Era.

Dad's activities characterized his love more than words could!

Only now am I realizing how much he taught me about life and leadership. Dad, never really told us that he loved us. He was more of a man of action. Two profound activities demonstrated his love became his nightly ritual: First, he would come into our room and check to see if we were safely in bed. If not, he would move us to the center of the bed and place a chair or pillows on the side of the bed so we would not fall out. Second, came the extra blanket. It could be the hottest day in July, but dad would come with another blanket to make sure we were covered. When my oldest brother, who was in his fifties, came home for a visit, Dad was still rearranging furniture and adding an extra

IN THIS ISSUE...

Casting your vision

A guide to
kingdom living

Help your leadership
make decisions

Idea Share

VBS alternatives

cover. Dad's activities characterized his love more than words could!

Three years ago my son, Steve, and I decided to take dad camping at Manzanita Lake, knowing this would be the last time. Up the mountain we went in his '64 Chevy pick-up with the camper on back. I was not prepared for the cold night we would experience.

We turned in about 10 o'clock. An hour later, dad was shivering. Doing what he so often did to us, we placed blankets upon him. He still was cold. I felt his wrist for a pulse and it was weak. He asked anxiously "What are you going to do about it?" It was obvious, the watch was now mine. I massaged his arms and held him through the night to keep him warm. His grateful response in the morning went like this, "Thanks for keeping me warm!" At first, I did not know how to respond. Then I said, "Dad, you have kept me safe and warm for years, now it is my turn to care for you!" These were some of the last words he was ever able to speak, a lasting lesson on parenting and leadership.

Recognizing your father's imprint on your life is the first step in grasping your own significance. Understanding the natural power with which your father shaped your life will positively affect the lives of your children and those you come in contact.

Thanks for letting me share about Dad,
Rick

Casting your VISION

Now is a good time to review this past year's ministry, meet with your staff and discuss questions such as "What was right, what was wrong." "What was confused and what was missing?" Out of that interaction, prayerfully LIST God's objectives for the coming year and then explore ways to CAST your vision. The senior pastor has the role of functioning as the primary vision caster for the church! Here are five practical "P's" for effectively communicating the VISION:

Do it pictorially

A vision is visual in nature. What kind of picture does your vision create in people's minds? What will your church look like: a hospital, an army, a family?

Do it passionately

If you are not excited about where you're going, don't expect anyone to follow. The vision must be cast with faith and enthusiasm.

Do it precisely

The vision must be clear and focused. Spell out details and give the people a

concrete image of the vision. Write it out and publish it to the people.

Do it prominently

The vision has to be given high visibility. Cast it from the pulpit, the bulletin, the newsletter. Scroll the slogan on a banner across the platform. Depict the vision in the logo, and use it everywhere. Drive it home to your leadership teams. Remember, casting a vision is not just a promotion campaign, it is the overflow of your life.

Do it painstakingly

Casting a vision takes planning and effort with continuity and repetition. The vision must be perceived as more than a flash-in-the-pan dream. The vision of a future reality should be the plumline for everything the church does. It takes ruthless evaluation, unswerving commitment, and unrelenting tenacity to make the dream come to fruition. Dethmer, Jim. "Casting Your Vision" Open Bible Leadership Tips, March 1996.

VBS - not just on the church grounds during a summer week. How about:

1. Camp and picnic sites. Use the VBS curriculum in day camps, as part of the week-long camp curriculum, or for special retreats at camp. Conduct classes on the open grounds, in tents or campers, around picnic tables, in shelters.

2. Have a block-party VBS around your church with story areas, craft areas, lots of sports activities, refreshments, etc. Invite the neighborhood in.

3. Alternate the time you have your VBS. Have it during Wednesday night service, Sunday evening or your Children's church hour. For information regarding VBS curriculum, call 1/800/992-7444



A GUIDE TO KINGDOM LIVING

No one ever said that parenting would be easy. As our three children express their ideas and viewpoints in totally unconventional ways, we wonder if we ever acted that way. Did we really try to do our "own thing" years ago?

As parents, we must constantly evaluate our life-style, for we are important and highly visible role models to our children. If we do nothing else, we must set high examples for our young. Periodically we must ask ourselves: Is God my partner in life? Is the way I live, in agreement with Christ's teachings? Is my relationship with my child honest, open, and accepting?

We must recognize and acknowledge that parents have room for growth and change. As we study the Scriptures, we evaluate our own life-style, we can seek to change our weaknesses and increase our strengths.

The Bible is full of inspiration and messages that will meet us where we are in our lives. In Matthew 5:3-10, Christ gives us keys to the kingdom of God—a kingdom that is also for us today.

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

Are you honest with your child? Or do you claim to have all the answers? To be "poor in spirit" involves admitting to the child that you do not have all the answers to life. By admitting this weakness, strength is gained as together the parent and child can turn to God for answers and guidance.

Most parents, most adults for that matter, have a real fear of admitting that they have need for help or outside strength. One father at a recent parenting seminar told me, "What

"Jesus began to teach them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Matthew 5:2-3

would my son think of me if he heard that I lost my position at work? He would lose faith in me."

As a parent genuinely relates to the youth and is open and honest, the youth will see the parent as a true human being.

A close friend of the family sat down with her two older children and explained that the family was having financial difficulties and that they would have to struggle to tighten the budget. As she exposed her vulnerability to her children, they accepted their mother as a real person and sought creative ways to pitch in and work together.

To be "poor in spirit" does not bring about feelings of despair and anguish. Rather, this poverty is full of reward and fulfillment as lives are made whole.

Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

What kind of role model are you for your children? Are you approachable? That is, is your life genuine and real enough so that your child feels comfort in confiding in you?

People build barriers around themselves as they pretend to be what they are not. These barriers inhibit communication between parent and child. To avoid this, you can "risk" exposing your inner self to your child. This means talking about your fears, hopes, failures, and dreams. As you let your child hear or see how you've solved a problem, conquered a fear, or met a goal, he can experience part of the openness and freedom the Christian faith gives.

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Jesus Christ was a peacemaker. How do you deal with conflict in your own family? Do you go that extra mile for something you know is right and good? Or do you merely brush aside the truth, hoping to avoid conflict?

A Sunday school teacher told of how she dealt with conflict with older elementary children. "When conflict arises among the children, I try to listen to all sides of the story while striving for a fair compromise. This manner of dealing with conflict helps justice to occur in the situation without ignoring the truth."

This manner of dealing with conflict works in families as well. Acceptance and love are shown as caring parents encourage peaceful family situations.

Blessed Are Those Who Are Persecuted for Righteousness Sake

Do you really know what you believe? Can you verbalize your beliefs? Do you put your faith into action? Sharing your faith through words and actions is vital for the Christian. Often, especially during the teen years, doubts occur as the young person seeks to define his own faith and beliefs. It is imperative when this doubting occurs that the parent consistently help the teen find answers. This involves encouraging Bible study and sharing your personal faith story.

When a faith issue is challenged, avoid arguing the question. Few are won into the Kingdom through arguments. Do not compromise your belief; just continue to love the other person.

God's Word gives us life-changing guidelines for happiness and fulfillment. We minister to our children by being genuine, by caring, and by sharing our personal faith. □

Edited from: **MAKING MEMORIES THAT COUNT** By Bruce, Debra Fulghum. 1994 Gospel Publishing. (77-81).

IDEA SHARE:

SOME TEACHING IDEAS FOR CHILDREN

My Shield

Form groups of four. Give each group a small blanket or towel. Have children work together in their groups to use their blankets to show something they do when they are cold, when they are afraid, when they want comfort.

Younger Ages:

- What does a blanket do for us?
- How is a blanket like a shield?
- Can God do the same thing?

Older Ages:

Read aloud 2 Samuel 22:31. Ask:

- What does a blanket do for us?
- How is a blanket like a shield?
- What do these verses say God does for us?
- How is God like a blanket? How is He different?
- How does it make you feel to know that God shields you and goes to battle for you?
- Who does God battle?

We seek a blanket to meet some of our needs, we can also seek God. God is always helping us. He protects and shields us in all situations.

Adapted from Yount, Christine. *Helping Children Know God*. Group Publishing, 1995

Six Hints to Help your Leadership Team Make Quality Decisions

1. *Allow adequate time.* Rushed decisions are risky and rarely the best decisions.
2. *State your opinions convincingly.* After all, you are a member of the group. Avoid demanding your own way.
3. *Accept stalemate if it occurs.* Find the next best alternative acceptable to all.
4. *Seek out different opinions.* They are all useful in selecting alternatives and evaluating possible outcomes.
5. *Assure that a decision is supported by your entire leadership team* before it is implemented.
6. *Stay flexible.* Decisions can be changed if the need arises and your leadership team is agreeable.

Temptation - an object lesson

Scripture: "Then Jesus was lead up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Matthew 4:1.

Items needed: A small bowl; large bag of M&M's.

Presentation: Ask the kids about their favorite candy. Suggest that your favorite is M & M's. Pour some into the bowl and eat a few while talking about their wonderful taste and aroma. But, do not share or even suggest sharing with them. Suddenly remember that you forgot something for the lesson; put the bowl on your chair in front of the kids and walk out of sight for about 15 seconds. Upon returning, discuss what they felt when you left the candy unattended. How many wanted to take some. Explain this as temptation and talk about temptations at home, school, church, etc. Then read the scripture.

Teaching: Jesus also faced temptation and resisted it. Throughout his life he was able to resist temptations. We are also asked to resist temptation and Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help us resist temptations wherever and whenever they occur. It is by His power we can resist.

Additional Note: Sometimes a child may actually take some of the candy while you are out of sight during your lesson. If one is accused by others during the lesson, you can speak about repentance (being sorry) and forgiveness when temptation overwhelms us. Those who are the accusers need to learn about forgiveness.

Conclusion: Let the kids know the M & M's will be given out after the service or after their Sunday school lesson.

Submitted by Richard A. Woodruff. He has other lessons available. Please contact him at 221 Enterprise Ave., Merlin OR 97532 (541) 471-0551

The 21st Century Sunday School:

Strategies for Today and Tomorrow

This practical guide will help the C.E. Leader in any situation. Some of the subjects discussed are:

- Where is our Sunday school going?
- How can our Sunday school reach new people?
- What do I do with multigaged groups?
- How do we organize multiple sessions?

Book includes reproducible charts, diagrams, worksheets, and job descriptions to make your job easier. 7-03949 \$12.99



Contact Foursquare Publications to order your copy
1 (800) 992-7444