

# parent equip

SESSION 2

BRENTWOOD  
families

## LESSON PLAN

### Influence with Love

Practical Thoughts and Action Steps for Parents  
Deuteronomy 7:6-11

#### INTRODUCTION/ATTENTION-GETTER

Give each parent an index card. Tell them to suppose they are at a community “get-to-know-you” event and direct them to list on the index card 3 facts about themselves that they would share to help others know who they are. If they ask for clarification, do not give any. The point is for them to list things that come to their mind, not for the facilitator to guide their categories.

#### ASK

What do the things you listed say about your priorities, as well as your identity?

Instruct participants to notice whether they listed their church involvement or their relationship with Jesus as “most important facts” about themselves.

#### ASK

Why do you think most people didn’t include their faith on their list?

#### BRAINSTORM

Our culture encourages our children to find their identity in a lot of places. Together, create a list of places children/students might find their identity, such as:

- Gender/sexual orientation
- Sports teams/extra-curricular clubs
- Friend group
- Personality
- Hobbies/interests
- Academic ability

#### THE POINT

Today’s session will focus on the importance of helping our children make their relationship with Jesus the primary source of their individual identity. Church involvement is particularly significant when pointing your family toward Jesus as the ultimate source of their identity.

#### WHEREVER YOU ARE...

Encourage parents that wherever they are as a family right now is a great time to start as they seek to disciple their children. The intention of these classes is to give families some practical handles for family discipleship, starting wherever they are.

#### DOWNLOAD APP

Remind participants to download the Brentwood Baptist Church app and turn on notifications. During this series, they will get prompts regularly with content to help them in their journey.

#### DISCUSS

Ask participants to remember themselves as an elementary school student. How did they dress? What did they look like? What was their personality? What was most important to them? (Give them an opportunity to share anything significant or humorous that comes to mind.) As the leader, feel free to share one of your own awkward tendencies as an elementary school student to get the ball rolling.

Repeat the process, directing them to think about themselves as a teenager, young adult, and newlywed or brand-new parent.

#### ASK

What are some things about you that have changed over time? What parts of your identity have been consistent throughout your life? How has your identity as a believer been consistent through changing circumstances and life stages? (For some, this won’t be significant at all.)

## SHARE

If the leader has a significant memory of how the church has been a consistent part of their identity throughout their life stages and circumstances, share that here. Alternatively, if the leader didn't experience the church being a significant part of his or her identity growing up, share here how that created difficulty or caused them to flounder in their identity overall.

## RESILIENT FAITH

In a recent workshop on resilient faith, Timothy Paul Jones stated that one of the top contributors to college students maintaining their faith throughout college is having significant multigenerational relationships within their church prior to college. In the book, *Sticky Faith*, Youth Worker Edition, the authors recommend that five adults are needed to build relationships with every one student in order for them to experience these significant multigenerational relationships. Positioning one's child to develop these relationships falls on the parent. The less involved a child is in the life of the church, the less likely they will be able to develop those relationships.

## BRAINSTORM

Together, brainstorm ways a child/student can build significant multigenerational relationships within the church, such as:

- Serve as a family with other families and/or adults
- Be a part of a Sunday group
- Be a part of a Wednesday group
- Get involved in ministry to senior adults
- Build relationships with other families and get to know each other's kids as well
- Attend worship as a family and get to know others who might consistently sit near you.

## THE GOAL

Your child/student should feel like he or she is part of the church and has community there—not just that church is a place the family goes to worship.

## SHOWING UP

The first step toward helping your child build his or her identity as part of the body of Christ is for your family to consistently be present at church. As parents, you must show your children that involvement within the body of Christ is your priority.

## READ

Call on a volunteer to read aloud Psalm 122.

## LEARN

Explain that Psalm 122 is a "song of ascent," which means that it is one of 15 psalms the Israelites sang while they traveled the long, exhausting trip to Jerusalem for annual feasts. Going to worship with God's people at His temple involved a journey. When they arrived, they celebrated! We have a hard time understanding the priority and significance of traveling for days just to get to the house of the Lord.

## DISCUSS

How is our attitude as modern Christians different than that of the Old Testament Israelites concerning the value and importance of corporate worship?

## EXAMPLE

Distribute the "Healthy Habits" survey. Instruct participants to mark an "X" on the line in the place that best represents their habits for each category.

When they finish, direct them to think through their actual habits over the past week (or even the past day). Ask: How much sleep did you actually get last night? The night before? How many fruit/vegetable servings did you actually eat yesterday? How many times did you actually exercise in the past week? (Save the church attendance question for now.)

Point out that when we answer questions about things we think we "ought to" do, our responses tend to be aspirational. Some data experts estimate that people lie up to 50% of the time on anonymous surveys, likely because they answer in terms of what they want to be true.

Like many other areas in life, we might see our church involvement in aspirational terms, rather than actual ones. Be certain, however, that your children do not. They recognize exactly how often your family actually walks through the doors as well as your level of involvement, and they recognize what other commitments hold a higher priority for your family.

When you prioritize other things over involvement in the body of Christ, whether it's the extra rest your family needs on the weekend or participation on travel sports teams, you may think you're setting the example that your family prioritizes church most of the time.

Here's what your kids probably see: we attend church as long as there isn't something else more important planned.

Truly prioritizing church involvement means sacrificing other priorities because this is more important. When is the last time your family said no to another commitment or opportunity in order to make church involvement the priority?

## **DISCUSS**

As a group, wrestle with the tension between legalism (always walking through the doors with no exceptions as a to-do item on your spiritual checklist) and disordered priorities (missing church easily whenever anything else gets scheduled). How do you find the healthy balance of prioritizing church involvement without becoming legalistic?

## **BEYOND SHOWING UP**

Remind participants that showing up is just the first step toward building significant multigenerational relationships within the church. Your family needs to continue taking steps toward small groups, community, and service so that your child has the opportunity to develop relationships and identity as part of the body of Christ.

Give participants the Session 2 take-home worksheet, encouraging them to prayerfully work through it over the next week.

## **PRAY**

Take a few moments to pray over the participants, asking God to help them be faithful and consistent in taking one step forward in their church involvement to help solidify your family's identity, and your children's individual identity, as part of the body of Christ.

## **REMINDER**

End by reminding participants that we are all on a journey. Wherever you are right now is a great place to start!