

*“Project Connect”*  
 (a monthly growth group  
 for Parents of Teens)  
 The Tampa Bay Church  
 12/7/08  
 by  
 Jeff Chacon

Session Six: “How to Make the Faith Connection”

1. This morning = last of six month series of classes entitled, “Project Connect”, based on book, “The Disconnected Generation”, by Josh McDowell.
  - a. Review:
    - i. Premise of class:
      1. Our teens are changing biologically and socially and so our parenting styles and ways of relating to them must change along with them.
      2. Our parenting should slowly transform from primarily based on “authority” in their lives as toddlers to being primarily based on “influence” in their lives as emerging teens. This allows them to gradually achieve the independence that God designed for them to be developing as future adults, while maintaining the influence in their lives that they still need as children under our care.
    - ii. Practicals of “how to connect” that we discussed: (notes on website)
      1. “Get and Stay Involved”
      2. “Open Wide Your Heart”
      3. “Resolve Every Conflict”
      4. “Discipline with Love”
2. Transition =) This morning = “Session Six: “How to Make the Faith Connection”
  - a. Or, “How do we help our teens develop their own relationship with God?”
3. Ephesians 6:4 = “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”
  - a. “The training and instruction of the Lord” can and must occur in many different ways. We’ll discuss three main ways this morning.
4. Outline:
  - a. One: Model the Faith
  - b. Two: Teach the Faith
  - c. Three: Share the Faith
5. One: Model the Faith
  - a. 1 Corinthians 4:15-17 = “Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your

father through the gospel. 16Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 17For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church."

- i. Every area of your life. (Your children are watching!)
  - ii. Especially Quiet Times (your personal reading and praying times with God)
    1. They see Lisa with her Bible open in the big, cushy chair in our home office every morning.
    2. They see Jeff on prayer walks.
      - a. All my kids have referred to it as inspiring to them.
- b. Model humility (when corrected, and inviting input)
- i. Proverbs 9:7-9 = "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse.  
8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;  
rebuke a wise man and he will love you.  
9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;  
teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning."  
    1. Heartfelt, humble apology when wrong.
    2. Even explain from the Bible what you did wrong.
      - a. (Example: "I was impatient, and 1 Corinthians 13 says that's unloving.")
  - ii. Proverbs 21:21 = "He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor."  
    1. We've got to "pursue" righteousness.
      - a. Humbly ask the kids what you can do better as a parent.
      - b. Then tell them what they can do better as kids.
- c. A general disposition of joy
- i. 1 Thessalonians 5:16 = "Be joyful always; 17pray continually; 18give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
  - ii. Titus 2:9-11 = "Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."  
    1. Joy draws people to Christianity.
      - a. (Because Christians are legitimately happy.)
    2. Kids know if you're generally joyful or not.
      - a. Especially when they see other kid's parents who are mad all the time and irritated.

- b. The difference in you will attract your kids to your lifestyle!
    - d. Evident daily and personal walk with God
      - i. Pray sincerely. (Every time! Even at the dinner table!)
      - ii. Talk about what you're learning spiritually.
        - 1. When you find something new in your Bible study, share it excitedly with the kids.
        - 2. Share with them soberly what God is teaching you, and ask them what God is teaching them right now.
      - iii. When face family trials, get the Bible out, seek God's will; pray together; seek God for support and direction.
6. Two: Teach the Faith
- a. Quiet Times together for certain periods of time
    - i. holidays
    - ii. family vacations
    - iii. when one child is going through some things and needs it the most
  - b. Teach (or make resources available) on Christian Evidences
    - i. More important these days than ever! (Post-modern world)
  - c. Spiritual Talks
    - i. Sometimes it's better to wait for a special moment; other times, you need to make the moment special.
    - ii. Q: What are the times and circumstance that my teen is most receptive to spiritual conversation?
      - 1. Special Times
        - a. One child: Jamba Juice
        - b. Another child: driving in the car
        - c. Another child: no time or place was easy, so we just had to wade in and push through the awkwardness.
      - iii. If child wants to talk, make it a priority.
  - d. Teach and expect gratitude from your children.
    - i. The more grateful, the more they'll respond to the cross.
7. Three: Share the Faith
- a. Involve the kids (wisely) in evangelism. (Make sure it's not a turn-off.)
  - b. Family service projects
    - i. Serve the poor and needy together (great fun, great memories, and great character building!)
  - c. Make it a top priority to "win" a mentor for your teen.
    - i. Adopt a college student or single; make them meals, pay for gas, etc., and ask them to spend time with your child.
8. Transition =) Q: What hinders kids growing up in the church from developing their own personal relationship with God?

- a. As parents, we would say (and rightly so!):
  - i. The World (a godless culture: school, movies, T.V., music, etc.)
  - ii. Worldly friends
- b. I asked my kids: "What do parents do that hinders their kids from developing their own personal relationship with God?" And they said:
  - i. In a word: "pressure".
  - ii. Parents forcing them, instead of leading them to God.
  - iii. Parents pressuring their kids to get baptized (biggest thing)
  - iv. Think about how you would reach out to other kids in the world.
    - 1. If not in love with God, baptism should not be a consideration.
  - v. Don't compare your kids to other kids (either their brothers and sisters, or kids from other families at church).
    - 1. This happens a lot and it is very un-motivating to them.
    - 2. Example:
      - a. Tyler baptized at 12; Kyle at 16; Ryan at 14.
        - i. (They're all different.)
  - vi. Be patient and surrendered to God's timing.
- c. Issue is not getting baptized; issue is wanting to follow Christ!
  - i. A big issue = Do they want your life? (The life of a disciple.)
    - 1. If not, then why not? (Leads to healthy soul-searching.)
- d. In your desire to see them get right with God, don't manipulate them.
  - i. Our children want to be loved for who they are - without any strings attached.

## 9. Discussion (Q&A)