

Letting Go of the Bike

Family Activity: Bike Race

Parents race on preschool bikes to the cone and back

Main Session #2: Letting Go of the Bike

This session is called letting go of the bike. You're probably wondering what that means and what we're really going to talk about. I just have to show you one of my favorite video clips from one of my favorite shows. I think it will help us in this talk.

Video Clip: "The Office: Michael Scott rides a Bike"

- Ridiculous that Michael can't ride a bike. He never learned to ride without training wheels.
- Training wheels are great but at some point we just have to "let go"
- Examples: standing/pulling up, learning to walk, learning to ride a bike
- In each example, parents eventually have to let go so the kids can begin to steer.
- The same is true with "FAITH"

Preteens: The Developmental Stage

- Preteens are in a cross-culturally distinguishable stage of life. This means that even the tribes in Africa have a special group called preteens! But what is this group like?
- Preteens stage is characterized by "**detachment**"—developing a desire for independence

150 years ago...

- At the age of 12-15, parents would release their children into the world to begin their own family. Dad would point to a plot of land and tell his son to go!
- The term teenager was not created until after WWII—began to be seen in culture in the 1920s
- Children were not forced into labor or marriage at such an early age. Parents wanted to let them be kids longer, so they extended childhood into "teenage" years.
- The idea was that children would be better prepared for the trials of adulthood, but is that what happened?
- Soon, teen years were common. It was in the dictionary in 1961.

What really happened...

- Extended childhood, but forgotten responsibility
- Created a window of time to increase preparedness for adulthood
- Less prepared in many instances—especially in faith
- Today, 70% of graduating seniors walk away from church

- A study released this year from Georgetown University found that less than 40% of 18-24 year olds say religion is important to them.
- What makes these kids—many who were raised in church—walk away from God? In many instances, this is a **LACK OF PERSONAL FAITH**

There are probably some things that you believe or value because your parents passed them on to you. There are probably a few of those values that you believe only because your parents said so. There are emotions attached to the things your parents taught you, so you feel compelled to follow them. However, if pushed to explain the why it is true/Biblical, could you?

Letting Go of the Bike means we create a strategy for helping preteens take ownership of the faith we have passed on to them—to make it personal. But How?

3 Ways to help preteens personalize the faith you pass on to them:

1. Give Legs to Faith

- Put your faith into practice as a family.
- James 1:22—**Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**
- Example: Donald Miller's story of a family on the brink of destruction goes on a family mission trip
- Help them see a great life spent serving a great God

Discussion:

Brainstorm ideas for your family to put faith into practice—serve others, share your faith, prayer & fasting, etc.

2. Ask More Questions

- While you tell children what to do and what to think, find ways to help preteens reach conclusions on their own by asking great questions
- When they share their views that are right, they have greater confidence. They can share that with others
- When they share ideas that are wrong, you hear them and can offer correction
- In both ways, you win because your son or daughter has owned their faith

Discussion:

- Take a few minutes to name some of the attributes of God—words that describe who God is and what God is like
- Next, ask preteens for an example from the Bible or their own life that backs up (proves) that description of God

3. Model a Personal Faith

- If you want preteens to have a personal faith that is strong enough to last each stage of life, you need to model a personal faith that does the same.
- Illustration: 1st Chair Parents produce 1st Chair Parents by Dr. Richard Ross
- Little Jesus or Big Jesus
- Do they see how much you love Jesus Christ?
- Quiet Time, Volunteering/Service, Personal testimony, example of God providing for you or the family, what God is teaching you

Discussion:

At lunch, maybe you can share one thing God has been teaching you.