

The Importance of Parents for the Faith Development of Their Children

As parents, we watch our children grow up physically, emotionally, and intellectually. We try to provide healthy situations for growth to take place, so we pay attention to what they eat, what they experience, and where, what, and how they learn. We also take an active role in their development, making sure that they eat healthy food, develop a variety of healthy habits, are not exposed to influences or circumstances inappropriate for their age and stage; we do everything to ensure that they are in good schools and otherwise have the best learning environments possible. Our children's development is directly impacted by what we do, proactively, to provide a healthy environment for their growth to take place. An important part of this healthy environment is not only what we do, but who we are. If we eat poorly or have exhibit bad behavior—if we lack healthy habits—the likelihood that our children will develop and grow to their optimum potential is severely curtailed.

Our kids also grow up in the faith. And just as our children are shaped by the environment we provide and create for their physical, emotional, and intellectual growth, who we are and what we do spiritually has a direct impact on their faith, both in the pre-adolescent years and when our kids are teenagers.

Children's Ministry In our Children's Ministry at NPC we want to help you provide important resources for your child's faith development. We want to partner with and encourage you to provide the optimal environment for their growth. And just like the above-mentioned areas of development, so too with faith development. You as a parent are a crucial piece—in almost every way THE crucial aspect—of their spiritual growth.

That's our goal with Sunday School, Sermon pullouts for younger ones, worship milestones, special events like VBS and Club 45. And of course, it all begins with our Nursery and pre-school programs as we seek to provide a loving environment for every age and stage.

Youth Ministry The "ecology" of faith development begins to shift as your children move into adolescence and it becomes more complex. For the most part, and for a variety of developmental reasons, younger children appropriate the faith of their parents. As they mature our kids begin to move toward owning faith for themselves. A very important stage on the journey is the faith "the group." The progression goes something like this:

my parent's faith => my group's faith => my own faith

Of course the ultimate goal of Christian nurture is to raise our children in such a way that they embrace faith in Christ for themselves in the adult years (for many, this takes place in college). What we do as parents of adolescents shifts. Our input and influence in a host of areas begins to wane, as kids are influenced by their peer group(s).

Here is an important reality: your teenager will almost certainly be influenced by the faith of his or her "group." That's why we have "youth group," Sunday School, trips and camps in our youth program. We seek to engender environments where our kids can have healthy faith experiences and expressions. But **church is almost certainly not the only group your child belongs to**. So it is important for you to do all you can to encourage your sons' and daughters' participation in the life of NPC.

We're here for you and your children. We look forward to partnering with you in the new year.

Warmly in Christ,

Quinn Fox

Associate Pastor for Discipleship

On behalf of our Family Ministries team