

A Message from the Children's Ministry Coordinator

In the summer of 2011, while flipping through the pages of a ministry resource catalog, I came across several offerings for a movie coming to theaters that September. The movie, called *Courageous*, was produced by the creators of two other great Christian films, *Facing the Giants* and *Fire Proof*. While I was and am excited about *Courageous* and the impact it is certain to have, what really captured my attention as I perused the page was the following statement:

"Nothing will enhance [the] church's potential to reach people for Christ and disciple people in faith more than strengthening the family".¹

In one sentence, someone had managed to put into just the right words what the Lord had been speaking to my own heart. The family is the God ordained arena in which children are intended to learn the most lasting lessons about what it means to be followers of Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 makes it clear that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual training of their children. In fact, this passage instructs parents to take advantage of daily opportunities to consistently and intentionally weave faith into the fabric of family life. This and other such scriptures (Prov. 22:6; Psalms 78:4-7, Psalms 145:4, Ephesians 6:4) reveal the heart of God concerning the critical importance of passing on faith from one generation to the next.

Yet, with hostility toward biblical truths rising steadily in the public arena and in the marketplace of ideas, raising children to be mature disciples of Christ who know and honor God with their lives is a task that grows increasingly more difficult for Christian parents. A survey conducted by the Barna Group in 2003 revealed that most Christian parents desire to lead their children spiritually, but simply do not know where or how to begin.² Furthermore, they face the added challenge of carving out the time necessary to engage with their children over matters of faith from the often frantic pace of modern life. In too many instances, Christian parents are finding

"There are two powerful influences on the planet- the church and the family. They both exist because God initiated them. He desires to use them to demonstrate His plan of redemption and restoration....Each needs the other, and there is too much at stake for either to fail. Their primary task is to build God's kingdom in the hearts of men and women, sons and daughters". (p.20)

-Reggie Joiner
Think Orange

¹ Lifeway Publishing (May 2011) *Biblical Solutions for Kids* etc. p. 19

² The Barna Group (2003). *"Parents Accept Responsibility for their Children's Spiritual Development But Struggle with Effectiveness"*.

it all too easy to abdicate the responsibility of their children's spiritual development *entirely* to the church. This places the church, and more specifically children's and youth ministries, in positions they were never meant to occupy.

In his book entitled *Think Orange*, author Reggie Joiner offers valuable insights in efforts to persuade parents and those in church leadership to rethink the purpose and programming of children's and youth ministries. "Thinking orange", Joiner contends, is essentially about embracing the idea that together, the family and the church make a greater impact on the faith of the next generation than either can alone.

At Living Truth Christian Fellowship, we believe that generational discipleship in the context of family is the best and biblical model for nurturing children into a saving relationship with Christ. Moreover, as it is the primary mission of the church to make disciples of Christ, we contend, in agreement with Joiner, that forging a solid and uncompromising faith in the hearts of our young people requires that the church and the family (parents) synchronize and combine their influence in a strategic and prayerful partnership.

The Children's Ministry at Living Truth exists, therefore, to encourage and support parents, equipping them to confidently assume their responsibility to *lead* in the spiritual training of their children. In accordance with Deuteronomy 6:5-7, or "orange thinking", our programming and curriculum is selected, planned and implemented with the aim of strengthening the family-church partnership in order to:

- Teach children the way of salvation.
- Help them to develop and nurture a rock solid relationship with Jesus.
- Train them to be disciples of Christ who know, love, and serve God.
- Equip them to contend for and stand firm in their faith.
- Prepare them to share their faith and the love of Christ with others.

I am thrilled that you are visiting our web page. Take some time to learn more about us and glean from the resources that are available to you here. I invite you to come, pray, grow and labor with us as we seek the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be the people, the families, and the church that God desires for us to be.

In Service to Christ Jesus ,

Trish Campbell
Children's Ministry Coordinator