

Keeping our young people strong in the church and in the home.

RETAINING KIDS IN HOMES AND BIBLE CLASSES

How to prevent the youth from slipping through the cracks: Sad truth is, most families lose their sons and daughters to the world in the teenage years or in the college years. Sad truth is, most churches lose their young people when they get to be at a certain age of maturity. I will mention two ways to keep this from happening. The first way, is for the parents. The second is for the Bible class teachers. Due to the simple fact, most parents don't make their kids a spiritual priority, this also needs to be emphasized.

HOME AND FAMILY PRINCIPLES



GROUND THE CHILDREN IN THE WORD OF GOD

1 TIMOTHY 4:16 "WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE CLOSELY. PERSEVERE IN THEM, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU WILL SAVE BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR HEARERS."

Bible study needs to be a daily practice. Going over key principles of Christian fundamentals in moral living, salvation, the church work, Bible authority, in curriculum needs to be studied and discussed. Find a good lesson book to study

and read with your family. Connect Bible study with a special event that leaves a positive memory, (some examples: cook some homemade cookies, light some candles, sit outside with the sunset, etc.) Make it out to be a special occasion, (not only in your attitude during the study, but in the activities that surround the Bible study event). Your attitude towards the Bible study and the memory firming circumstances, will make this more special in the eyes of kids. Not saying Bible study is not special or worthy in itself, I am saying if you tie it to a positive experience and a “special tradition,” it leaves a bigger emotional/memory impression on young minds.

APPLICATION

AS THE ABOVE PASSAGE STATES, WE MUST FIRST LOOK AT THE WORD CLOSELY AND PERSEVERE IN IT.

When you study with your family, (include spouse, if possible, for their examples of influence, both positive or negative can affect your kids), after each lesson, make an application that you and your family can do. Example: if you read James 1:27, about visiting widows, you and your family can plan a day to visit some of the older ladies at church or in the nursing home.

If you read about not neglecting the assembly, in Heb 10:25, then when they come to church, you can tell them how proud you are of them, and make it a special occasion, of taking them out for ice cream afterwards, (to let them know how much it means to you, that “they care about God so much.”) If you read about Jude 23, that says we need to try to save others, give your family an assignment to invite one of their friends to church with them.

📷 If you read a verse, like 1 Thessalonians 5:18, that says we are to give thanks to God. Drive to the beach or start a bonfire in the back yard, to watch the sunset and sing songs and give prayers of thanksgiving to God. The more they study and the more they apply, the more they will be rooted to His will and work.

You have heard the saying if you act loving, when your angry at someone you begin to feel loving? If you act a certain way, feeling will start to form in the area's you're acting out. If you emphasize the Word and the applications connected to what is being studied. And reward the activities done with positive reinforcements: words of praise, rewards, special activities, etc. you further enforce such behavior. Of course, the other side of the coin is to discipline the bad behavior as well.

I see a sad trend, kids wanting to be baptized, and the church members or parents/grandparents, forbidding them. If they know what they need to do and are aware of the Bible teachings, we should not hold them back. They are at the ripe age of humility and earnestness.

This is the best time to mold them, teach them, convert them, save them, ground them, get them busy in church work, inside and outside of worship. Many times, when they get older and they have no root in the Word, (Mark 4:6;16-17) then that's when the world draws them away.

I've seen kids who so wanted to get themselves into God's house and bear His name, who wanted to be saved, yet were denied and due to no foundation of spiritual support, when High School or College came with its influences and support venues for worldly things, they turned completely away.

Of course, it goes without saying, you and your family need to go to a church, that has a good Bible based, preacher, who teaches the deep truths. I've seen many fall, when the Word is watered down or distorted. Also make sure the Bible class teacher is teaching truth. And key grounding principles. These are your kids after

all. I have seen kids grow up and live in sin, because of the false or weak teachings of Bible class teachers, who influenced them negatively.

BIBLE CLASS PRINCIPLES

GROUND THEM IN THE WORD OF GOD

1 TIMOTHY 4:16 “WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE CLOSELY. PERSEVERE IN THEM, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU WILL SAVE BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR HEARERS.”

AS the verse mentioned above, it applies to the one who does it. The verse is not about home or family, it is about a teacher teaching others and persevering in what is being taught. A Bible class teacher needs to teach in Sunday school and Wednesday night classes, core concepts of church work, moral living, salvation, Bible authority.

Not watered down fun time activities, like drawing and making paper art projects. Yes, if they are babies, that is one thing teachers can do, (though the truth for their age level, should still be taught). But if they can read, talk and comprehend basic themes, then they should be taught those themes.

You have 2 classes with them a week, which is not as powerful as a family unit studying each evening. But as a teacher, you are still essential. Especially if the home unit is not doing what it should do in such matters to ground and solidify the child towards God and His Word. Which regrettably, most families, don't.

TO INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE

THE FAMILY UNIT IS INFLUENCED BY THEIR PARENTS, BUT TEACHERS DON'T ALWAYS HOLD AS MUCH SWAY IN THE CLASSROOM DUE TO A LACK OF EMOTIONAL INFLUENCE. DESPITE A TEACHER BEING AN AUTHORITY FIGURE AND INTERACTING WITH THE STUDENTS REGULARLY, THAT IS NOT ENOUGH. IT IS IMPORTANT TO BUILD A FRIENDSHIP WITH THE STUDENTS FOR A EMOTIONAL CONNECTION.

INFLUENCE.

This can be done by, inviting the students over after church to dairy queen for ice cream, or to your home for pizza and a devo singing night, etc. It helps if you have kids of your own or a spouse. If you are single, and not well known in the church your apart of, (due to being new, etc.) include the parents of the students, as well. Let the kids know you care. Being an authority figure as a teacher, will give you credence in what you say, but when you establish a closer connection, that strengthens the bond you have with the students. This helps them take more to heart what you say in your lessons. A stranger has so much sway with his/her words, a friend so much more.

Build the Core of the Class through positive reinforcement

Build a reward system when they come to church for class, when they have their lessons done, when they do an assignment you gave them, when they memorized a verse you had them do, etc. It can be stars, points, etc. That once accumulated,

you can use to treat them to something special, group outing at C'C's pizza, or a pick from the prize bag, (that has stuff inside, like a cross necklace, Bible hero doll, etc. Make sure it is relevant to the age group and is stuff they would like.)

Once you have begun to ground them and build a repour with the students, create a weekly event with them to do a Bible based activity with you.

The events can be done in the class or out of the class, it can be done in the friendship building class events you put together. It is important to get them into leadership roles and to get them acting out the Word regularly in their lives.

Note: positive reinforcements (reward system or of heartfelt praise) in such assignments are important.

Examples of group assignments: When talking about singing, record the boy's song leading, in Bible class. Have them watch the video, with group and praise them. When talking about serving, teach the girls how to make unleavened bread, or visit the elderly shut ins from church. When talking about encouragement, have them write cards, or come up to someone at church with you to greet them.

Give them assignments they can do at home. Have them write down what they did to share with the class. Mention to them the "assignments of coming to church faithfully and of Bible study." And have a check box and an end of the year celebration party for those who got a lot of checks in coming to church and in doing their Bible lessons. Note: they don't have to be perfect to have rewards or a celebration.

The point is to get them to try and be doing their best. If you do an assignment with the class each week, grounding them in core concepts, and reinforcing those

concepts by assignments each week, it will make a difference in shaping their external actions into internal conditions.

Have a close bond with them and reinforce their behavior with positive reinforcements for emotional conditioning. Get them to take initiative and do things outside of the group, as well, the more they incorporate what is being taught, the more it will become apart of who they are.

This is not as effective as a family unit. BUT is effective. What you teach them, can stay with these kids for a lifetime. The bond you make, can influence them for good, many years after they have grown up. The applications you install in the children can be the key developmental triggers to help them stay in His church and come to Christ, instead of leaving the congregation for the worlds allurements.

Ideas for the family unit or for church Bible classes for children.

Teach the core concepts, when teaching, encourage them to do the core concepts, emphasis their importance, (including salvation truths) and get them to apply the core concepts in their lives. Be their friend. Reward their behavior with praise or by doing something nice for them.

Be consistent in the role and capability you have, to discharge that role. A parent can and should study with one's family each evening. A teacher has less time and resources but can still affect the children in and out of the classroom.

For teaching lessons, I have each of the students read a section, when a section is read, we talk about it, I ask questions, we look up the scriptures connected to what is being read, and we discuss what was read and the scriptures connected to what the student read.

At the end of the class/home study, especially for the young, it's fun on occasion, to make a game out of the study and quiz the students/family on what was in the lesson.

Game idea's.

Red light, green light: but instead of turning around to allow kids to run towards you, as the "green light" you ask a student a Bible question, if that person get's it right, they can walk ahead one step. If not, they stay where they are. Then ask the next student. Whoever tags the teacher, by getting the most questions right, wins.

Teams: have class into two teams, ask a team a Bible question, after they talk with each other, (make sure they first due so, as a team,) have them give you the answer. If it is right, they get a point, if it is wrong, they don't. Whoever gets the most points wins. Can be done as individual class members as well.

One leg to zero: have the students spread out. Ask each student by turn a Bible question. If they get it right, they keep a leg, if not, they try to hold still on one leg, while standing. Go around the room, and ask each student a question, if the one-legged student gets it right, he is safe, if he gets it wrong, he sits down. The last person standing wins.