



Helps for Passing the Spiritual Torch—

Assisting Parents to Spiritually Train Their Kids at Home

by Marshall Bruner

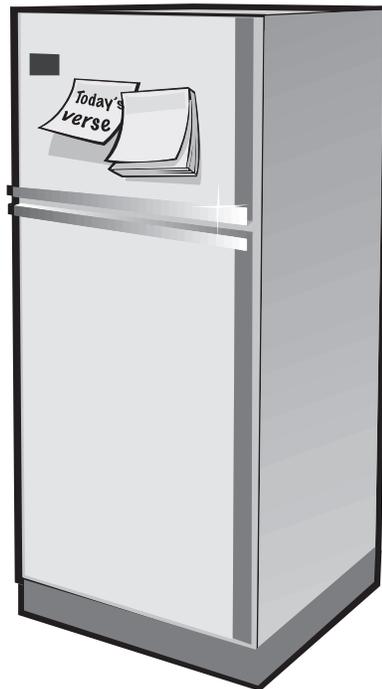
As children's leaders, we should encourage parents to "pass the spiritual torch"—that is to train children in the way they should go. Below are a few ways you can help the parents in your church to establish good spiritual habits with their children.

Family Activities

- Become your child's best friend. He or she must understand that you will love him or her unconditionally. Part of this spiritual journey for kids begins with having fun with your child. If you can play together, you can pray together. And if you can pray and play together, you can discuss some of the tough issues kids now face in school. Break the ice by first sharing some of the tough issues you faced as a child and how the Lord helped you through those times. Another way to bond as a family is to shut off the television and do "family things" together at the house—like taking turns reading an exciting short story. Don't forget the natural ways of bonding as parent and child, like

teaching a sport, hobby, or trade. Dig out the old photos and have lots of laughs together. Find out what your child or children enjoy doing, and join with them in doing it as a family activity.

- Before heading off to



school and work each day, have a quick huddle—prayer time. Cite a favorite Scripture verse—the same one for an entire week—and encourage your child to memorize it. Put the memory

verse on the refrigerator for all the family to see and memorize. Add a tune to the Scripture passage, or make up a "Scripture picture" (drawing a mini-picture for each of the main words of the passage) to make learning God's Word even more fun.

- Have a regular prayer time and Bible reading time with the entire family.
- During quiet times together, ask the children questions about spiritual things.
- After church, discuss what each member of the family learned.
- Include the children in difficult decisions so they can seek God for His answers as well.
- Encourage the child to lead in prayer during meal times.
- Take a "spiritual journey" somewhere, like a nature center, a lake, a wooded area, etc., where the entire family can relax together. Use the opportunity to naturally share about God's goodness, His creation, and His intent for their lives.
- Let your child see you praying and reading God's Word.

Model for the children what being a Christian is—by being steadfast in the things of God and by allowing your actions to reflect Christ.

- Randomly ask your children, “How can I pray for you today?”
- Check with the children’s leaders at church to see how your child is progressing spiritually. Ask the children’s leaders what you can do at home to assist your children with their spiritual development.

Parent Activities with the Children’s Pastor

- Invite the parents to children’s church. Let them see how you are reaching and teaching and leading their kids for Christ.
- Encourage parents to join your ministry team or to assist on occasion with children’s church or Wednesday night activities. Doing so will enable the parents to see for themselves what their kids are learning while investing themselves in the children.

- Invite the parents to attend a monthly meeting after a church service, where you can share with them what you will be teaching the kids during that month. At that time, provide the parents with take-home papers (based on what you will be teaching throughout that month) that they can incorporate into their daily home devotions—such as memory verses or Bible passages that can be discussed at length at home.

Questions for Further Study—

1. What are some steps you can take to build relationships with the children in your ministry?