

Lesson #6: Shoot for what happens after hours.

Remarkably little children's ministry actually takes place at church, under our care. If you want to support parents in their roles as primary spiritual care-givers, you need to focus on more than the few hours of teaching time you have with their children at church. Focus on the time the children have with their parents!

We like to think of our church as a sit-down, eat-in restaurant that fills our members' spiritual "bellies" with great food while at church, yet also gives so much food that they have plenty to take home in "doggie bags" to keep feeding themselves and their children on the rest of the week.

Here's some of the ways we do this:

- Regularly hosting special events: parent lunches, panels/speakers on various topics relevant to parenting.
- Offering Core Seminar classes (Sunday School for adults a la CHBC), both on parenting as well as a wide variety of important topics which aid parents in their own spiritual growth. (See Appendix D for a listing of some of these core seminars. Core seminar content is available for free download at the CHBC website.)
- Strongly encourage parents' church attendance and accountability with others to foster spiritual growth through discipleship and the preaching of the Word.
- Planning times for our Pastor for Families to be available to speak with them and give advice.
- Encouraging teachers/caregivers to give deliberate, regular feedback to parents about their children.
- Hosting "Daddy" breakfasts and other informal, member-initiated meetings to encourage fathers in godly leadership of their families.
- Offering resources in the bookstall and library.
- Pastors mentioning and even giving out (for free) good books for families from the pulpit during announcement time.
- Giving out take home resources of what the children are being taught in their church classes so that parents can review and reinforce the concepts at home.
- Offering online curriculum resources and quarterly newsletter of what the children will be learning.
- Encouraging members to share honestly and deeply with each other about what is going on in their lives. Encourage them to truly support each other in what they are going through. Helping them make connections with others who are going through/have gone through similar seasons and issues with their children.
- Holding an annual book fair and giving out a resource of articles and good books for parents to use at home with their children. This book list is called Truths to Teach, Stories to Tell: Books and other resources for your family. We make it available through our website: www.capitolhillbaptist.org. It is also available on the praisefactory.org website. The booklists are substantial and updated annually as more good books come on the market. I have included some of our favorite books and some helpful articles from this book in Appendix E.

Lesson #6: Questions for You in Your Ministry Setting:

1. How is your church like a sit-down, eat-in restaurant of spiritual food for your parents and children? How would you like to improve this?
2. What kinds of spiritual "doggie bags" do you send them home with?
3. Do you think parents are aware of good resources to use at home with their children? If not, what could you do to educate them better?
4. Is there an atmosphere of honesty about struggles and questions that parents have in raising their children? Why or why not? What could be done to improve this, if there is not?