



THE PARENT UPDATE

West Side Youth Ministry

The Summer Cometh

Jake Greer

Hey everybody! As many of you have probably realized -- and started planning for -- the end of the school year is right around the corner and the Summer is fast approaching! We've got a lot of things in the works for the next few months. Some things are set and ready while we're trying to work out a couple planning details in others. Be sure to check out our online calendar over on the website for most all of the dates for our upcoming events! Also, be sure to sign up for our text alerts. Parents, text @wsympar to 81010. Students, text @wsymstu to 81010.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Day Camp @ Camp Caudle

Monday, June 6, 2016 at 8:30 AM to Friday, June 10, 2016 at 3:30 PM

Want to be a counselor at Day Camp? You must be going into the 9th grade and apply over at www.campcaudle.org/volunteer. Awesome opportunity to serve kids!

Sr. Impact

Monday, June 20, 2016 at 8:00 AM to Saturday, June 25, 2016 at 2:00 PM

Entering 9th grade thru 2016 graduates. \$110. Must sign up by APRIL 27 at www.westsidelyouthministry.org/registration.

Teen Week

Sunday, July 10, 2016 at 2:00 PM to Saturday, July 16, 2016 at 12:00 PM

Entering 8th grade thru H.S. graduates. Teen week is devoted to helping teenagers become followers of Jesus while enjoying lots of Raucous Fun Time and Comic Hilarity. All registration is handled at www.campcaudle.org.

Need more info? Email me at jake@westsidear.org or visit us at www.westsidelyouthministry.org

Quantity Time Doesn't Help Our Kids

Jonathon McKee

The more time I "hang" with my kids, the better... right?

I guess that depends. Define "hang."

- Silently sitting and watching TV together?
- Dragging our kids on errands with us?
- Sitting at the dinner table together while Mom and Dad argue about bills?

As much as we'd like to believe that "quantity time" in itself will pay off, a fascinating new study out of the Journal of Marriage and Family contends mere quantity time isn't enough. In fact, the study reveals the amount of time parents spend with their kids between 3 and 11 has virtually no relationship to how children turn out. Remarkably, the study found "one key instance when parent time can be particularly harmful to children - when parents, mothers in particular, are stressed, sleep-deprived, guilty and anxious."

Hold the phone! Does this mean we shouldn't "hang" with our kids?

Please don't stop reading at the headlines... because the report goes on to talk about teenagers.

Note the ages mentioned above: kids between 3 and 11. If we keep reading the report, the authors note one key instance in when quantity time does matter: adolescence. And I quote:
The more time a teen spends engaged with their mother, the fewer instances of delinquent behavior. And the more time teens spend with both their parents together in family time, such as during meals, the less likely they are to abuse drugs and alcohol and engage in other risky or illegal behavior. They also achieve higher math scores.
This new report isn't alone in these findings. Columbia University has been noting this connection between "quantity time" and raising healthy kids for years in their Family Dinners reports.

So what can we take away from this new report? After all, it seems to contradict conventional wisdom that the more time moms and dads spend with kids, the better.

I think this report brings several realities to light:

1. Proximity doesn't produce quantity time. If we bring our kids to the grocery store with us, ignoring them the entire time, talking on our phones, occasionally barking at them, "Put that down!"... we aren't clocking healthy bonding time. Bonding necessitates dialogue. So if you're going to drag your kids on errands with you, make it fun. Interact with them. Ask them their favorite meal and have them help you shop for it. Do more listening than talking. Make them feel noticed and heard.

2. Adolescents have different needs than kids. It's counterintuitive, because just when our teens - and even tweens - begin pushing us away... they need us the most. No, this doesn't mean smothering them or putting them on a leash. This simply means parents need to be proactive about looking for opportunities to bond with their kids. Healthy parenting requires healthy investments of both bonding and boundaries. Are you investing in both? Which bank is getting more deposits this

month?

3. Don't use quality time as an excuse to avoid quantity time. If your kids are like mine, you'll experience one or two quality time moments for every dozen times you hang out with your kids. Quality time usually necessitates quantity time. Parents need to clock quantity hours having fun with their kids, talking, laughing... listening! You never know when quality time moments will materialize.

What can you do this week to truly connect with your kid?

Jonathan McKee is the author of over a dozen books including the brand new *More Than Just the Talk*. He has over 20 years youth ministry experience and speaks to parents and leaders worldwide, all while providing free resources for youth workers and parents on his websites, TheSource4YM.com and TheSource4Parents.com.

4 Steps to Asking Well-placed Questions

Jonathon McKee

The world provides us plenty of teaching moments each day. It's our job as parents to use these every once in a while (I say every "once in a while" because our kids would quickly tire of discussion-time every time the tv or radio gets turned on). The key to spring-boarding these good discussions is well-placed questions.

Here are four practical tips helping you ask well-placed questions on the fly.

1. Observation

The first step to helping our kids think through situations is getting them to pause for a moment and simply observe what they just encountered. This can be achieved by merely asking, "What did he just say?"

This simple question nudges young people to actually stop and truly look at something.

As I write this, the top song on iTunes is Lana Del Rey's, *High on the Beach*. This song is about way Lana is dealing with a breakup...by escaping to the beach to get high. Hence the chorus:

All I wanna do is get high by the beach

When parents hear this song, the first question we can ask is, "What did she just say?"

2. Interpretation

The next natural question is, "What does she mean?"

Yes. Play dumb.

Basically, we're making our kids actually process the content... maybe even for the first time. This question subtly hints, lyrics matter. We're not merely shrugging our shoulders and saying, "Who cares!" We're taking notice.

Be careful of tone. Approach this question with curiosity, not judgment. The whole purpose of these questions is to open doors, not slam them shut if our kids smell a trap. Our purpose is to steer kids towards truth and let them discover the answers for themselves. A condemnatory attitude will jinx this whole process. So tread carefully!

So simply ask, "What does she mean 'get high by the beach'?"

These questions lead to the next natural step...

3. Opinion

Ask them their two cents. Ask:

"How's that going to work out for her?"

"Has she thought this through?"

"What's right?"

This provokes our kids to offer insight based on their own personal values. Instead of telling our kids how to think, we are asking them what they think.

Imagine your kids share about a friend who is spreading rumors at school. The temptation would be to get up on our soapbox and begin lecturing about gossip. Resist this temptation. Turn your lecturing to listening... with a well-placed question. Simply ask: Do you think she was right?

And as they're stumbling through their own values, ask them one last question to steer them towards truth...

4. Foundation

Direct them towards scripture. Ask: "What does the Bible say about this?"

If our kids don't know the exact chapter and verse, then be ready to direct them. Yes, this requires us to be in the Word ourselves so we know where to point. Don't worry; if you don't know a scripture off hand, don't be afraid to admit, "Let's look this one up later when we get home."

When you open scripture, go through the same line of questioning outlined above.

1. What does that scripture say?
2. What does it mean?
3. How does this apply to our situation?
4. How can we live this out this week?

Well-placed questions open doors to meaningful conversations. If you're like me - prone to lecture - questions help you replace monologue with dialogue.

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