

Truth:78

Parents, You Can Partner with Your Church

We believe that God has called both the church and home to raise up the next generations to know, honor, and treasure God through Jesus Christ. This is accomplished through a strategic, loving partnership between the church and home. This partnership affirms that parents by proximity, opportunity, and God's design, bear a unique responsibility for nurturing their children's faith (see Deuteronomy 6:4-7). This partnership also affirms the role and responsibility of church leadership to provide encouragement and training for parents, and also to provide formal instruction for children and youth. Therefore, it is important for parents to consider how they can enrich their partnership with their local church. Following are seven ways parents can do this:

1. Become familiar with your church's vision for children and youth

The church leadership will be greatly encouraged when parents express an eagerness to learn more about the reasons behind and goals for the instruction being implemented in the classrooms, programs, and other related activities. If your church is not yet communicating this vision and philosophy to parents, prayerfully and humbly consider how you might bring this to the attention of the leadership.

2. Offer to serve the church in discipling children and youth

Many churches find it difficult to adequately staff their children's and youth ministries. Common complaints from parents regarding the classroom experience of their child relate to understaffed classrooms and/or overwhelmed volunteers. Seriously consider how you might use your gifts and abilities to further the discipleship of children and youth in your church. Teaching, providing organizational oversight, leading small groups, preparing visuals, and leading worship are all facets valuable for implementing a spiritually enriching ministry.

3. Prioritize family participation in the life of the church

One of the most important ways that parents can partner with the church for the faith of the next generation is to make it a high priority for the family to participate in the regular life and rhythms of the church, especially the corporate worship service. When parents do this, they are teaching and training children that the Christian life is to be lived in community with God's people—not just as an isolated family. As members together, we have both responsibilities and privileges. Living out the "one another commands" within the

greater family of God should be the normal and regular habit of every Christian family. At a minimum, families should prioritize worshiping together in the weekly service. We know this may feel daunting to some parents, so we've created several resources to help you. Visit bit.ly/children_in_church for strategies to engage children in the worship service, including the free brochure "8 Tips for Helping Your Child Worship" and the My Church Notebook, a journal custom-made for kids learning how to listen to and write down what they're hearing from the pulpit.



4. Partner with your child's ministry teams

Your children will be best served when parents and church are joyfully working together. Toward that end, here are some very simple and practical ways in which parents can strengthen the relationship with their child's ministry team:

- **Pray.** Before Sunday school (or other events) pray with your child—for their own attitude and encouragement and also for the teachers, volunteers, and other students.
- **Bear One Another's Burdens.** Ask the teacher if there are specific ways you can pray for the class from week to week.
- **Equip.** Share appropriate concerns you have about your child's spiritual condition, temperament (i.e. shy, energetic, not comfortable in front of a group, etc.), as well as any behavioral issues, with teachers.
- **Volunteer.** Inquire if there are any needs in the classroom that you could help with.
- **Be Prompt.** Bring your child to class on time. If needed, make sure to take them to the restroom, have a snack between services, or get a drink of water.
- **Prepare Ahead.** Make sure your child is prepared for class: Bible in hand, verses memorized, etc.
- **Be Kind.** Have realistic expectations regarding the classroom and volunteers.

- **Seek Reconciliation.** If you have any problems with the class, teacher, etc., pursue a biblically appropriate way to address those issues outside of class (Matthew 18:15-17).
- **Be thankful.** Let your child’s Sunday school team know you are grateful to God for them and appreciate their ministry.

5. Use the Truth:78 curricula GIFT pages to disciple your children

One very strategic way parents can partner with the church and take primary responsibility for their child’s discipleship is by using the curricula-specific take-home GIFT pages (Growing in Faith Together). These pages provide parents with a tool that will assist them in guiding their children to personal application of the biblical truths taught during the classroom time. Parents have the greatest opportunity for “teachable moments,” situations that arise in everyday life, that can be opportunities to apply the truth of God. Real heart application of biblical truth, which changes lives, usually takes place in the context of close relationships and everyday life.

Take-home GIFT pages provide parents with the following:

- Lesson title, main ideas, memory verses, and a list of Scriptures presented in the lesson.
- A brief summary of the lesson.
- “As You Walk By the Way”—questions to further spiritual discussion and heart application.
- Action Steps—suggestions for putting biblical truth to practice.

6. Encourage, support, and pray for your church’s leadership

Youth and children’s pastors and ministers have a difficult job as they try to navigate the goals and needs of the wider church as well as the goals and needs of parents and their children. Commit to praying for them and remember to communicate thankfulness for their ministry. If you have concerns or disagreements with the leadership be sure to address it in a biblical manner, the first step being, address the leader(s) personally at a mutually appointed time.

7. Pass along parenting resources for the church to review and recommend

There are many excellent resources available for parents to help them disciple their children—and there are also many poor resources. Parents can serve the wider church by alerting church leadership to specific parenting resources. Upon review, the leadership may choose to recommend these to the wider body. Here are some family and parenting resources we highly recommend,

- Truth78 devotional books and parenting booklets available at bit.ly/Truth78Books and bit.ly/truth78booklets.
- Truth78 recommended parenting books

- *The Disciple-Making Parent—A Comprehensive Guidebook for Raising Your Children to Love and Follow Jesus Christ*, by Chap Bettis
- *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting*, by William P. Farley
- *Teach Them Diligently: How to Use the Scriptures in Child Training*, by Louis Paul Priolo
- *The Faith of a Child A Step-by-Step Guide to Salvation for Your Child*, by Art Murphy
- *Your Child's Profession of Faith*, by Dennis Gundersen
- *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, by Tedd Tripp
- *Instructing a Child's Heart*, by Tedd Tripp and Margy Tripp
- *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, by Paul David Tripp
- *Future Men*, by Douglas Wilson