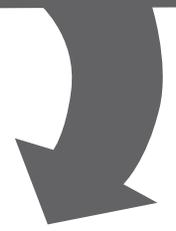


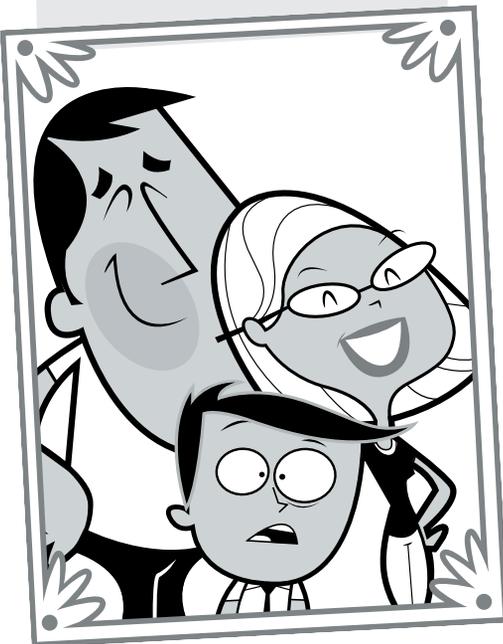


You're in the Family Business, Too!



“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

- What is the church's role in helping families strengthen their faith?
- How can talking and praying with families build relationships that help them grow closer to God?



▼ Training Session

It's no secret that many families are sinking. And they're reaching for help—for someone to throw the life preserver.

When working with your kids, don't forget their families.

Church must be a place where families are valued, where they can seek refuge from the raging waters they're struggling to float in. That's where we, as the teachers of their children, come in.

What do you know about your students' families and home lives? Have you at least met the parents of all your students?

Start with that. Families need to know that you're approachable and excited to have a role in their lives.

Initiate contact. Phone parents to thank them for the contributions their kids make in class. Be specific; parents will be grateful you take a personal interest in their children.

After you make initial contact, ask questions that will give you insight into their home life: What do you like to do as a family? When do you spend the most time together? What are some issues that you're working through with your children? How can I help?

As you continue building relationships with families, encourage them in their spiritual growth. Give parents resources that strengthen their faith together. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Provide a half-dozen ideas for family devotions. The curriculum you use probably has a devotion option. Share it with families.
- Mail monthly “fridge fliers” with themes, special projects, memory verses, and questions to prompt spiritual discussions.
- Create drive-home discussion questions to open up dialogue about what children learned at church.

Some families might politely decline your invitation to build a relationship. Without invading their privacy, be persistent. It's important that you work on that relationship. Explain that their children will benefit from such a connection. Your friendship and willingness to work together will help each child feel important and loved—and make the classroom more relevant.

When you build relationships with families, you help those families plant their kids on an unshakable foundation.



Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- Why is family ministry so important in this field?
- How do children benefit when we focus on families?
- What steps can you take to create a bridge for children between church and home?

▼ Journal

Lord, help me to be open to moments where I can connect with the families whose children I teach. Help me to find time to . . .

God has created us for relationship. He has set us up to be his family. When you reach out to the families in your church, you're extending God's family.

▼ Application

Write a card to mail to three families you want to encourage and connect with. Point out the unique, positive qualities you see in their children, and tell them how much you look forward to getting to know them better.

Choose three families each week. Find some time in your schedule to write a card to each family so you're making connections with every family.