

PARENT *link*

January 2019

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

This month we begin a new emphasis on a different discipleship value. For the months of January, February and March we will be focussing on Developing Godly Communion. We want to give students the tools to develop their own personal relationship with God in a variety of settings and contexts. Here is the teaching schedule for the month of January.

January 6 - We will kick off the New Year with our annual **Bacon and Pancake Breakfast**. All students in grades 7-12 will meet in the MPR and enjoy breakfast together. We will preview our teaching schedule for the quarter, and give more details about our upcoming events.

January 13 - **Junction, week 1** - In this brief series we will look at the story of Moses and the Exodus to see how God can use pain in our lives to grow us, and purify us.

January 20 - **Junction, week 2** - Sometimes God also uses painful times to prepare us for something greater He has in store for us.

January 27 - **Communing With God: A Prayer Conference** is at Faith Church this weekend. There will be no student ministry classes Sunday morning, as we encourage all students to attend the conference.

WHAT WE'RE DOING



Junior High Scavenger Hunt

January 18

7:00pm

All students in grades 7-8 are invited to join us for an exciting night of clue-solving, item-finding, photo-taking, question-answering fun!

Everyone will meet at Faith Church in the Student Ministry room at 7:00. An app-based scavenger hunt will take teams all across Miami Township looking for specific places, posing for team photos, solving puzzles and answering trivia questions. Prizes will be awarded!

As with all of our events, friends are welcome to join us. Cost is \$5 per person, but we must have everyone sign up no later than January 15 so we can plan for the correct amount of leaders/drivers.

WHAT WE SUGGEST

"What will the New Year bring for my family?" Wouldn't it be great if we knew the answer to that question at the beginning of the year? We could plan ahead for trouble, save up for future expenses, prepare for difficult times. Maybe if we knew the dangers, we could work to avoid them altogether. But we don't have that luxury of knowing the future, and so we must face each issue as it comes up.

But that doesn't mean that every situation has to be a surprise, especially with our teenagers. While we might not know the specifics of what is coming our way, we can be sure of some of the situations our teenagers will be facing. And we can work in advance to help prepare them to face those situations in a godly manner.

Make a parenting resolution this year to be proactive in your conversations with your teens. Initiate conversations about vaping, alcohol, drugs, sex, relationships, video games, friends, etc. Don't wait for an issue to arise, begin the conversation early. Resist the urge to lecture, but instead focus on asking questions, and discover how your teenager is thinking about these issues. Remember, our job as parents is not just to get teenagers to behave a certain way, but to equip them to make good, biblical decisions on their own. Help them find a basis in Scripture for their decisions and actions in these areas.

If we can begin these conversations before major issues arise, we can give our students a good foundation when they do face these issues. We may not know exactly what those issues will be, but we can start preparing for them now. Not sure how to have these conversations? Come talk to Bryan or Pam in the church office, we have lots of resources, tips, and encouragement we would love to share with you!

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Celebrate Your Family Identity

Jim Burns -President of HomeWord and Executive Director of the HomeWord Center for Youth and Family at Azusa Pacific University

On Monday nights when our girls were growing up, Cathy and I would take them to the Golden Spoon for frozen yogurt after dinner. The weekly yogurt run was part of our family identity --- part of what made us who we were. Even the neighbors knew our routine and sometimes shouted to-go orders as we pulled out of our driveway. Our three daughters are now grown, but when our family gets together, we still make trips to the Golden Spoon. It's one of those simple traditions that have kept our family bonds strong.

Not surprisingly, a strong family identity also helps children develop a strong and healthy self-identity. Knowing what makes their family unique --- traditions, values, and ways of relating to one another --- gives children a clear starting point for discovering their own place in the world. Studies have shown that kids who identify with their family's values tend to be less promiscuous and face less risk of drug and alcohol abuse.

I'm a big fan of parents who make the effort to build a strong family identity. But how is it done? Here are three principles that I believe are critical to the process.

1. Be present. Children regard your presence in their lives as a sign of care and connectedness. Families who eat meals together, play together, and build traditions together thrive. Your presence matters! Does your family eat together at least four times a week? If so, there is a greater chance your kids will perform better in school and be less likely to exhibit negative behavior.
 2. Celebrate everything! Don't miss a single chance to celebrate your family. You can celebrate birthdays, graduations, and other rites of passage, but don't miss out on celebrating life's smaller occasions such as Little League victories, learned skills, and school achievements.
 3. Talk about faith. For some families, spiritual discussions are easier said than done. But having faith conversations with your kids helps to build your family identity. They also help your kids build strong convictions, as they get older. When you regularly expose your kids to God's truth, it can, as a friend of mine says, "help them develop a sweet tooth for Jesus." And that's something far better than buying your kids frozen yogurt at the Golden Spoon.
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