

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

January 14th

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. Is there a family tradition that you have that you most enjoy? (either in your current family or the home that you grew up in). If not, what is one that you would like to start?

Bible Study Questions

1. Read Matthew 18:6.
 - What does Jesus say about causing a child to stumble?
 - Why does Jesus take this so seriously?
2. Pastor Michael said that being a poor Christian example is one of the greatest hindrances to a child's spiritual development. Why is this the case?
 - Are there any examples that you have seen when a parent or an influential adult's hypocrisy pushed a child or teen away from Christ?
3. A positive example can have an incredible impact on a child. Parents set the tone for a Christ-filled home. What things would you expect to find in a home that smells like Jesus?
4. How joyful is your home?
 - How are you modeling this and where can you improve?
5. How peaceful (not quiet but referring to resolving conflict in love) is your home?
 - How are you modeling this and where can you improve?
6. How do you promote authenticity in your home?
7. One of the most important things is prioritizing your walk with God. How are you currently showing an example of valuing your walk with God above all else?

8. Our greatest weapon is the power of God. How does knowing that God is with us encourage us in the daunting challenge of being examples?

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When you look at the heroes of the Old Testament, we find a series of dysfunctional families. They serve as a reminder of how we are broken by sin and bring that brokenness into our family situation. In attempting to create a Christian home, one finds a daunting challenge. But God has given us weapons to succeed. The greatest is his own power. But there is a second weapon that has incredible power to restore or to build...the power of example.

- I. **One of the greatest danger to a child's spiritual growth is a parent whose life doesn't match their beliefs:** In Matthew 18:6, Jesus warns that anyone who causes a child to stumble is better off being drowned in the sea. Woe to anyone who tempts a child. If parent's are the greatest influence on kids, then a hypocritical example becomes an incredible stumbling block in their walk with God. Children are watching to see how their parents, grandparents, and other Christians live. When someone says one thing and then does another, the message is that they really don't believe what they previously said.
- II. **A parent's example sets the tone for a home that smells like Jesus:** If a negative example is destructive, a positive example can powerfully inspire a child toward Christ. Scripture repeatedly talks about the power of example (Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12). If homes are to be an environment that cultivates Christ followers, then it must be a home that smells like Jesus. Parents set that tone.
 - **A home that smells like Jesus is joyful:** Joy is the second fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Many Christians have a reputation of being dour and judgmental. Yet a Spirit filled home should be full of the joy of God's love.
 - **A home that smells like Jesus pursues peace:** Much of the New Testament is spent on teaching us how to love one another (Romans 12:9-21). Every home will have conflict, but a Christ follower is quick to forgive and to serve one another in love.
 - **A home that smells like Jesus is authentic:** Jesus often condemned people who put on a great show of their faith (Matthew 6:1-7). Instead, we are to be authentic, recognizing that we are broken people being transformed by Christ. This means that as parents, we admit our failings and are willing to apologize when needed.
 - **A home that smells like Jesus features parent's that prioritize their walk with Christ:** In Genesis 22, God teaches

Abraham to prioritize God even above his own beloved son. When parents prioritize their walk with God, their children notice. If they see their parent's valuing their walk with God, then they will value it also. Note: Studies have shown that is it specially impactful when a father does this.

- III. **The greatest asset for building a spiritually healthy home is the power of God:** We have been focusing on our own example, but there is a greater weapon that we have at our disposal. It is described well by King Jehosaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:12. When facing a powerful army, he declared, *“We have no power to face this vast army that is now attacking. We do not know what to do. But our eyes are on you”* We have the power of the Holy Spirit within us and he is able to enable us to lead our families.