

DIRECTIONS

Foursquare Department of Christian Education



Spring/Summer 2002

A newsletter for Christian educators

The Process of Growing People

Discipleship is more than believing right things, it is a way of living!

Jesus called His first disciples with two simple words, "follow me." Peter and Andrew answered that call and soon discovered how their lives would forever change. It was not enough for the disciples to agree to follow Jesus, they had to surrender their lifestyle to His will.

"Jesus always moves from an explanation of truth to how that truth is to impact the lives of His listeners." — Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

Discipleship is more than believing right things, it is a way of living! Discipleship is becoming like Jesus, in knowledge, attitude, and actions — a particular habit of thinking, speaking, and acting like Christ. Jesus continues to speak to Christians as He did with those early disciples when He says, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Our churches may be growing, but are individual Christians growing? Is godliness up? Christ-likeness? Commitment?

Sometimes Christians approach discipleship as merely memorizing Bible verses or attending Bible studies. The mistaken notion is that the more "spiritual" things we do, the more growth we experience in Christ. In reality, receiving Christ and studying the Bible are only the beginning of the discipleship process. Dwight L. Moody once wrote, "The scriptures weren't given for information but for transformation." The challenge for pastors and C.E. leaders today is to help people realize the full potential of their growth in Christ.

It is as important to do what the Bible says as to know what the Bible says. James 1:22 reminds us, "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Obviously, we have to know the Bible if we are going to do what it says. However, we are not judged on how much of the Bible we know. We are judged on how much we do with what the Bible says.

The Bible also reminds us that God looks at the heart, or the motivation behind our actions. We have all observed examples of people who do right things with the wrong attitude. Jesus constantly worked on the attitudes of His disciples. During a breakfast by the sea as recorded in John 21, Jesus told the runaway disciple, Peter, that it really didn't matter what the other disciples did. Peter's primary responsibility was to hear the instruction of the Lord and respond in genuine obedience. Jesus said, "If you love me, you'll do what I tell you."



Christians study the Bible (knowledge) so we can change our heart (attitude) and our lifestyle (action). A truly changed lifestyle begins by learning to walk as Jesus walks, learning to know what Jesus knows, and by doing what Jesus does.

Rick Wulfestieg, National Minister
Foursquare Christian Education Department

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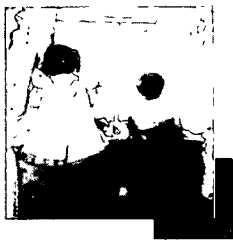
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Family Snapshot

More than two-thirds of Christian parents say youth and children's programs are very important to their church experience, but less than half are satisfied with those programs. Those are the findings of a survey by Christian Parenting Today. In fact, out of five areas surveyed, parents were least likely to be satisfied by the teen ministry. Parents were more pleased with the preaching and music, and only 14% said they are not satisfied with their church overall.

didyouknow

One-third of all American households contain at least one child under the age of 18. (Boiling Point by George Barna and Mark Hatch, Regal Books)

By the time kids are 12, they routinely use the adjectives *flirtatious*, *sexy*, *trendy*, and *cool* to describe themselves. According to some research groups many children by age 11 do not want to be called children at all (From Parents, October 1999, Vol. 74, No. 10, "Cheated out of Childhood," by Kay Hymowitz, P.175)

Seven- to ten-year-olds swear for a variety of reasons: They want to push the limits, shock their parents or mimic older kids. Cursing is a way of exploring sexuality for the first time. Mystery is definitely part of the swearing's allure. Knowing the definitions of the words can make them less appealing (From Parents, February 2000, Vol 75, N92, "Talking Trash," Leslie Garisto Pfaff, P 165).

Wednesday is least likely to rank as "family night" among all Americans. Only 4% reserve that evening. Quality-time night varies by region: Friday for Southerners (32%), Saturday for Midwesterners (26%), and Sunday for families in the West (15%) and Northeast (22%) (American Demographics Oct. 2001).

What parents are looking for: The survey asked, "Is this program extremely important to you?" and "Are you very satisfied?" Here are the responses:

- Children's programs--
92% important, 45% satisfied.
- Sunday school--
69% important, 39% satisfied
- Youth Programs--
69% important, 34% satisfied
- Preaching--
75% important, 58% satisfied
- Music--
51% important, 48% satisfied

The family altar: The survey found Christian parents are more likely to regulate their kids' media exposure than to encourage development of their devotional life. Nine in ten parents say they must approve the TV shows their children watch; four in ten families report having devotions together once per week or more, and 52% say they rarely, if ever, have family devotions.

What you're up against: The typical Christian family spent seven hours per week in organized activities outside the home, not including work and school. Of the families surveyed, 93% attend church each week; 45% are involved in lessons such as music, dance, and karate; 38% participate in sports programs. Far fewer families are active in community service groups 18% or Scouts (15%). Even with all this activity, Christian families still have dinner together five or six nights per week, according to the survey, and nine in ten pray before dinner. Most families turn off the TV (64%) and wait until everyone is present before eating (59%)

LaRue, Jr., John C. "Family Snapshot" Leadership Magazine. Spring 2002 Published by Christianity Today International Used with permission.

impact young people with the gospel



Walter Hoefflin

Whether you're a paid or volunteer youth leader, speaking is a weekly assignment. Have you ever spoken and felt that every person listening was hanging on every word you said? How about the opposite? Presenting the Word of God to our young people is one of our main callings. We have been given the opportunity to plant the seed of God's Word into the hearts and minds of this emerging generation

In a recent interview, a male tenth grader from Georgia was asked to relate the most memorable sermon he had ever heard. He responded, "I don't think there is one." What a powerful statement! How do we really connect with our youth regarding spiritual things?

In a recent survey across our country, youth were asked about certain sermon methods. Youth respond best to discussions, then stories, and, finally, lecture. Sometimes coined the most "plugged in" generation ever, young people are using various means to learn. So let's ask some questions. Do we allow time in our services or Sunday schools for discussion? Is the majority of our lesson lecture? Youth love stories, especially real life stories. This is nothing new Jesus taught in parables, short stories about current relevant events. Stories cause lasting images that can trigger thoughts, comments and recalling scriptures.

What has God been teaching you in your time with Him? Thom S. Rainer recently said, "More than 90% of Pastors in America spend only two hours per week in sermon preparation for each message preached." The power to change lives only comes through God's Word. There are tremendous time-saving resources available for youth leaders today. Listen to your youth! Ninety-percent of communication is listening. Listening can give you insights on these young people's hopes, dreams, fears and struggles. Listening is free, and what you glean can be priceless. Sharpen your skills by listening to great communicators either by tapes or live presentations. Not only will you be inspired by what is said, but also simple things they communicate can develop into new material for you to teach in the future.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." – Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

If we really want to impact young people with the Gospel, let's first look at ourselves and see how the Gospel is impacting us.

Walter Hoefflin serves as the Foursquare National Minister for Youth. He has served as an associate pastor and youth minister in the Southeast and Southwestern regions of the United States.



Getting a Toddler to Listen

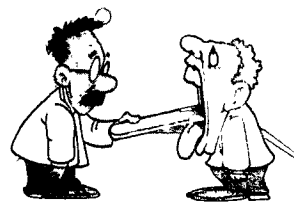
Train each person on your staff to follow this simple procedure for giving instructions to a toddler.

- **Look the child in the eye.** Bend to his or her level, if necessary.
- **Use a pleasant voice.** Avoid using a high-pitched tone. High-pitched tones tell a toddler you're ready to play. When you want to be taken seriously, lower the pitch of your voice.
- **Use the fewest words possible.** Yet still be polite. For example, say, "Please put the toy down," or "Sit on the chair, please."
- **Check for understanding.** Ask the child to repeat your instructions so you know the expected behavior is understood.
- **Allow time for the toddler to respond.** Gently pick up the child and remove him from the situation if you don't get a response from your verbal instruction. After removing him from the situation, lovingly explain that he was moved because he didn't follow instructions.
- **Be a good listener.** Remember that toddlers learn best from modeling, so strive to make your nursery a place where children are listened to attentively and responded to promptly.

Niles, Lori. "Nursery Notes" *Children's Ministry* January/February 2002: 18

Vital Volunteers: Growing a Healthy Culture

I can remember going to the doctor with a sore throat. The doctor took a cotton swab, rubbed it along the back of my throat, and then put the swab in a petri dish to grow a culture. The culture indicated my current state of health and revealed what was going on in my body—good or bad.



If you took a “swab” of your children’s ministry and put it in a petri dish, what would your culture reveal? A healthy ministry culture creates a place of trust and synergy that should produce an abundance of fruit in ministry. There are five ways to grow a healthy culture.

- 1. Select leaders by their callings.** You may need a sixth-grade leader, but a new volunteer wants to serve 4-year-olds. Respect people’s callings, help them discover their gifts, and place them in areas where God intends for them to serve.
- 2. Communicate well.** Share information that’s positive, negative, and constructive. Last year at our children’s “Summer Spectacular,” we discovered that our registration process caused parents frustration because of unbelievably long lines. After some great constructive feedback, we were able to address the problems before our next “Summer Spectacular.” The results produced a successful event! Our church culture communicated that when we speak up, all of us are smarter than one of us.
- 3. Equip people.** Show volunteers not only what needs to be done but also how and why it needs to be done. A soccer player understands the need to shoot the ball into the goal. Coaching the player on the best shooting angles and pointing out why they work develops a strong player. Equipping volunteers over time builds future leaders.
- 4. Share your values.** We have values that guide our ministries and keep us focused on the right path. A common purpose creates community among your leadership and volunteers. For example, if outreach is something your ministry values and if your volunteers reflect that value, it’ll become a positive part of your ministry culture.
- 5. Remember when.** You’ve developed a culture when you can tell the “remember when” stories. When your leadership has walked with the ministry and your volunteers for an extended season, the “remember when” phenomenon develops. You have people who remember ministry milestones, have celebrated the triumphs, and recall when things didn’t work or flat-out bombed. They’ve taken the results in the petri dish, good or bad, and worked to build a healthy culture.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.”—Philippians 1:27

A culture takes time to grow, but with perseverance, your petri dish will reveal a healthy ministry.

Article excerpted from: Jutila, Craig. “Vital Volunteers: Growing a Healthy Culture.” *Children’s Ministry Magazine* November-December, 2001 Used with permission.

creative teacher training

t i p s f o r b u s y s c h e d u l e s

The following are some creative training approaches that can happen anywhere, anytime, and with anybody.

E-Mail -- Create an e-mail list of teachers who can be contacted through this method. Ask a few specific questions that evaluate the previous week or help the teacher prepare for the next class time. Some helpful questions would be: "What is your lesson theme for next Sunday?" "Do you need any supplies?" "Did last week's class time go well?" "What assistance or resources would help you?"

Attach a pertinent article about age characteristics or learning styles. Provide links to websites that offer instructions on a new craft or activity that would help them in the classroom setting. However, don't send lengthy devotionals or large sized graphics that take a lot of time to download and read.

Coffee and Conversation -- Do you have a particular teacher that struggles more than others? Meet with that person at a local coffee shop and share several ideas for a successful class time. Help that teacher plan a couple of lessons and offer supplemental crafts or activities that suit that person's teaching style. Be sure to follow up the next few weeks to ask this person about how the lesson or class time went.

Potluck -- Throw a training potluck. Ask people who are not currently teaching to prepare dishes for the meal or have the church sponsor a simple meal. Also ask a couple of successful teachers to share a fun song, activity, or craft that worked well in their lesson. Have the entire group participate in a learning activity or craft idea. Keep it fairly simple and inexpensive, but make it fun. Provide child care and invite the spouses.

Conferences -- Sponsor or subsidize teachers' registration to a conference. Then plan a short follow-up time to ask the teachers to share one thing they learned from the conference.

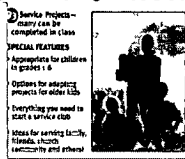
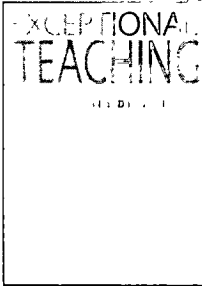
Newsletters -- Mail a simple one-page newsletter to each volunteer. This could be done on a monthly or quarterly basis. Provide information that would help them as teachers, as parents, and as spouses. Offer a teaching idea. Provide a simple meal recipe. Suggest a great teaching resource. Provide a quick family devotion. Include a comic or funny quote. Ask the volunteers to submit ideas for the newsletter.

Prayer groups -- Organize a group to regularly pray for each teacher. Pray for consistent needs such as physical health, family protection, creativity, and organization. Ask the group to regularly send a note reminding the teachers they are being covered in prayer.

Some of these ideas were taken from: Crane, Cynthia and Johnson, Keith. "Guerrilla Training" Children's Ministry Magazine, September/October 2001

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is a resource published by the National Department of Christian Education, P. O. Box 26902, 1910 W. Sunset Blvd., #200, Los Angeles, CA 90026. If you have any news or events to share, please contact us. <http://ce.foursquare.org>



New Resources

Exceptional Teaching – A Comprehensive Guide for Including Students With Disabilities by Jim Pierson

www.gospelpublishing.com or www.standardpub.com

Exceptional Teaching provides an up-to-date overview of the eighteen categories of students with disabilities and special needs. The author provides definitions, symptoms, behavior management suggestions, and exceptional teaching tips for each type of need. Above all, Jim Pierson reminds every teacher, "Jesus was an includer. Allowing His kind of love to work in our hearts will insure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in our classrooms."

The Big Book of Service Projects www.gospellight.com

How can you help kids serve others in response to God's love for them? The Big Book of Service Projects provides 93 ideas that encourage kids to accept responsibility for completing a task, learn to work as a team, and put God's Word into action. Activities in the book are appropriate for grades 1-6 with options for adapting the projects for older kids. Also included are ideas for service to family, friends, church, and community.

One Church Four Generations by Gary L. McIntosh

www.bakerbooks.com

This book gives thoughtful insight into the four generations found in churches today, exploring the qualities, values, and interests of each group in relation to the historical events and social events that have shaped them. It is essential to understand the distinctions of these generations and the resulting interaction of all four groups. The author says that these generations can create turbulence in our society and in our churches. One Church Four Generations is a helpful resource to understand your parents, kids, yourself, and most of all, your church.

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