

parent equip

SESSION 4

BRENTWOOD
families

LESSON PLAN

Influence with Action

Practical Thoughts and Action Steps for Parents
Deuteronomy 1:6-8

INTRODUCTION

Display a photo of a cheetah (or a video of one running).

ASK

"The cheetah is the fastest animal in the world—true or false?"

ANSWER

"It depends. The cheetah has the fastest sprint speed at 70 mph. However, it can not keep that stride beyond short distances. So, depending on the total distance traveled, other animals could potentially get there faster if the distance is great. There are different ways to be fast."

ASK

"What about strength? What are some different types of strength?" Allow the group to call out responses. (Examples are agile strength, explosive strength, maximum strength, and starting strength—not to mention mental strength, spiritual strength, emotional strength, relational strength, etc.)

If I say, "I'm strong," that can mean a variety of things. I can be strong physically but weak spiritually, or strong mentally but weak emotionally.)

In Sunday's sermon from Deuteronomy 1:6-8, the Israelites used military strength (given by the Lord), to physically conquer the nations, just as God commanded them to do. However, they only partially obeyed His directive. They did not drive out the false gods, causing spiritual compromise.

THE POINT

Our children are growing up in a world that is hostile to biblical truth. This session will focus on 5 primary values to equip families to live intentionally Christ-focused in the midst of this hostile culture:

1. Creating gospel conversations
2. Building healthy relationship and family identity
3. Defending against the world's influence by instilling biblical truth and praying together
4. Celebrating family members' value and worth
5. Blessing and empowering to go and make Him known

REVIEW

Briefly review the importance of a Christ-centered family identity (from Session 2) and the family as the ultimate small group (from Session 3). Allow participants to share any steps they've taken toward defining and adjusting their family identity and/or beginning/improving their family Bible time.

Celebrate the steps they've taken and encourage them to continue prayerfully work through the questions on the take-home worksheets from the previous sessions. Remind them there's no end date for these. Rather, they're meant to be a launching pad that propels them forward in their family discipleship.

GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS

Ask: "If your parents are Christians, how many of you know your parents' testimony? One parent? Both parents? What difference has knowing their story made in your spiritual journey?"

The home is a great place to begin learning about and practicing gospel conversations. Distribute the "Gospel Conversations Pro Tips" document to participants. Briefly talk through this document, focusing on clearly defining gospel conversations, as well as the importance of trusting the Holy Spirit with the results.

MY TESTIMONY

Explain that when we share with others our experience of becoming a Christian, there are 3 parts:

1. What my life was like before I met Jesus
2. How I met Jesus
3. How He has changed me/how He is working in my life

SHARE

The leader should briefly tell their own story here using these 3 parts as an example.

Encourage parents to spend time this week answering these three questions to tell their own story of becoming a Christian. Once they've worked through their own story, they could tell it to their family during their family Bible time. Spend a few moments discussing concerns and tips for keeping our stories authentic, yet age-appropriate for our children.

Once parents have led by sharing their own story, they can help their children construct their story as well (if they've become Christians). Take time to practice sharing your stories with each other.

SHARE

Point out that gospel conversations can also include other stories of God's faithfulness in our lives. The leader could share another story here from their own faith walk, where they struggled through a situation and God proved faithful.

DISCUSS

Give the participants space to share a story of their own, either of becoming a Christian or a difficult time when God was faithful to them. Point out that the more we tell these stories, the more comfortable we become doing so. This can help us share more freely with the lost and searching.

READ

Call on a volunteer to read aloud Psalm 77:11-12.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBERING

Remind participants that remembering where they've been and God's faithfulness to them changes their mindset. Repeating these stories ingrains them in kids hearts and can actually shape and influence your family's identity. Encourage participants to regularly include stories of God's faithfulness in their family Bible times.

REVIEW

Read aloud the primary values 1-3 below, reminding participants that we've covered these. Then, read primary value 4.

1. Creating Gospel Conversations
2. Building healthy relationship and family identity
3. Defending against the world's influence by instilling Biblical truth and praying together
4. Celebrating family members' value and worth

VALUE AND WORTH

Remind participants that in Session 3, we learned that the home makes the ultimate small group. No one else will know your children as well as you do! You have the opportunity to speak truth in a way that they will best understand, based on how they're wired.

DISCUSS

Invite participants to tell the group something you love about one of your children. After they've had a chance to share, ask: Does that child know that you love this about him or her? Emphasize the importance of speaking life into each of your children regularly. Point out that this will look different for each child. One child will feel most valued when you set aside everything just to spend time with her. Another child will feel special when you leave a note in her lunch. Use trial and error to discover what helps your children understand their value and worth as you communicate that to them in different ways.

BLESSING AND EMPOWERING TO GO

Review the first four primary values below, then read the final primary value.

1. Creating gospel conversations
2. Building healthy relationship and family identity
3. Defending against the world's influence by instilling biblical truth and praying together
4. Celebrating family members' value and worth
5. Blessing and empowering to Go and make Him known

DISCUSS

As you describe and explain blessing, empowering, and going, take time for questions, discussion, and sharing ideas as a group.

BLESSING

Blessing your children often involves meaningful touch combined with a verbal message. For example, place your hand on their shoulders, look them in the eye, and remind them that they are uniquely and marvelously made by the God of the universe, and that God has a future planned. This may include letting your children listen to you pray aloud, thanking God for who He made them. It might be writing prayers, Scriptures, and encouragements in a journal that they can look at later.

EMPOWERING

It's often easier and faster to just do things ourselves, but we show our children that they are competent and valued when we let them participate. If you're making dinner for another family, enlist your kids' help. Trust them with increasing levels of responsibility and continue to communicate your trust in them.

GO

The final phase is releasing your children to GO and make Him known. Whether you're sending your children on a short mission trip or bringing them to college, continue blessing and empowering them to actively share the gospel with a lost and hurting world.

Give participants the "Influence with Action Take-Home Worksheet" to prayerfully work through over the next week.

PRAY

Take a few moments to pray over the participants, asking God to help them be faithful and consistent in continuing to step forward in discipling the hearts of their children.

FINAL REMINDER

Parents, wherever you are, right now is a great time to start discipling your children!