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ABSTRACT

Train Up a Child in the Way . . . : Evaluating the Impact of a Curriculum

Equipping Parents to Be Disciplers of Their Resident Children

by

Gary Mark George

This study focuses on the issue of the transmission of faith from parent to child. Several Biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments underscore the responsibility parents have in intentionally teaching and encouraging their children to know and follow the Lord. From the perspective of Wesleyan theology, parents can be a means of grace for their children.

Churches and pastors confront a common problem and challenge in attempting to help parents accept and carry out their role as disciplers of their resident children. As a way of addressing this problem , the study exposed a group of parents from Christ United Methodist Church Newcomerstown, Ohio with a curriculum designed to equip them for the role of being the primary disciplers of their resident children. The most significant result was an increased awareness and commitment on the part of the study's participants.

The heart of the project was the development and implementation of a parent discipling curriculum guide entitled, Train Up a Child . . . : Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children. Using the curriculum guide as a basis, seventeen parents participated in a seven week, seven session parent discipling seminar in the Fall of 1997.

Significant findings of the study were primarily derived from two sources;

a researcher designed questionnaire and an exit interview with each participant. The study produced several significant findings. The findings revealed the participants to be somewhat familiar with discipling concepts and practices important to sharing the with their resident children before their exposure to the parent discipling curriculum. The findings also showed that a significant number of subjects moved to a deeper awareness and commitment to their role as disciplers of their children.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
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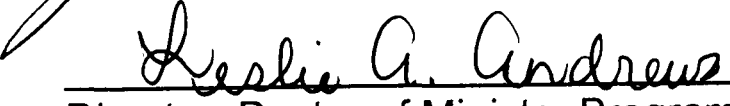
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Train Up a Child in the Way . . . : Evaluating the Impact of a Curriculum
Equipping Parents to Be Disciplers of Their Resident Children

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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Special thanks to my mentor, Dr. Donald Joy, for the insights, encouragement, wisdom, and gentle prodding he provided me in conceiving and completing this project. Dr. James Thobaben, who served as the Internal Reader for this project, provided several helpful suggestions and insights.

Finally, I offer my deepest gratitude and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ who lovingly calls believing parents to the privilege, responsibility, and joy of bringing their children to Him.

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Study

One of the most puzzling and vexing questions I have encountered as a pastor is, why so many young adults have seemingly neglected, abandoned, or become apathetic towards the faith of their parents? Nearly three years ago I had an experience that transformed this question from the academic to a question that captured my pastoral and personal attention. I will attempt to illustrate with a brief retelling of this experience that has served to provoke my interest in undertaking this study.

I found myself vexed in spirit as I sat at the desk of my office. I had just concluded a two-hour counseling session with a married couple who are active in the life of the congregation I serve as senior pastor. Over the course of our time together on that evening in the spring of 1995, these two concerned and caring parents poured out their hearts in sharing with me the struggles they were having with their son, a high school junior. Although their son had shown signs of rebellion since his middle school days, his behavior and attitudes were becoming more destructive. With tears in their eyes they shared their fears about their son's suspected alcohol and drug use, his violent mood swings, his disrespect towards his family as well as other forms of authority, and of his hostility to anything having to do with the Christian faith. Clearly these parents were perplexed, heartbroken, and in need of extraordinary grace, compassion, and hope.

As I sat and pondered over my appointment with these parents who so desperately wanted something better for their son, the realization struck me that their story was a poignant example of what I had observed far too many times: the great number of late adolescent and young adult children who reject the Christian faith of their parents. I began to recount the many instances in the course of my ministry where I had observed this unfortunate phenomenon. The faces of both parents and children rose from the mists of memory and became distinct again as I recalled the far too many cases of parents who, in one degree or another, experienced the anguish and lament of seeing their older adolescent or adult children neglect or, even worse, reject any semblance of faith in Jesus Christ.

In his book, Parents Passing on the Faith, Carl Spackman writes about the potential scope of this heartrending problem. "It is difficult to gather reliable statistics on the number of young people raised in Christian homes who forsake the faith, either temporarily or permanently; however, estimates range from 50 percent to as high as 80 percent" (Spackman, 9).

With all of this in view, I began to ponder some significant questions. Why do so many late adolescent and young adult children who are raised by Christian parents fail to embrace the faith? What can parents do to help their children towards becoming faithful Christian disciples? What is the role of the church and pastor in helping parents disciple their children? Are there ways to help parents become more effective in guiding their children towards faith? As I

reflected on these questions I began to grapple with an even larger question; could a ministry be developed that would equip parents for their role as disciplers of their children? My answer to this question was to design and implement a curriculum that sought to equip parents in their role as the primary disciplers of their resident children and to determine if such a curriculum had a positive impact on helping parents accept and carry out this role. Well known researcher and author George Barna writes,

“Parents, in particular, must consider the importance, must consider the importance of educating their children with the basic building blocks of character . . . parents must take the initiative and educate their children in critical areas of life, using the Bible as the ultimate authority” (Barna, 206).

I agree with Barna’s basic assessment that parents must take the initiative in the important task and opportunity of discipling their children in that most critical area of their lives, their faith.

The Problem and Its Context

Churches and pastors confront a common problem in attempting to help parents accept and carry out the role of discipling their children. Cameron Lee, marriage and family professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, states, "Parents must be encouraged to recognize and take up their role of discipling their children" (Theology, News, and Notes, 43, 11). I believe few pastors, churches, leaders, or parents would seriously challenge the intent or motive of Lee's assertion. There remains, however, the reality that most parents have not

accepted the role of instructing, or discipling, their children. Nationally known pollster George Gallup conducted a survey that sought to examine the religious life of younger Americans ranging from pre-teens to college age youth. Based on one of the survey's findings, he concluded, "Pre-teens and young teens in this day and age usually do not receive religious instruction at school or home" (Gallup, 18). While there may be a consensus on the part of churches and pastors that parents should accept the role of discipling their children, the question of how parents can be equipped to understand, accept, and carry out this role is a practical issue.

Several obstacles lie in the path of having parents become intentional in their role as disciplers of their children. The first is the tendency of many parents to default this role to a church- related program (i.e. Sunday school, vacation Bible school, or other educational program or ministry) or persons (pastor, Sunday school teacher, Christian Education director, youth minister, et. al.). The second is the fear many parents have of sharing their faith with others, much less their own children. Some parents fear turning their children off to Christian faith by being too obvious in sharing their faith with them. Other parents may not disciple their children because they feel too immature in their own faith to share that faith with their children. These fears provide formidable barriers to parents in their attempt to disciple their children.

The Bible provides a consistent and clear mandate for parents to accept the role of communicating and modeling faith for their children. Explicitly and

implicitly, Scripture calls upon parents to model and teach their children about the essence of trusting, obeying, knowing, and loving God. One of most cited passages in this regard is Proverbs 22:6. It instructs parents to "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."

The problem and attendant issues of parents recognizing, accepting, and carrying out their role as disciplers of their children have occupied the attention of Christian theologians, scholars, pastors, and leaders. Donald M. Joy recognizes the significant relationship between the parent-child bond and its impact on the child's experience of faith. He states, "Since the family and its total combination of exchanges and agendas is the matrix in which the child is formed, the roots and content of faith are powerfully shaped by what happens in the family." (217, Risk-Proofing Your Family). Joy recognizes the essential role parents play in the content and context of their child's developing faith. The relative strength of the parent-child bond is an important factor in how effectively parents are able to contribute to their child's faith development.

The related issues of faith development and faith transmission are also important components in grappling with the problem of helping equip parents for the vital role of discipling their children. James Fowler is the most recognized name in the area of faith development and has in many of his writings noted the link between parents and the faith development issues of their children. The literature in this area encompasses a vast array that includes books, articles, and research reports.

Context of the Study

The context for this study is Christ United Methodist Church (Christ UMC) located in Newcomerstown, Ohio. The church has approximately 540 members and is the largest congregation in the community. The church is the result of a merger in 1966 of the former Trinity and College Street Methodist churches, both former congregations trace their beginnings to the early 1830's. The present church is a traditional, stable congregation, oriented towards a Wesleyan, evangelical corporate expression of faith. The present church staff includes a part-time youth director, two part-time music ministry staff, one three quarter-time secretary, two part-time custodians, and a volunteer minister of visitation. I am in my eighth year as the senior pastor. My predecessor had a seventeen-year pastoral tenure and entered retirement after completing his ministry at Christ UMC. Although the congregational profile would reveal that the average age of its members to be more than fifty years of age, it does have approximately forty families consisting of parents and one or more resident children.

The community the church serves is located in east central Ohio (Upper Appalachia). Like many small towns in the region, it has suffered from the effects of long term socio-economic decline. The median income per tax return of residents living in the Newcomerstown Exempted Village School District is \$18,710 for the year 1996, which is about 80 percent of the statewide average.¹ 60 percent of elementary school children enrolled in the Newcomerstown

¹Cited in EMIS report. See appendix.

Exempted Village School District live in homes where both biological parents are married and living in the same household.² The estimated comparison figure for the children who are registered as preparatory members of Christ UMC reveals that about 90 percent reside in households where both biological parents are present and married to each other.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of a curriculum designed and implemented to equip parents who are members or constituents of Christ UMC, Newcomerstown, Ohio, in the role of discipling their resident children. The study took place over the course of four months (September-December 1997).

Research Questions

This study will seek to investigate the following research questions:

Research Question #1: What concepts did the subjects of this study have of a parent's role in discipling their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

Research Question #2: What discipling practices, if any, did the subjects employ with their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

Research Question #3: What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' concepts and practices as a result of their exposure to a parent discipling

²Figure provided by Ms. Linda Collins, East Elementary School principal.

curriculum?

Research Question #4: What aspects of the curriculum contributed to changes in the subjects' discipling concepts and practices?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms will be frequently and consistently used.

The term **curriculum**, as it is used in this study, is the “organization of learning activities guided by a teacher with the intent of changing behavior”³ (Pazmiño, 31). Additionally, it includes learning activities that facilitate the acquiring of knowledge and attitudes that forms the basis for behavioral change. More specifically, it is the designed series of presentations centered on the theme of equipping parents to carry out the role of discipling their resident children. The subjects will meet for seven weeks (seven sessions). Each session was approximately seventy-five minutes in length and was led by the researcher.

The word **equip**, as it is used in the context of this study, means to provide the resources necessary to help facilitate a specific task. In the case of this particular study it means to help the subject discover and employ the principles and resources needed to carry out their role as disciplers of their resident children.

³ This definition was developed by Lois LeBar, a known and respected figure in the field of Christian Education

Members are those persons who have been baptized, publicly professed their faith, and been officially recognized and received as persons connected to the United Methodist Church, and more specifically to Newcomerstown, Ohio Christ UMC, according to the *1996 Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church.

Constituents are those persons who are not members of Christ United Methodist Church but who regularly attend its weekly worship service or Sunday school classes.

Discipling, as it applies to this study, are the knowledge, attitudes, and practices parents intentionally use to share and model the Christian faith with their resident children for the purpose of leading these children to become or continue as disciples of Jesus Christ.⁴

Resident Children are the minor or dependent children, usually under eighteen years of age, who live with their parents.

Concepts, as it applies to this study, are the attitudes and knowledge parents have in relation to discipling their resident children.

Practices, as it applies to the context of this study, are the specific actions parents employ in discipling their children.

⁴The general concept of “disciple” listed in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament-Abridged in One Volume* helped me formulate the definition of “disciple” being used for this study.

Description of the Project

The focus of the project will be the development and implementation of a curriculum designed to equip parents who are members or constituents of Christ UMC, Newcomerstown, Ohio, in discipling their resident children. The curriculum consisted of seven weekly sessions lasting approximately seventy-five minutes per session. The goal of the curriculum was to equip parents to become more effective in discipling their resident children. Each of the seven sessions attempted to focus on a particular parent discipling concept (see Chapter 3). Lecture, small group discussion, and action assignments were among the various teaching methods that were employed by the researcher. Each session incorporated the following components: Gathering (ten minutes), Presentation (forty minutes), Discussion (twenty minutes), and Wrap-Up (five minutes).

The seminar was held in the conference room of Christ UMC.

Methodology

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was designed and administered by the researcher and completed by those parents (subjects) who participated in the parent discipling seminar. The subjects were asked to complete and return researcher-designed questionnaires on three occasions; before, immediately upon completion, and approximately six weeks after completion of their participation in the parent discipling seminar. This particular project's methodology and design is known

as a quasi-experimental single group interrupted, time series design. The data from the questionnaires was collected, analyzed, and summarized in a way that will provide a basis of determining whether or not a designed curriculum is effective in equipping parents in their role as disciplers of their resident children.

The data needed for this study was derived from the responses the subjects provided to the researcher-designed questionnaires that were administered before participation in the parent discipling seminar, immediately after participation in the seminar, and approximately six weeks after participation in the seminar. The questionnaires employed modified Likert type, nominal, ordinal, interval, and comparative rating type scales that included items designed to measure the subject's perceptions and practices as they relate to their role in discipling their resident children. In addition, a brief exit interview was conducted with each of the subjects upon completion of the curriculum for the purpose of determining how participation in this curriculum changed their concepts and practices in discipling their children.

Data Collection

The researcher, assisted by a proctor, oversaw the administration and collection each time the subjects were asked to complete a questionnaire. Subjects were notified in advance that their agreement to participate in the parent discipling curriculum would entail completing the questionnaires. The data gathered from the questionnaire administered before the subjects participated in the parent discipling curriculum was used to establish a baseline

measurement for the data that was gathered from the two subsequent questionnaires completed by the subjects. The data from each of the three questionnaires was analyzed and compared with each other in order to determine what, if any, changes occurred as a result of the subject's participation in the parent discipling curriculum.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were parents having resident children who were members or constituents of Christ UMC and who voluntarily participated in a curriculum developed and implemented by the researcher. The subjects were primarily drawn from two adult Sunday school classes although other members and constituents having resident children were invited to participate in the curriculum.⁵ The selection and subsequent participation of the study's subjects was not, therefore, random. Seventeen parents participated in the seminar.

Independent and Dependent Variables

The independent variable of this study is the parent discipling curriculum that was designed by the researcher and presented to the subjects of this study. The dependent variables were the changes in the concepts and practices of parents that occurred as the result of their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum, and the aspects of the curriculum that contributed to these changes.

⁴The New Life Sunday School Class consists of married adults, ages thirty- two through fifty. The Foundations Sunday School Class consists of both married and single adults whose ages range from twenty-five to thirty-five. Both classes include members with resident children.

Delimitations and Generalizability of the Study

A parent discipling curriculum can take on myriad forms depending on the biblical, theological, denominational, and contextual presuppositions and understanding of both the designer-presenter and the subjects. Some variances occur in the type and amount of impact a parent discipling curriculum can be expected to produce the aforementioned factors. The relatively small number of subjects is another factor that is important to recognize in considering the conclusions that resulted from this study.

The researcher can, however, generalize that the subjects of this study do represent an important segment of persons found in many churches and therefore, that a similar segment of persons in a similar church and community context would expect similar results.

With the previously mentioned delimitations in view, the study will have value if a child is brought to faith in Jesus Christ as the result of a parent, pastor, or other Christian leader who acts on the conviction that underlies this study; parents should be equipped for the role and privilege of discipling their children.

Biblical and Theological Foundations

This study is grounded in some significant biblical and theological concepts. As mentioned previously, Proverbs 22:6 instructs parents to "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." This is a clear biblical mandate for parents to intentionally "train up" or disciple the children under their care. This passage recognizes the godly role parents have

in communicating and modeling faith to, with, and for their children. Earlier in the Old Testament we find Moses serving as God's spokesman when he instructs the Hebrew community, and specifically the parents in that community, to teach (disciple) their children God's word and ways.

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth (Deuteronomy 11:18-21 NIV).

This passage conveys to the faith community and to parents, both past and present, the importance of intentionally transmitting faith to their children.

In the Gospels we find Jesus displayed an appreciation for children and for their inherent capacity to be discipled. In Matthew's gospel we read of the Jesus had a high regard for children as well as a warning to those who would mislead them.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:1-6 NIV).

Jesus recognized that children can be spiritually influenced and shaped by those in authority over them, including parents.

Biblical scholar Warren Carter writes, “on a literal level children are welcomed and affirmed as members of the households constituted by God’s reign” (114). Jesus’ welcoming stance towards children (Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 9:36-37; Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17) provides parents with a strong basis for discipling them.

The account of Jesus washing his disciples feet (John 13) provides a model for parents in terms of their discipling attitudes and practices. Wholehearted devotion, true humility, selfless sacrifice and unmitigated love characterized Jesus’ discipling approach. This same approach can be appropriated by parents as they seek to effectively teach their children to be Christian disciples.

Two Pauline passages furnish further grounding and insight for the premises of this study. It is worth noting that the Apostle Paul saw two distinct, yet complementary, dimensions in his role as a discipler.

As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. (1 Thessalonians 2:6-12)

NIV).

Reflecting on his experience of discipling the Thessalonians, Paul used two vivid images to describe his efforts in ministry. The first was of a “mother caring for her little children” (v. 7) and the second was of a “father” who “deals with his own children” (v. 11). The apostle may well have been signaling to his readers that effective discipleship involves motherly elements like gentleness, tenderness, and affectionate caring coupled with the fatherly elements of justice, righteousness, and truth. This particular interpretation of this passage underscores the distinctive, yet complementary elements that mothers and fathers may contribute in their respective roles as disciplers of their resident children. The image of God faithfully mediated through a child’s mother and father provide a rich matrix for teaching the child who and what God is.

The second Pauline passage, I Corinthians 4:14-17, reinforces the parallel between effective discipling and effective parenting.

“ I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. 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. Therefore I urge you to imitate me” (NIV).

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of his role as their spiritual father, the one who had begotten them through the gospel. This passage helps to establish the idea that parenting and discipling have similar dimensions and concerns.

In Ephesians 6:4 the Apostle Paul charged Christian fathers to disciple their children when he wrote, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead,

bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." This short verse contains three words that represent different aspects of the discipling task: *ektrepho*-to bring to maturity, to nourish; *paideia*-training discipline; and *nouthesia*-instruction, warning. These words and their related meanings connote the importance of the elements of content and context in the discipling process.

Turning from biblical to theological support for this study, it is important to note the influence of Wesleyan theological motifs on the researcher's grasp of the theological dimensions present in this study. One of John Wesley's more important theological emphases was his understanding and insight into the nature of grace (prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying), and more specifically the means of grace. Wesleyan theologian and scholar Thomas Langford notes the importance Wesley placed on using the means of grace. "For John Wesley, regular observance and utilization of the means of grace were requisite for growth in Christian life" (Practical Divinity, 45). Wesley understood that the means of grace "are either Instituted or Prudential: . . ." (John Wesley's Theology, 229-230). Among his list of instituted means of grace were "Prayer: . . , family, . . ." (229). This brief citation points to one means-- in this case, prayer-- that Wesley understood families should practice together. Expanding on Wesley's concept and understanding of the means of grace, could it be that Christian parents are a means of grace? Perhaps it is possible to expand Wesley's two-fold conception of the means of grace from instituted and

prudential, to a three-fold construct: instituted, prudential, and providential with Christian parents being placed in the third category. If it is plausible to understand parents as means of grace, then it is a logical step to understand their children to be potential objects of this means of grace. As with any of the means of grace, the element of faith appears to impact the efficacy of that particular means. The premise that parents are a significant means of grace provides a context and impetus for this study.

An early generation of American Christians, the seventeenth century Puritans, clearly understood the vital role the family, especially parents, had in discipling their children. The authors of Religion, Family, and the Life Course cite the writing of the Puritan, William Gouge. In a pamphlet entitled Of Domestical Duties (1622), Gouge writes,

For the family is a seminary of the Church and Common-wealth. It is a Bee-hive in which the Stocke, and out of which are sent many swarms of Bees: for in families are all sorts of people bred and brought up and out of families are they into the Church and Common-wealth (Moran, 123).

The book's authors later observe, "Children were expected to be catechized by their parents at home as a normal part of their initial religious training" (123).

Perhaps a present generation of American Christian parents would do well to embrace this principle. If parents are faithful to the role of intentionally discipling their resident children, I believe that we would see fewer of them departing from the way that leads to salvation and life eternal.

Overview of Dissertation

Chapter 2 will anchor the study in the ongoing flow of related research and literature. Chapter 3 will show the design of the ensuing study. In Chapter 4 the findings of the study will be reported. Chapter 5 will complete the dissertation with a summary of the findings and their interpretation.

CHAPTER 2

Precedents in the Literature

My interest and motive for developing a curriculum designed to help Christian parents become effective disciplers of their children stems primarily from parental as well as pastoral observations and issues. As the father of two sons, one of my greatest desires and hopes is to have both of my children become professing, practicing disciples of Jesus Christ. I believe with every fiber of my being that there is no greater vocation or calling for each of them to fulfill than the call of Jesus to be His disciples. I perceive two critical issues for Christian parents: the first is to discover what responsibilities and role parents have in helping their children become disciples of Jesus Christ; secondly, to learn if a discipling curriculum can equip parents to carry out their role and responsibility as disciplers of their children.

From the perspective of being a pastor I have in a number of instances observed a painful, perplexing phenomenon; a significant number of parents who experience the anguish of seeing adolescent and adult children either abandon or never embrace Christian discipleship. I have experienced both pastoral and friendship relationships with many of these parents. I heard their frustration and sensed their grief in realizing that their sons, daughters, and in some cases grandsons and granddaughters, had rejected or ignored any tangible semblance of Christian profession and practice. As a pastor I confront several significant questions that arise from this tragic scenario. Why do so

many adolescent and adult children raised by Christian parents fail to embrace a life of faith and discipleship? Can parents be better equipped to become effective disciplers of their own children? What role and responsibility do I have as a pastor in helping equip parents to disciple their children?

I believe Scripture consistently supports the foundational concept that Christian parents carry the primary role and responsibility of discipling their children. I am also convinced that pastors can minister to parents by helping equip them to be effective disciplers of their children. In Ephesians 4:11-13, I find a clear directive for helping equip parents be disciplers of their children;

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Holy Bible, NIV version)

These verses shape my philosophy of pastoral ministry in general, but are especially appropriate for this context. These same verses also lead me to conclude that one of the most important pastoral tasks I have is to help parents become committed, effective disciplers of their children. I believe that a well designed, well presented curriculum that seeks to effectively equip parents for their role as disciplers of their resident children is one way to accomplish this purpose.

It is one thing to know what a particular task is, it is quite another to carry it out. Although I have had a longstanding pastoral interest and concern about

this issue, I first began to see how this might be positively addressed while preparing for and participating in the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) seminar, CE 810 *Family Ministry in the Faith Community* held in January of 1995. The seminar exposed me to a number of conceptual frameworks that sparked a desire to work in the area of helping Christian parents grasp the nature of their role as primary disciplers of their children. Two subsequent seminars, CE 815 *Family Faith Development Strategies* (Jan. 1996) and CE 820 *Trinitarian Images of Family and Sexuality* (July 1996) have provided additional conceptual and practical handles for my interest and work in my proposed area.

Combining my parental and pastoral motivation, I began to ponder the question of how parents can be motivated and trained to be the primary disciplers of their children. In a time when the church growth movement has helped Christians move toward a renewed understanding of the Church's primary mission, making disciples, I believe that we are overlooking a "people group" –to borrow from the language of the church growth movement-- that can be fruitfully and effectively disciplined. This overlooked people group is the resident children raised in homes where one or more parents are professing Christian disciples. If our children are a reward from God (Psalm 127:3, NIV), then it seems obvious that believing parents have the privilege and responsibility of helping to bring them to faith in Christ. With all of this in view, I raise the following question: would parents be motivated and equipped as disciplers of their children if given the opportunity to participate in a structured curriculum and

setting which emphasized the importance, nature, and strategies of their role as disciplers of their children? Although this may not be the first time that this question has been asked or acted upon, I believe that we can conclude that such an undertaking would be a worthwhile ministry project to research and pursue.

Several distinct, yet interrelated sources inform this project. These sources provide the structure and substance necessary for its construction.

These sources are clustered around the following themes:

- Parent-Child Bonding: Context for Faith and Discipleship
- Faith Development: Process and Parameters
- Faith Transmission: Parents to Children

The literature review that follows is ordered and organized around these themes.

Parent-Child Bonding: A Context for Discipleship

As I mentioned earlier, I have been profoundly influenced by the conceptual frameworks developed by Don Joy. One of his greatest contributions to the Christian academic and faith community is his work in the area of the theological implications of birth bonding and pair bonding, particularly as they relate to human sexuality and family. Joy used the research of zoologist Desmond Morris who identified definable stages in the process of pair bonding. The concept of bonding suggests important implications for transmitting faith from parent(s) to child(ren). Even from the first moments after birth, Joy details how bonding between parents and child provides a basis for a healthy

relationship throughout infancy, childhood, adolescence, and beyond. He goes on to show how mothers and fathers model the image of God for even the youngest child. These differing but complementary images provide children with what he characterizes “as a lifelong double-image imprint between the child and the two distinctly different parents” (Bonding, 124). In other words, mothers and fathers become human vehicles that God uses to convey and help stamp God's image (*Imago Dei*) upon the life of their child. This concept grounds this project's premise that parents are intended by God to be the primary shapers of their children's faith formation.

Mary Henry seconds Joy's premise that bonding and spiritual formation are linked together. From her perspective as a writer in the area of spiritual formation, she concludes, “The parent-child bond of trust, constructed during infancy and early childhood, allows the child to be open to others and to his ever widening formation field” (40).

The value of a Christian mother and a Christian father to a child's spiritual well-being cannot be overstated. They provide the child's first exposure to what God is like. The parents quality of relationship with one another and then as couple with their child provides fertile ground for faith to be sown and then to sprout and grow.

In Risk-Proofing Your Family, Joy devotes a chapter, “The First Curriculum”, to describe what he understands to be the most important elements of how a child learns and grows. He states, “That basic curriculum consists of

three things:

1. Parents
2. Intimacy
3. Sexuality in the image of God” (Risk-Proofing Your Family, 23).

While all three of these elements are crucial to a child’s experiences of faith, parents are the instrumental agents in providing a curriculum of living faith which almost by default puts them in the role of being disciplers of their children.

Joy understands that a child’s experience of faith is integrally tied to their experience of his or her parents and of the family. He writes, “Since the family and its total combination of exchanges and agendas is the matrix in which the child is formed, the roots and context of faith are powerfully shaped by what happens in the family.” (176)

The value of Joy’s concepts of bonding and of parents being part of the “first curriculum” are conceptual keystones for constructing a project that aims to help parents effectively disciple their children.

The concept of parent-child bonding lends support to my understanding that the integrity and intimacy forged by strongly bonded parent-child relationships provide one of the best contexts for resident children to be disciplined.

Faith Development: Process and Parameters

Faith development theory provides another primary source for this project. Faith development theory holds that persons pass through faith stages during the course of a lifetime. James Fowler is the most recognized scholar

associated with faith development theory. His research is based on an extensive number of interviews he and his team of associates have conducted with persons around the world. The value of faith development theory to this project is that it provides understanding of the process and parameters of a child's emerging faith development. This information helps in understanding how children and adolescents apprehend and experience faith. Equipped with the broad contours of faith development theory, parents hold a helpful tool to guide them in identifying what stage of faith their child is experiencing and to assist their child's continued faith development by employing appropriate discipleship strategies.

Fowler's book, Stages of Faith, is the definitive text in the field. Heavily influenced by Erik Erikson's work in the area of developmental psychology as well as by Lawrence Kohlberg's work in moral development, Fowler constructs a six-stage theoretical model of faith development¹. Fowler's major thesis is that all people, no matter what their religious background or preference, proceed through faith stages. Each stage has its own unique faith dynamics and each builds upon the previous one. People can become fixed at any given stage, and relatively few people ever attain the last stage (Stage 6-Universalizing Faith).

It is important to note how Fowler defines faith:

People's evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others, and

¹Fowler's six stages of faith are: Stage 1, Intuitive-Projective Faith; Stage 2, Mythic-Literal Faith; Stage 3, Synthetic-Conventional Faith; Stage 4, Individuative-Reflective Faith; Stage 5, Conjunctive Faith; and Stage 6, Universalizing Faith. It should be noted that Fowler recognizes what he terms as a pre-stage before Stage 1, which calls this pre-stage Undifferentiated Faith.

world (as they construct them) as related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence (as they construct them) and of shaping their lives, purposes, and meanings, trusts, and loyalties, in light of the character of being, value, and power determining the ultimate conditions of existence (as grasped in their operative images-conscious and unconscious- of them) (92-93).

Although his definition of faith may differ from one given by a theologian, pastor, or layperson, the value of Fowler's work for this project lies not in defining faith but in postulating that all of us move through sequential stages of faith development. Fowler's extensive interviewing provided him with the empirical data necessary to support his thesis that people move through faith stages. Faith development theory becomes a helpful tool in designing a curriculum which seeks to equip Christian parents to better understand and foster the spiritual direction and formation of their children. Fowler admits to limitations to his theory of faith development. He states, "There is a limit to how much one can talk about faith and development in faith without acknowledging that the question of whether there will be faith on earth is finally God's business" (302).

Technically oriented and based in the reporting of religious faith research, Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence, edited by Fritz W. Oser and W. George Scarlett, was written for professional religious educators and scholars. Its value is in acquainting its readers with issues which relate to how religious development occurs in children and adolescents. Not surprisingly, the book asserts: "Religious educators and a growing number of counselors have

come to rely on faith development theory for its provision of a set of lenses for understanding the patterns and dynamics of faith knowing and valuing.” (44)

The set of lenses faith development theory can provide are valuable not only to professional educators and counselors but valuable to parents in understanding their children's faith development and experience.

Tied into Fowler's understanding of faith development, the concept of vocation is another important component in the construction of this project. In his book, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian, Fowler demonstrates how faith development and Christian vocation are integrally related. He defines vocation as “ . . . the response a person makes with his or her total self to the address of God and to the calling of partnership” (95). In the case of children and adolescents, it appears that parents are primary agents for helping their children sense and respond to God's call and claim for their lives. At the core of discipleship lies the recognition that God has a purpose and call for each person. Parents carry both an opportunity and obligation to assist their children in sensing and responding to God's vocation for their lives.

Faith development has profound implications for parents and their children. In his article, “Gifting the Imagination: Awakening and Informing the Children's Faith,” Fowler provides practical suggestions for fostering a child's faith development. He recognizes the importance of the family in the development of a child's faith when he asserts, “The most critical context in the awakening and informing of children's faith today is the home and family” (198).

He sees a reciprocal blessing resulting to those parents who willingly and consciously attempt to help expand their child's faith horizons (199).

Faith development theory, especially with its emphasis on discernible faith stages, can be a helpful tool in equipping parents to share and model faith with their children. Parents equipped to recognize what stage of faith their children are presently experiencing can use that information in ways that help their children know and respond to God's call to discipleship.

Faith Transmission: Parents to Children

A vast body of literature exists concerning the transmission of faith from parents to their children. It falls into two broad categories; popular literature targeted towards the Christian family, and academically oriented literature geared towards a professional readership. It is my purpose here to distill the review so that it falls within the scope of this project's purpose and objectives. Since this project focuses on the transmission of Christian faith from parents to their children, it important to note the salient literature in this area.

On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family, authored by Ray S. Anderson and Dennis B. Guernsey, provides an excellent understanding of how familial relationships impact each member's spirituality. Anderson outlines a psycho-social framework for why the family is an appropriate context for discipleship. He emphasizes the dynamic of love as central to the process of each family member's spiritual formation. He writes, "Hence spirituality is a work of love. Family life contributes to the openness of personal being to the

degree that love is an experienced reality" (122-123). This point is crucial to the objective of parents accepting their role as the primary disciplers of their children. The primary motive for parents to disciple their children is based in their love for God and for their children. Dennis Guernsey tackles the issues that pertain to how parents can best give direction to their children's faith formation. He examines the issue of whether content or context is the greater factor in facilitating a child's spiritual growth. He writes,

I have come to the conclusion that spiritual formation in the confines of the family is at its heart a socialization task. . . . This means that whatever affects the family, the ability of the family to fulfill its function as the primary socialization agent in the life of its children ultimately affects the ability of the parents to lead their children meaningfully along the road or journey of faith." (136)

Guernsey sides with context being a greater factor in a child's spiritual formation than content.

Myron R. Chartier's article, "A Theology of Parenting: An Incarnational Model," pleads for qualitative parenting based on the pattern of the biblical incarnation of Jesus Christ. He reviews and summarizes what he perceives to be the theology of parenting of writers such as Bruce Narramore, Ray Anderson, (see above) and Bruno Manno. In what amounts to a synthesis of these views he constructs a seven-point parenting model.² He summarizes his model by stating, "The model of God's parental love as revealed in Jesus

²Chartier's seven points each begin with the rubric "To Love Is to — ". The seven points added to the end of the rubric are 1. Care 2. Respond 3. Discipline 4. Give 5. Respect 6. Know 7. Forgive

Christ provides a prescriptive pattern for Christian parents. The discipleship of parenting begins by loving our nearest neighbors--our children" (American Baptist Quarterly, 3, 76). The logical extension of this view appears to support Anderson and Guernsey in their understanding of the value of emphasizing the value of a context oriented approach to parents' discipling (transmitting) faith to their children.

In The Christian Family, Larry Christenson outlines a linear, hierarchical, and authoritarian approach to the spiritual formation of children in a family. He directs parents to know and carry out God's order for children. In what appears to be a no-nonsense, unyielding tone he states, "God's order for children is compassed in a single command: 'Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord' (55). Christenson advocates parents (especially fathers) use their position and authority to influence the direction of their children/s spiritual lives. Although he attempts to ground his views in what he believes is a correct interpretation of key biblical passages related to the family, the tenor of his writings and views appear overly rigid and harshly patriarchal. In contrast to Anderson's (see above) emphasis on love as the prevailing dynamic in helping a child grow spiritually, Christenson emphasizes the place and importance of faithful obedience. Although love and faithful obedience are not contradictory, it likely points out the difference between a discipleship approach based primarily on content as opposed to one based primarily on context.

Content and Context

“Parenting as Discipleship,” written by Cameron Lee, sees both similarities and differences in the parental roles of discipline and discipleship. In noting one of the similarities of the two roles, Lee states, “Parenting, like discipleship, is a teaching relationship, but the teaching is more cognitive” (Journal of Psychology and Theology, 19, 270). Lee recognizes along with several others the important role parents play in teaching their children about matters of faith. His unique angle is that discipline and discipleship, though distinguishable from one another, are linked in the process. Along with Christenson, he appears to lean towards a content oriented approach to discipleship.

Parents Passing on the Faith, authored by Carl K. Spackman, is an exposition of selected biblical passages which pertain to instructing parents on the value of transmitting faith to their children. The interpretation of the passages is heavily influenced by Reformed theology and a hermeneutic which tends toward a content oriented approach. Although he fails to cite any source, Spackman claims that “estimates range from 50 percent to as high as 80 percent” in terms of the number of children growing up in Christian homes who “forsake the faith, either temporarily or permanently” (9). His solution to this unhappy state is to inspire parents to assume their role of being disciplers of their children by appealing to biblical passages that command and instruct parents to take on this task.

Steering a middle course between the issue of context and content, Kenneth Gangel, in his book The Family First, sees the importance of both. He advises, "Christian nurture in the home requires a consistent day by day inculcation of Biblical values which lead the child to the place which he can volitionally make genuinely Christian choices on the basis of what he has learned." (62) He goes on to offer a five-part prescription on how to teach children Christian convictions and principles. In a similar vein, Margaret M. Sawin in "How the Family Shapes Religious Believing and How Religious Education Can Shape the Family", claims that the "family is the most influential area of an individual's life and, therefore predominantly shapes the individual's religious behavior" (American Baptist Quarterly, 3, 53) but then proceeds to give examples of how a content oriented approach can shape the faith of the family.

The issues of a context versus a content oriented approach are key to determining how to construct a project designed to measure whether a parent discipling curriculum can be effective in equipping parents for this task. Although both elements appear to be necessary in constructing such a curriculum, the result will likely be a curriculum which tends to be more oriented in one direction or the other. The question becomes, is discipleship more caught than taught? Which approach, or orientation, is better suited for parents who seek to transmit faith to their children? As seen from the literature cited above, opinions vary as to which is better suited to the purpose of parents discipling their children. My own view is that while content is an important and necessary

component in the construction and implementation of a parent discipling curriculum, context is the stronger element that needs to be emphasized in designing the curriculum.

The book, Five Cries of Parents, written by Merton and Irene Strommen, centers on a study of what parents identified as their greatest desires for their family. One of the factors that motivated the Strommens to research and write this book was to discover how faith can be at the center of family life.³ Their research identified five issues or “cries” parents wished for their families. The chapter entitled “Cry for a Shared Faith” holds particular relevance to this project. In compiling their research the authors note with irony that the “cry for a shared faith is only a muted cry. Though religious faith ranks high in importance for parents in the Adolescent -Parent study, it is seldom a topic of discussion in the home” (130). In accounting for one possible reason for the lack of faith conversations between parents and their adolescent children, they surmise that many parents believe that religious instruction is the province of the church and not of the home (135). If this observation is accurate it seems opposite from the Old Testament pedagogical principle for parents stated in Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (NIV):

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and

³ The book’s stated purpose is “to know how faith can be made central in family life.”

the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

The Strommens' research reveals that although parents desire to see their children experience faith, they do not necessarily follow through with the kind of practices that would facilitate that end. Their finding supports the conclusion that parents need to recover their role as faith teachers or disciplers of their children. One important piece in accomplishing this task is to help parents understand, accept, and carry out their role as disciplers of their children, one of the objectives which this project seeks to accomplish. Merton Strommen's companion volume Five Cries of Youth provides an excellent context for better understanding the need for this critical objective.

Gene Getz, in The Christian Home in a Changing World, urges parents "to equip each child to faithfully serve Jesus Christ" (57). He suggests three goals for parents to pursue in order to positively influence the faith development of their children. This work is an example of the many books whose common theme is to encourage parents to adopt an active role in the development of their children's faith. In his later work, The Measure of a Family, Getz writes, "The family is really the church in miniature" (13). His purpose in making this point is to remind contemporary Christian parents that the task of influencing and shaping their children's faith should not be seen solely as the task of the local church, but as the task of the church incarnate.

Several studies focus on research questions having to do with the

transmission of faith from parents to children. The information from these studies is helpful to this project in that they provide empirical data useful in helping parents better understand the dynamics transmitting their faith to their children.

“Transmission of Religious Values and Social Values from Parents to Teenage Children” is an article based on research undertaken by Dean R. Hoge, Gregory H. Petrillo, and Ella I. Smith. Their study centered on the responses to a questionnaire designed by the researchers of 451 Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist tenth grade, suburban Washington, D.C. youth, 315 of their mothers, and 284 of their fathers. The study offers research data about the “hows” and “whos” of transmitting faith from one generation to the next. One of their findings has relevance for this project. This study revealed that overall there is a weak relationship between parent-child value transmission. Unfortunately, the study does not go on to provide much explanation for this finding. The finding itself, however, reveals that parents are not particularly effective in transmitting their values (which includes religious faith) to their children. This project aims to discover if parents can be equipped to be more effective transmitters of their faith to their children.

A similar type of study was undertaken by the husband-and-wife research team of Roger L. and Margaret G. Dudley. In their study of 247 Seventh Day Adventist family triads (mother-father-youth), one of the questions they sought to answer was the likelihood of adolescents adopting a similar value system to that

of their parents (“Transmission of Values”, 3). Their conclusion, differing from the Hoge study cited above, offers parents a measure of encouragement and hope in the task of encouraging their children towards faithfulness to Christ and the values which mark Christian discipleship.

Often parents and religious leaders become discouraged as they see their young people appear to reject the values that they themselves hold so dear. It is good for them to remember that even as separating forces are at work, holding influences are also active. Adolescents find themselves by leaving, but they are also drawn back again. And adults have the opportunity to influence the relative strength of these contrasting forces. (13)

Their conclusion supports the possibility that parents can influence the faith and values of their children. The relevant question as it pertains to this project is, can parents be equipped to become more effective in transmitting faith if educated to do so?

Mark A. Lamport undertook a study to discover some basic insights into the spirituality of adolescents. The results appear in an article entitled “Adolescent Spirituality: Ages of Conversion and Factors of Development.” Based on a survey of 257 Christian adults, Lamport sought answers to the following: at what age do most people become Christians, to what extent do males and females differ in age of conversion, what are the most common contributing factors in becoming a Christian? The answers which his research provided offer a valuable tool for developing a curriculum which seeks to provide Christian parents with helpful information that may assist them in helping their children become disciples of Jesus Christ. Among his significant

findings were that "adolescence is a prime age period for conversion" (27), sixty percent of conversions occur before age twenty (22), and that family influence was one of the most common factors that influences a person to become a Christian (23). When taken together these findings help show that parents have a window of opportunity for influencing their children towards becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.

Some older studies worth noting include Families in the Church: A Protestant Survey, Adolescent Religion, Christian Youth: An In-Depth Study. Though somewhat dated, these books provide some important data pertaining to factors that influence the spiritual formation of children and adolescents. The question of how parental leadership styles relate to a child's faith formation is important to note in designing a curriculum that seeks to equip parents to be effective in discipling their children. Well-known writer S. Bruce Narramore in "Parent Leadership Styles and Biblical Anthropology" (Bibliotheca Sacra 135, 345-357), addresses this issue. He reviews the parenting style views of notable Christian and secular writers in the context of the parenting styles categories (Authoritarian, Permissive, Authoritative) originally described by Diane Baumrind and others.⁴ His conclusion is that an "Authoritative" style of parenting is the one best suited for a child's spiritual nurture (356).

⁴ Diane Baumrind's work in the area of parenting styles is frequently cited by many Christian family authors. See her article entitled "Current Patterns of Parental Authority", Developmental Psychology Monograph Series, 4 (n.d.).

In a related article, "The Relationship Between Parenting Style and the Spiritual Well-Being and Religiosity of College Students", Mark Wheeler writes "that the relationship between parenting style and religiosity and spiritual well-being have been desperately overlooked." (54) His research focused on a study of 171 students attending three Christian colleges located in the Midwest region of the United States. His data came from a questionnaire he devised for his study. Surprisingly, his data led him to conclude that no relationship exists between being raised by parents employing an authoritative parenting style and the state of their relationship with God. This finding runs counter to the conclusion reached by Bruce Narramore (see above), although to be fair it must be noted that spiritual well-being and spiritual development, though related, are not totally synonymous.

The question then remains, what parenting style is most congenial to the task of parents transmitting their faith to their children? It appears that the jury has not reached a definitive verdict. Despite the inconclusive finding about the effect of parenting style on a child's spiritual development, parents would likely benefit from an understanding of parenting styles and how each style (Authoritarian, Permissive, Authoritative) could help or hinder the process of disciplining their children.

Summary

Several components and sources are necessary to the development of a project seeking to effectively equip Christian parents for their role and responsibilities of being the primary disciplers of their resident children. The separate yet related themes of bonding, faith development, and faith

transmission form the foundation for developing a curriculum that seeks to equip parents to become effective disciplers of their children. The discipling concepts and practices that these themes suggested led to the construction of the curriculum that was designed and implemented for this study. The curriculum was intended to better equip parents for their role as the primary disciplers of their resident children. The curriculum, entitled Train Up a Child: Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children is included in the appendix.

The concept of bonding establishes that a parent-child bond marked by integrity and intimacy provides an optimal context for the discipleship of resident children. The developing child who is strongly bonded to parents of faith will likely be strongly influenced by their precept and example. Helping parents become aware of the power and potential of their bond with their children will be a primary goal and component of the parent discipling curriculum that this study seeks to evaluate. In the words of Don Joy, parents are an essential part of a child's "first curriculum" (Risk-Proofing Your Family, 22-23). The curriculum that this study will evaluate is a logical extension of that first curriculum.

One other item deserves mention as it relates to parent-child bonding. I think it is plausible that the mystery and magic of the parent-child bond is yet another expression of God's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. The grace filled parent-child bond, established at birth, provides parents with a

wonderful context for their role as disciplers of their resident children.

Faith development theory helps to establish both the process and parameters which inform the discipling task. Parents equipped with a basic understanding of faith development theory will have a helpful and practical tool that can guide them in discipling their children. First, an understanding of faith development can provide parents with useful benchmarks for their children's emerging faith. Just as many parents use weight and height charts to measure their child's physical growth, or report cards to gauge their academic growth, faith development stages can assist parents to assess their child's growth in faith. Secondly, a basic understanding of faith development can help inform discipling practices that are appropriate to a child's level of faith maturity. It is important to note that faith development is not the only or even the best tool parents can use to fulfill their role as disciplers of their resident children. I believe that faith development theory needs to be modified so that it complies with and yields to the greater authority of Scripture. With this in mind, I believe faith development theory is a helpful tool parents can use to help them disciple their resident children.

Finally, literature that sheds light on the transmission of faith from parents to children holds value for the construction of a parent discipling curriculum by helping to identify factors that facilitate or hinder the discipling process. Research done in this area provides tangible clues to what attitudes, values, and practices are factors in seeing faith effectively conveyed from

parents to children. The information this research provides will be used to assist the development and implementation of a parent discipling curriculum.

The attempt in this chapter has been to highlight literature appropriate to a project of this nature and scope.

CHAPTER 3

The Design of the Study

The problem this study will address is, can a ministry be developed that would equip parents for their role as disciplers of their children? My answer will be to design a parent discipling curriculum and to determine if such a curriculum offers a positive impact on helping parents accept and carry out their role as disciplers of their resident children. Research indicates most professing Christians make their initial faith commitment before they reach majority age.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of a curriculum designed and implemented to equip parents who are members or constituents of Christ UMC, Newcomerstown, Ohio, in the role of discipling their resident children.

Statement of Research Questions

This study will seek to investigate the following research questions:

Research Question #1: What concepts did the subjects of this study have of parents role in discipling their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

Operational Question #1: What basic knowledge related to discipling their resident children did the subjects have prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

Operational Question #2: What basic attitudes related to discipling their resident children did the subjects have prior to their

exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

Research Question #2: What discipling practices, if any, did the subjects employ with their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

Research Question #3: What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' concepts and practices as a result of their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

Operational Question #1: What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' concepts a result of their exposure to the curriculum?

Operational Question #2: What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' discipling practices as a result of their exposure to the curriculum?

Operational Question #3: As a result of their exposure to the curriculum, what substantive changes occurred in the subjects' concepts and practices were short-term as opposed to longer term?

Research Question #4: What aspects of the curriculum contributed to changes in subjects' concepts and practices?

The main focus was to determine whether a parent discipling curriculum exerted a positive impact on the concepts and practices of parents in their role as disciplers of their children. The curriculum incorporated the teaching and learning of discipling concepts and practices derived from the realms of child-

parent bonding, faith development, and faith transmission. (See Chapter 2).

These learned concepts and practices were meant to have a positive impact on their children's faith.

The answers to the above research questions provided a basis for evaluating the impact of the curriculum in equipping parents to disciple their resident children. More specifically, the answers to the research questions measured the changes that occurred in the discipling concepts and practices of parents who participated (subjects) in the parent discipling seminar. Three questionnaires were developed that attempted to measure the subjects' discipling concepts and practices. I also conducted brief interviews with each subject. The main purpose of the interview was to query the subjects about how the subject's participation in the seminar changed their parent discipling concepts and practices and what aspects of the curriculum contributed to these changes.

The Subjects of the Study

The project involved a group of parents who are members or constituents of Newcomerstown, Ohio, Christ UMC, have resident children, and voluntarily agreed to participate in a seven-week parent discipling curriculum. Seventeen persons participated in the project. My method of acquiring participants was to make verbal (Sunday morning worship, adult Sunday school classes) and published announcements (church bulletin and newsletter). I also sent a letter targeted to those members and constituents of Christ UMC with resident children

and invited them to consider participation in the project. All persons who agreed to participate in the entire seven-week curriculum and were willing to complete the researcher designed questionnaires were accepted as subjects for the project. Study groups meeting for a limited number of sessions have worked well in the past for this congregation and was, therefore, an important factor in choosing this format. The parent discipling curriculum sessions occurred on Sunday mornings during the Sunday school hour. This time slot works well for those in the pool of persons from which the subjects participating in the project emerged.

I recognize the inherent limitations of using a group of self-selected participants. One limitation is the likelihood that the subjects will have a higher level of motivation than would be expected from a group randomly selected. This factor, however, will be tempered by allowing for the premise that parents who are not motivated to disciple their children would probably not participate in the project. I assumed a higher level of interest and motivation among those who make up the subject group. I attempted to look for changes in the subjects' concepts and practices in discipling their children.

The subject group was representative of those members and constituents of Christ UMC with resident children in terms of age, socio-economic status, and level of involvement in the life of the congregation. While Christ UMC is located in a small, relatively poor, upper Appalachian community, its members and constituents tend to have higher household incomes and levels of educational

attainment than is true of the area's general population. The church has a significant number of public school teachers among its members and constituents. The subject group consisted of nine women and eight men. Of the seventeen participants, there were seven married couples (14 subjects), one married woman whose husband did not participate in the seminar (1 subject), and a couple who had been previously married to each other but were divorced (2 subjects). Subjects averaged two resident children per household.

I have pastored Christ UMC for more than six years (Feb. 1, 1991 to present) and have enjoyed an excellent relationship with the church during my pastoral tenure. The church has a fine record in mission and ministry to both its own people and to the people of the area it serves for Jesus Christ. I believe this congregation will continue to have a vital ministry in the years ahead.

The Curriculum

The focal point of this project was the design and implementation of a parent discipling curriculum. I designed and implemented the curriculum with the subjects in a seven session, weekly group gathering that incorporated elements of teaching, sharing, group interaction, and action assignments. The curriculum was titled, Train Up a Child in the Way . . . : Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children.

The curriculum was implemented over the course of seven sessions lasting seven weeks (September 21 to November 2, 1997). During these seven sessions I presented topics relevant to the task of equipping parents to

effectively disciple their resident children.

The outline of the curriculum in its seven-session format was as follows:

Session 1 Introduction: The first questionnaire was administered to the subjects. After the subjects completed the Participants Initial Questionnaire, they were welcomed to the seminar, heard a brief overview of the seminar's purpose and goals, and a preview of the remaining six sessions. The subjects were reminded that they were expected to complete questionnaires on two others occasions and agree to be interviewed approximately six weeks after the last session.

Session 2 Foundations for Discipling Our Children: Biblical and Theological Implications for Parents

Overview: In this session participants will encounter and discuss biblical passages and theological concepts related to their parental role, influence, and practices in discipling their children.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Engage in a class exercise designed to illustrate the concept of *Imago Dei* (Humans made in God's image)
2. Learn and be able to identify theological concepts and biblical passages related to the roles, influences, and practices of parents in discipling their children.
3. Explore and discuss with each other how an understanding of theological concepts and Biblical passages can provide parents with insights and strategies for discipling their children.

Session 3 Parent-Child Bonding: Understanding the Context for Discipling Our Children.

Overview: In this session participants will explore and consider the nature of parent-child bonding. Participants will also examine and discuss how parent-child bonding can positively influence their children's faith.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Experience Christian fellowship.
2. Share with other participants their remembrance of the birth of their children.
3. Learn and identify some key concepts of parent-child bonding, particularly as it relates to discipling their children.
4. Learn some practical ways to use concepts from parent-child bonding in discipling their children as a result of their discussion with each other.

Session 4 Sensing Our Children's Cry for Faith: Opening Our Eyes, Ears, and Hearts to Our Children

Overview: In this session participants will wrestle with the concept of sensing children's openness and cries for faith that provides parents with some golden opportunities to effectively share how faith can provide a priceless resource for handling the challenges and opportunities life can pose with their children. Using findings from Merton Strommen's research with youth, participants will assess information that can assist them in their ability to sense and act on those often spontaneous and serendipitous "faith moments" with their children.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Share with each other two or three "teachable moments" they have experienced with their children.
2. Learn and be able to identify six characteristics that relate to a youth and child's Christian identity and purpose.
3. Learn and interact with the concept of "faith moments" and the concept relates to discipling their children.
4. Discover practical ways to maximize "faith moments" as result of discussion with other

participants.

Session 5 Our Children's Developing Faith: Recognizing Our Children's Potential for Faith.

Overview: Participants will confront and interact with basic tenets of faith development theory (James Fowler). Participants will consider and discuss how an understanding of a child's faith stage can help parents recognize the "possibilities" as well as "limitations" marking that particular stage.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Share the results of their query (see Session 4 Wrap-Up) with other participants.
2. Learn and be able to identify the concept of faith development.
3. Be able to identify and describe the first four stages of Fowler's faith development theory.
4. Consider how faith development concepts can provide parents with valuable insights about their children's faith development and appropriate discipling strategies that can be employed depending on a child's stage of faith development.

Session 6 Helping Our Children Towards Faith: Practical Suggestions for Fostering Faith

Overview: Participants will examine and discuss the use of spiritual disciplines and practices as it applies to discipling their children. Participants will explore, share, and discuss the use of specific spiritual disciplines and resources that can be used to disciple their children.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Able to define the concept of spiritual disciplines, particularly as it relates to discipling their children.

2. Identify common spiritual disciplines that are helpful in discipling their children.
3. Share discipling ideas, strategies, and resources with each other.
4. Create a plan to implement the strategic use of spiritual disciplines in discipling their children.

Session 7 A Balanced Approach to Discipling Our Children: Context and Content

Overview: Participants will learn how to identify and reflect on the relationship, similarities, and differences between discipling approaches and practices that are either context or content oriented. They will explore and discuss practical ways to incorporate both context and content oriented discipleship as part of a strategic approach to discipling their children. They will complete the second questionnaire at this session.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Be able to identify and differentiate between the concepts of Content (Faith Taught) and Context (Faith Caught) as it relates to discipling approaches and practices.
2. Be charged to accept the challenge, responsibility, opportunity, and privilege of being the primary disciplers of their children.
3. Complete the questionnaire administered at this session.

With the exception of the first session (Introduction), each session focused on a parent discipling issue that sought to present subjects with information and/or strategies related to their role as disciplers of their resident children. While the sessions were designed to focus on one major issue, I

attempted to show the subjects how each session's topic related to the topics of the previous sessions as well as to the overall purpose of the project.

I chose the topics on the basis of the lectures and readings I encountered as a D.Min. student and my research for this study. I sought to identify the salient issues that pertain to equipping parents for their discipling role on the basis of my research, and pastoral experience. I tried to present each session's topic in a clear, concise style.

Those who participated in the curriculum were asked to attend each of the seven sessions, fulfill the assignments or exercises that applied to a particular session, and to complete the questionnaires and interview referred to earlier.

The sessions were held once a week for seven weeks (September 21, 1997 to November 2, 1997). Each session lasted approximately seventy-five minutes. With the exception of the first session (Introduction), each session was divided into four segments. The four segments were:

Gathering (10 minutes)

Presentation (40 minutes)

Discussion (20 minutes)

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

The Gathering segment normally consisted of greeting the participants, a brief opening prayer, and an activity designed to highlight the topic for that particular session. The Presentation was the longest segment. The session's topic and its relevant issues were discussed, explained, and illustrated.

Participants were invited to react and respond to the presentation during the Discussion segment. Occasionally the presenter asked the participants one or two pre-selected discussion questions. Each session, excluding the first, concluded with a wrap-up time that included a brief review of the session's topic, an action assignment to be completed in advance of the next session, and a brief closing prayer.

It was my hope that the subjects would be positively influenced by their exposure to the seven-week seminar.

Data Collection and Analysis

The independent variable of this study is the parent discipling curriculum that was designed by the researcher and presented to the subjects of this study. The dependent variables were the changes in the concepts and practices of parents that occurred as the result of their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum, and the aspects of the curriculum that contributed to these changes.

Instrumentation

In order to measure and evaluate the impact of the curriculum on participants, three questionnaires as well as an exit interview were developed. The research questions and their attendant operational questions served as a template for the specific items that were developed for the questionnaires as well as the exit interview. Items were developed that attempted to provide data about the subjects' concepts and practices in discipling their resident children, both before and after their exposure to the parent discipling curriculum. The purpose

of the exit interview was to provide a means for the subjects to personally state how their participation in the seminar had changed their concepts or practices in their role as a discipler of their children (Research Question 3) and to discover what aspects of the curriculum contributed to changes in the subjects' discipling concepts and practices (Research Question 4). Each subject was asked to complete the Single-Group Interrupted Time-Series questionnaires that were developed and to participate in an exit interview.

The questionnaires employed modified Likert, nominal, ordinal, interval, and comparative rating type scales that included items designed to measure the subject's concepts and practices as they related to their role in discipling their resident children to provide a basis to measure the research questions. To better insure more candid responses, each participant was randomly assigned a code number. The assigning of the random code number was done to protect the anonymity of the subject in as far as possible. The random distribution of the code numbers to the subjects was overseen by a proctor.¹ In addition, item types were also varied throughout the course of each questionnaire to be administered. The questionnaires were administered at three different intervals.

The first questionnaire, known as the Participants Initial Questionnaire or PIQ, was administered immediately prior to the subjects' exposure to the seminar. The information from this questionnaire provided a baseline of information about the subjects' discipling concepts and practices before their

¹Ms. Kathy Ellis, member of my CRG, served as proctor.

exposure to the seminar (Research Questions 1 and 2).

The second questionnaire, known as the Participants Questionnaire or PQ, was administered immediately after the seminar was completed. The data from this questionnaire was compared to the data from the first questionnaire to determine what short-term changes resulted from the subjects' exposure to the parent discipling curriculum (Research question 3).

The third questionnaire, known as the Participants Final Questionnaire or FQ, was administered approximately six weeks after the completion of the seminar. The data from the third questionnaire was compared to the data from both the first and second questionnaires to determine what changes were longer-term as compared to the changes revealed by the data from the first and second questionnaires (Research question 3). The three questionnaires contained substantially the same type and number of items to facilitate easy comparison of the data from the three questionnaires.

The questionnaire was pre-tested by my Congregational Reflection Group (CRG). I also submitted a draft of the questionnaire to my mentor, Dr. Donald Joy, and my internal reader, Dr. Jim Thobaben for their evaluation and feedback. I incorporated the suggestions from my CRG, mentor, and internal reader in creating a final draft of the questionnaire(s). The three questionnaires asked the same number of identical questions except for twelve demographic questions that were included in the opening section of the first questionnaire but not included in the two questionnaires that were subsequently completed by the

subjects. The purpose for using identical items was to provide a basis of comparison between the three questionnaires in order to measure the concepts and practices of the subjects for the particular interval being tested by the researcher.

The brief exit interview provided an additional means of gaining information related to Research Question #4. I sought to gain data from the subjects through a simple, narratively based interview protocol. The standardized questions I developed for the interview were submitted for review to my mentor and internal reader before the interviews were conducted. I interviewed each of the seventeen participants in the period from December 7, 1997 to December 14, 1997. Each subject was asked the same questions as the other subjects. In addition to helping answer Research questions 3 and 4, the interviews helped me determine if the subjects had learned and put into practice the discipling topics that were presented during the course of the seminar.

I used the data gained from the questionnaires and interviews to evaluate the impact of the curriculum on the subjects. A copy of the questionnaires and list of interview questions is included in the Appendix.

CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Study

The seven session, seven week curriculum sought to impact its subjects' concepts and practices as it related to their role as disciplers of their resident children. My intention was that the subjects would be positively impacted by their exposure to the several elements of the seminar's curriculum; presentation, small group discussion with other subjects, seminar exercises, etc.

Although the curriculum's impact on the subjects turned out to be less than my original expectation, the seminar did have some impact on the subjects' knowledge, attitudes, and practices as it related to discipling their resident children. The details and basis for the curriculum's impact constitute the content of this and the final chapters.

Overview of the Curriculum, Seminar, and Subjects

The curriculum was designed by the researcher to present the subjects with some basic topics which related to a parent's role in discipling their resident children and to allow them to interact with the topics, the presenter, and each other. Six basic topics were presented during the course of the seven week seminar. The topics and sessions when presented were as follows:

Session One	Introduction
Session Two	Foundations for Discipling Our Children: Biblical and Theological Implications for Parents
Session Three	Parent-Child Bonding: Understanding the Context for Discipling Our Children

Session Four	Sensing Our Children's Cry for Faith: Opening Our Ears, Eyes, Hearts to Our Children
Session Five	Our Children's Developing Faith: Recognizing Our Children's Potential for Faith
Session Six	Helping Our children Towards Faith: Practical Suggestions for Fostering Faith
Session Seven	A Balanced Approach to Discipling Our Children: Context and Content

The seminar had seven weekly sessions. Each session, with the exception of one, took place on Sunday mornings from 8:45 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. and were held in Christ UMC's conference room. The third session took place on Sunday evening October 5th from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. in the Christ UMC Fellowship Hall. The sessions were generally divided into four segments: Gathering, Presentation, Discussion, and Wrap-Up. Since time had to be allotted for subjects to complete questionnaires at both the first and last (seventh) sessions, these two sessions did not have a Discussion segment.

Nineteen persons originally registered for the seminar and were present at its first session. One husband and wife couple dropped out after the first session leaving seventeen subjects attended sessions during the course of the seminar, completed the study's three questionnaires, and were present for the interview.

All of the subjects were parents having at least one child living with them. Nine of the participants were mothers (women). Eight of the subjects were fathers (men). The subjects had a composite total of eighteen resident children.

Each household (parent(s) and resident children) averaged two resident children per household. The smallest number of resident children in any subject's household was one while the largest number of resident children in any subject's household was three.

The marital status of the subjects was as follows; seven married couples, two divorced persons, and a married woman whose husband did not participate in the seminar.

All of the subjects were members of Christ UMC and indicated that they had held that status for seven years or more. Eleven of the seventeen indicated that interest in the seminar's topic was the main reason for their decision to participate. Three cited being invited by the pastor as their main reason for participating while the remaining three subjects indicated that the encouragement of their spouse was the main reason they chose to participate. Their composite attendance rate was 92%, with nine attending all sessions, seven attended all but one session, and the remaining subject missed two out of the seven sessions.

The findings presented in this study were culled from two sources: the three completed questionnaires and the individual, post-seminar interviews conducted approximately six weeks after the conclusion of the seminar. The subjects completed the questionnaire at three different intervals. The first interval was at the outset of the first session and before the subjects had any exposure to the seminar's topics. The second interval occurred at the last

session after the session's topic had been presented and briefly discussed. The final interval was approximately six weeks after the seminar had concluded. A copy of each of the three questionnaires is included in the appendix.

The individual interviews were conducted from December 7th through December 14th, 1997. The interviews took place approximately five to six weeks after the seminar concluded. The interviews averaged thirty minutes in length. A standard set of questions was developed for the interview and posed to all the subjects. A copy can be found in the appendix.

The findings of the questionnaires formed the sole basis for answering the first two research questions. The questionnaires also provided an important source for helping to answer the third research questions and its attending operational questions, especially the third operational question.¹

The interviews provided an important instrument in helping to answer the third research question. The information from the anonymous questionnaires was used to provide composite data about the subject group. By contrast, the interviews provided a means to seek and gain data from the individual subjects about their personal observations of the changes they experienced in their parent discipling concepts and practices as a result of their participation in the seminar. The interviews formed the sole basis for answering the fourth research question.

The findings from the questionnaires and interviews are ordered and

¹ See Chapter 3, page 42.

presented in relation to the four research questions that relate to the particular instrument.

The Findings of the Questionnaires

The findings of the questionnaires as they relate to the research questions and their attending operational questions, if any, are presented in the next several pages.

Research Question #1: What concepts did the subjects of this study have of parents' role in discipling their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

The intent of the first research question was to measure the parent discipling concepts the subjects had prior to their exposure to the seminar. Concepts, as it applies to this study, are the attitudes and knowledge parents have in discipling their children. The Participants Initial Questionnaire was the basis for gathering the information to answer this research question. Two operational questions grew out of the first research question. The first of these was, "What basic knowledge related to discipling their resident children did the subjects have prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?" The subjects were queried about their basic knowledge of some key discipling principles that were to be presented to them in the course of the seven week seminar by having a section of the questionnaire designed to ask for their response to these principles.² Nine questionnaire items of the Participants Initial

²Item numbers 13-21 in the Participants Initial Questionnaire (PIQ).

Questionnaire (PIQ) were posed to the subjects presenting them with a discipling concept and asking them to check one of four responses they believed best completed the item. The nine items were derived from discipling concepts that would be presented to the subjects in the course of the seven week seminar. The items were a mix of discipling knowledge and attitude concepts. Items 13, 14, and 21 were oriented towards attitude and items 15,16,17,18, 19, and 20 being oriented toward knowledge. The four possible responses contained two incorrect responses, one correct response, and a response that indicated the subject did not know the answer to the particular question. The subjects were given a score of either correct or incorrect (or not knowing the answer) for each of the nine items based on whether their response to the item matched the information that would be presented for that particular concept in the course of the seminar.

The PIQ revealed that the subjects had a fairly good knowledge of the parent discipling topics before their exposure to seminar. Table 1 summarizes the results of their composite response to these questions.

Table 1-Summary of Subjects Knowledge of Discipling Concepts Before Seminar		
Participants Initial Questionnaire Item No./Item	No./Pct. of Subjects Responding Correctly	No./Pct. of Subjects Responding Incorrectly or Not Knowing Answer
13. The Bible;	16 / 94%	1 / 6%
14. The concept that each person is made in God's image is:	16 / 94%	1 / 6%
15. Parent-child bonding is:	16 / 94%	1 / 6%
16. The concept of bonding maintains that a mother and father provide their child:	14 / 82%	3 / 18%
17. Adolescent youth who are active, professing Christians:	16 / 94%	1 / 6%
18. A major study revealed that most parents:	8 / 47%	9 / 53%
19. Most four year old children:	10 / 59%	7 / 41%
20. As a child grows, his or her faith:	15 / 88%	2 / 12%
21. The spiritual disciplines:	11 / 65%	6 / 35%
Composite average	13.5 / 80%	3.5 / 20%

Results from the PIQ support a finding that the subjects had a good basic knowledge or at least recognition of parent discipling topics that would be covered in the course of the seminar.

The second operational question was, "What basic attitudes related to discipling their resident children did the subjects have prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?". Four questions on the PIQ were designed to measure the subjects' parent discipling attitudes, especially the role subjects believed or felt categories of persons, institutions, and organizations should have in their children's faith development or spiritual growth.³ Two of the

³PIQ Question numbers 23,25,26,and 27.

questions had to do with the subject's attitude about what persons, institutions, or organizations should have a role in shaping their child(ren)'s faith. Another question asked the subjects to rank the five most important influences from a listing of nineteen different types of persons, institutions, or organizations the subjects felt to be the most important in shaping their child's spiritual growth. The fourth question was directed towards having the subjects choose from six possible choices that best described their understanding of their role in helping their children grow spiritually.

Table 2 shows the composite results of how much a role subjects believed different categories of persons should have in shaping their children's faith (PIQ question #23).

Table 2 Subjects Response -The Role Other Persons Should Have in Shaping Their Children's Faith			
Category	Degree of Role (Number of Respondents Indicating)		
	<i>None</i>	<i>Limited</i>	<i>Important⁴</i>
Grandparents	0	0	17
Siblings	2	1	15
Parents	0	0	17
Other Relatives	0	4	13
Child's Friends	0	7	10
Neighbors	0	14	3
Sun. School Teachers	0	1	16
Pastor	0	0	17
Youth Director	0	0	17
Church Members	0	3	14
Other Adults	0	11	6
School Teachers	0	6	11

The results indicated that a high number (at least ten or 66%) of subjects believe parents, grandparents, siblings, other relatives (not parents, grandparents, or siblings), children's friends, Sunday school teachers, pastors, youth directors, church members, and school teachers should have an important (important or very important) role in shaping their children's faith. Finally, the results showed that a high number of subjects believed neighbors and other adults (not in the listing) should have a limited role.

In a similar vein the subjects were queried in regard to the role

⁴ Includes the PIQ item #22 categories marked Important or Very Important

institutions, organizations, and popular media should have in shaping their children's faith. As Table 3 shows nearly all subjects believed that church and church related children/youth groups should have an important (very important or important) role in shaping their children's faith. On the other end of the spectrum most respondents believed government should have either no or a limited role. School was the one category that saw the greatest diversity of attitude by the subjects. The media categories of television and popular music should have either no or a limited role according to the respondents.

Table 3 Subjects Response -The Role Institutions or Organizations Should Have in Shaping Their Children's Faith⁵				
Category	Degree of Role (Number of Respondents Indicating)			
	<i>None</i>	<i>Limited</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Important</i>
School	1	7	2	7
Government	10	5	0	2
Church	0	0	0	17
Children/Youth Groups	0	1	0	16
Television	6	7	2	2
Popular music	5	8	2	2

The subjects were asked to select and rank from a list of persons, institutions, and organizations those they felt were the most important to their children's spiritual growth. Table 4 displays the results of this question.

⁵ Includes the PIQ item #23 categories marked Important or Very Important

Table 4 Subjects' Ranking of the Five Most Important Categories of Persons, Institutions, or Organizations to Their Children's Spiritual Growth		
<i>Rank/Category</i>	<i>No. of Subjects Indicating</i>	<i>Avg. Composite Rank</i>
1. Parents	17	1.0
2. Pastor	12	3.7
3. Sunday School Teachers	10	3.5
4. Child's Friends	10	3.8
5. Grandparents	9	3.0
6. Church	9	3.8
7. Youth Director	7	3.3
8. Siblings	4	3.0
9. Other Relatives	3	3.7
10. Church members	2	4.5
11. School	2	5.0
Clubs or Groups	0	N/A
Government	0	N/A
Neighbors	0	N/A
Other Adults	0	N/A
Other media	0	N/A
Popular music	0	N/A
Television	0	N/A
Other	0	N/A

The subjects had nineteen possible categories from which to choose their top five selections. Eleven out of the nineteen possible categories were selected and ranked by at least one person. Eight categories received no selections or rankings. The subjects universally selected parents as the most important influence of their children's spiritual growth. It is worth noting that "person" categories, i.e. parents, grandparents, pastor, etc., were among the

highest ranked. The only institution or organization category ranking in the top five was the church, tying for fifth with grandparents.

The fourth question about the subjects' attitudes concerned their role in their child's spiritual growth. They were asked to select one item from a list of six possible options that best matched their understanding of that role. As Table 5 shows, five out of the six options were selected by at least one person with the most frequently selected response being "Intentionally and regularly modeling my faith before my children".

Table 5 Subjects' Understanding of Their Role in Helping Their Children's Spiritual Growth	
<i>Item/Description</i>	<i>No. of Subjects</i>
a. Seeing that my child regularly attends Sunday school, church or other church related programs	4
b. Unsure of my role in helping my child's spiritual growth	0
c. Intentionally and regularly modeling my faith before my children	9
d. Intentionally encouraging my child's spiritual growth	1
e. Allowing my child's spiritual growth to happen naturally	1
f. My spouse should have the primary responsibility in our child's spiritual growth	1
No response	1

Six out of the sixteen respondents appear to have indicated a more passive role in helping their children's faith by selecting items a, e, or f. The other ten respondents selected the more active roles items c. and d. implied.

Taken together the four PIQ questions that related to the subjects' attitudes shows the majority of respondents believed parents should have an active role and should be the most important influence in their children's

spiritual growth.

Research Question #2: What discipling practices, if any, did the subjects employ with their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?

The intent of the second research question was to measure the parent discipling practices the subjects used in discipling their resident children prior to their exposure to the seminar. Again, the PIQ was the basis for gathering the information to answer this question.

The subjects were asked to identify the particular discipling practices they had taught or encouraged their resident children to practice from a list of fourteen discipling practices and to indicate the frequency for the identified items. The results from the PIQ revealed that prayer was the discipling practice most cited by the respondents. It was also the practice that the most respondents indicated was practiced daily. Conversely the practice of fasting was the least cited practice. Table 6 summarizes the results of the discipling practices the subjects taught or encouraged their children to use.

Table 6 Discipling Practices Taught or Encouraged by Subjects with Their Resident Children					
Discipling Practice	Number Indicating by Frequency				
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
Bible reading	3	4	3	0	7
Christian service	4	3	4	1	5
Devotional reading	9	2	2	1	3
Family devotions	6	1	2	3	5
Faith sharing/witnessing	8	2	1	0	6
Fasting	16	0	0	0	1
Journaling	13	0	0	1	3
Meditation/Reflection	10	2	1	2	2
Prayer	0	1	3	9	4
Sunday school attendance	1	2	12	0	2
Tithing/Giving	2	1	11	0	3
Worship attendance	0	2	14	0	1
Christian social outreach	5	2	2	0	7
Christian missions	11	2	0	0	4

The findings indicated that a majority of respondents taught or encouraged their children to exercise the discipling practices of prayer, Sunday school attendance, worship attendance, and tithing/giving. Similarly a majority never taught or encouraged their children to practice fasting, journaling, or meditation/reflection. The response to this question also indicates many of the subjects were unsure either of their discipling practices or what these practices were in areas like Bible reading, Christian service, family devotions, faith sharing/witnessing, and Christian social outreach. It is also important to note the

relatively high number of subjects who indicated “Not Sure” for several of the categories including Bible reading, Christian service, Devotional reading, Family devotions, Faith sharing/witnessing, Journaling, Prayer, Tithing/Giving, Christian social outreach, and Christian missions. This may indicate the subjects general lack of familiarity with specific discipling practices or uncertainty of the frequency with which they taught or encouraged these practices with their resident children.

While all but one of the fourteen practices was cited by at least one person, it was clear that overall, prayer, Sunday school attendance, tithing/giving, and worship attendance were the discipling practices most cited and frequently taught or encouraged by the subjects to their children.

Research Question #3: What Substantive Changes Occurred in the Subjects' Concepts and Practices as a Result of Their Exposure to a Parent Discipling Curriculum?

The intent of this research question was to determine the changes that occurred in the subjects' parent discipling concepts and practices as a result of their participation in the seminar. The findings for this research question are based on the data collected from the three questionnaires that were completed at three different intervals by the subjects. As previously noted, the questionnaires contained essentially the same items. The first of the questionnaires was titled the Participants Initial Questionnaire (PIQ). The second was titled Participants Questionnaire (PQ). The third questionnaire was

titled Participants Final Questionnaire (FQ). Substantive changes in the subjects' concepts and practices were determined by comparing the results of the questionnaires for the items common to each that related the subjects' concepts and practices. Substantive changes were understood to involve a change of more than 10 per cent as it related to the subjects' composite knowledge,⁶ or a change of at least three persons in frequency in a particular attitudes or practices category in a questionnaire as measured by a previous or subsequent questionnaire comparing the same item.⁷

The PIQ provided a baseline measurement for the subjects while the two subsequent questionnaires, the PQ and FQ, revealed the substantive changes that occurred from the PIQ or from each other at the respective intervals. The PQ and FQ were also compared to determine what substantive changes had occurred from the PIQ or each other that could be understood as short-term (PQ results) and longer-term (FQ results). Three operational questions arose from the third research question. The first was, "What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' concepts as a result of their exposure to the curriculum?". The process for determining whether substantive changes occurred was to determine the substantive changes that took place in the subjects' knowledge and attitudes from the responses of the first of the PIQ with the responses from the PQ and FQ.

⁶PIQ questions #13-21 and PQ/FQ questions #1-9.

⁷PIQ questions # 23, 25, 26, 27, 29 and PQ/FQ questions 11, 13, 14, 15, and 17.

Table 7 presents the results of the changes that occurred in the subjects' knowledge of some of the basic parent discipling principles presented during the course of the seminar. The results were obtained by comparing the composite scores of the subjects' knowledge and attitudes (PIQ items 13-21, PQ and FQ items 1-9) from the three questionnaires.

Table 7 Summary of Composite Discipling Knowledge & Attitude Scores	
<i>Questionnaire</i>	<i>Composite Score (Pct.)</i>
PIQ	80%
PQ	90%
FQ	88%

Based on the understanding that a substantive change for this item entailed at least a ten per cent change in composite knowledge scores, the above table supports the finding that a substantive change resulted in the subjects' knowledge from the time before their exposure to the seminar as measured by the PIQ and the time immediately after the completion of the seminar as measured by the PQ. The table also presents the finding that when the PIQ is compared to the FQ The change was not deemed to have been substantive, although there was a positive change in the subjects' knowledge. Further, the table shows a slight regression in the subjects' knowledge from the time they completed the PQ to the time, approximately six weeks later, the FQ was completed .

In terms of substantive changes in the subjects' attitudes, a comparison

was made between the items on the questionnaires related to this area.

Substantive change for the items having to do with subject's discipling attitudes was based on a criteria that substantive change occurred when there was a change of at least three subjects from one category to another or a change in the ranking.⁸ In comparing the similar question in all three questionnaires that related to the role subjects believed various categories of persons should have in shaping their children's faith, only two categories, saw a substantive change. The categories were other relatives, changing substantively from the PIQ to PQ measurements, and school teachers, changing substantively from PIQ to FQ measurements. As Table 8 attests the changes for both categories were from a more important (important or very important) role to a more limited one.

⁸ PIQ question # 26 and PQ/FQ question #13 are the same item in all three questionnaires.

Table 8 Subjects Response -The Role Other Persons Should Have in Shaping Their Children's Faith : A Comparison of PIQ, PQ, and FQ Results ⁹									
Category	Degree of Role (Number of Respondents Indicating)								
	<i>None</i>			<i>Limited</i>			<i>Important</i>		
	<i>PIQ</i>	<i>PQ</i>	<i>FQ</i>	<i>PIQ</i>	<i>PQ</i>	<i>FQ</i>	<i>PIQ</i>	<i>PQ</i>	<i>FQ</i>
Grandparents	0	0	0	0	1	0	17	16	17
Siblings	2	2	2	1	0	0	15	15	14
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	17
Other Relatives*	0	0	0	4	3	6	13	14	11
Child's Friends	0	0	1	7	7	5	10	10	11
Neighbors	0	2	2	14	12	14	3	3	1
S S. Teachers	0	0	0	1	0	0	16	16	17
Pastor	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	17
Youth Director	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	17
Church Members	0	0	1	3	2	3	14	15	13
Other Adults**	0	0	1	11	12	9	6	5	7
School Teachers*	0	0	0	6	7	9	11	10	7

* Categories indicating substantive change **One "Not Sure" response

The findings from this table also indicates that most subjects believe grandparents, siblings, parents, other relatives, child's friends, Sunday school teachers, the pastor, youth director, and church members should have an important role in shaping their children's faith. Most of these categories remained fairly constant when measured by the three questionnaires. The categories of parents, pastor, and youth director were indicated by all

⁹ Includes the PIQ and PQ/FQ categories marked Important or Very Important for this item.

respondents on all three questionnaires as having an important role in shaping their children's faith.

In the related question of how much of a role did subjects believe institutions or organizations should have in shaping their children's faith, a comparison of questionnaire results revealed that four out of six categories saw a substantive change.¹⁰ The summary for this question is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Subjects Response -The Role Institutions or Organization Should Have in Shaping Their Children's Faith : A Comparison of PIQ, PQ, and FQ Results¹¹												
Category	Degree of Role (Number of Respondents Indicating)											
	<i>None</i>			<i>Limited</i>			<i>Not Sure</i>			<i>Important</i>		
	P I Q	P Q	F Q	P I Q	P Q	F Q	P I Q	P Q	F Q	P I Q	P Q	F Q
*School	1	3	2	7	6	10	2	0	0	7	8	5
*Gov't	10	7	6	5	7	7	0	0	1	2	3	3
Church	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	17
Children/ Youth Groups	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	16
*Television†	6	0	2	7	5	10	2	1	1	2	4	4
*Popular music	5	6	3	8	5	8	2	4	1	2	1	5

* Indicates substantive change †Only ten responses were recorded for the PQ for this category.

As a whole more of the subjects moved towards believing school should have a limited role rather than an important role in shaping their children's faith, especially when comparing the PQ for this category with the same one for the FQ.

¹⁰ PIQ question 25, PQ and FQ question 13.

¹¹ Includes the PIQ and PQ/FQ categories marked Important or Very Important for this item.

Another category seeing a substantive change was in the category of government. Surprisingly, a substantive change occurred from the PIQ to the FQ when a majority (ten) of respondents indicated that government should have no role in shaping their children's faith to the point that a majority indicated government should have at least a limited role.

A substantive number of subjects (four) moved from indicating that television should have no role in shaping their children's faith to the attitude that television should have at least a limited role. In fact, the FQ shows that a majority of the respondents (ten) selected this category.

Finally, the category popular music saw two related substantive changes. The first was a substantive change from the PQ to the FQ in the number of respondents (three) who indicated on the PQ that popular music should have no role in shaping their children's faith to a position that it should have at least a limited role. Secondly, a substantively larger number of subjects (four) indicated that popular music should have an important role in shaping their children's faith than when this category was measured in the PQ.

Another question related to attitude asked the subjects to select and rank the five items, out of a possible list of eighteen, they felt to be most important to their children's spiritual growth. Table 10 shows the results of this question from the three completed questionnaires.

Table 10 Comparison of Results of Subjects' Ranking of the Five Most Important Categories of Persons, Institutions, or Organizations to Their Children's Spiritual Growth								
PIQ			PQ			FQ		
Rank Category	No.	Avg.	Rank Category	No.	Avg	Rank Category	No.	Avg
1. Parents	17	1.0	1. Parents	17	1.0	1. Parents	17	1.0
2. Pastor 3.7	12	3.7	2. S.S. Teachers	12	3.8	2. Pastor	13	3.0
3. S. S. Teachers	10	3.5	3. Grandparent	11	2.6	3. Grandparents	12	3.0
4. Child's Friends	10	3.8	4. Pastor	11	3.8	4. Church	12	3.4
5. Grandparents	9	3.0	5. Church	10	3.2	5. S.S. Teachers	11	3.9
5. Church	9	3.8						

The findings for this item show all subjects consistently ranked parents as most important to their children's spiritual growth on all three questionnaires. Though this category did not witness substantive change, the more important finding is the unchanging attitude of the subjects belief that parents are the most important factor in their children's spiritual growth out of the list of items they were asked to select and rank. The table also reveals the category "Child's Friends", while ranking in the top five in the PIQ, did not make the top five in the results of the two subsequent questionnaires. The other ranked categories remained constant throughout, with the only changes being what rank they were assigned by the subjects based on the number who selected the category. The ranking of the category "grandparents" saw a slightly higher response from the previous questionnaire to the next questionnaire as did the category "church", which was the only institution to be ranked in the top five in any of the three

questionnaires. The category “Sunday school teachers” ranked third in the PIQ, rose to second in the PQ, but fell to fifth in the FQ. Finally the category “Pastor”, ranked second in the PIQ, fell to fourth in the PQ, but regained its second ranking in the FQ.

The final attitude related question had to do with the changes in the subjects’ understanding of their role in helping their children grow spiritually. Overall there was substantive change in only one of the six possible roles the subjects could select as the one that best matched their response to the question. Table 11 demonstrates this finding.

Table 11 Summary of Subjects' Understanding of Their Role in Helping Their Children's Spiritual Growth			
<i>Item/Description</i>	<i>Questionnaire.</i>		
	<i>No. of Subjects</i>		
	<i>PIQ</i>	<i>PQ</i>	<i>FQ</i>
a. Seeing that my child regularly attends Sunday school, church or other church related programs	4	3	2
b. Unsure of my role in helping my child's spiritual growth	0	0	0
c. Intentionally and regularly modeling my faith before my children	9	10	9
d. Intentionally encouraging my child's spiritual growth	1	3	5
e. Allowing my child's spiritual growth to happen naturally	1	0	0
f. My spouse should have the primary responsibility in our child's spiritual growth	1	1	1
No response	1	0	0

If items a., b., e., and f. are understood as more passive parent discipling

roles, and items c. and d. more active roles, it is important to note that a substantive number of subjects moved towards a more active understanding of their role in their children's spiritual growth.

I turn now to reviewing the finding for the second operational question: "What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' discipling practices as a result of their exposure to the curriculum?" Table 12 summarizes the results of the three questionnaires. A substantive change in a practice was understood by the researcher to occur when a change of at least three respondents occurred from the classification "never practicing" to the "practicing" classification. To account for those subjects who did not respond or indicated not sure on the questionnaire, the change had to appear numerically in both the never practicing and practicing classifications for the same questionnaire. Using this criteria, there were only two practices that saw substantive change, Faith sharing/witnessing and Christian missions. Faith sharing/witnessing saw a substantive positive change from the subjects' completion of the PIQ to the completion of the FQ approximately six weeks after the seminar had concluded. This positive change resulted in seeing a majority of the subjects teaching or encouraging this practice with their resident children by the time that the FQ was completed. Christian missions changed substantively from the PIQ to the PQ. Although the change was positive, seeing a substantive number of subjects moving from never practicing to practicing at least monthly, the subjects reverted to approximately the same point when the results of the PIQ are compared to the

FQ. The twelve other practices listed on the table were not deemed to have substantively changed in any interval subjects completed their respective questionnaires.

Table 12 A Summary of Discipling Practices Taught or Encouraged by Subjects with Their Resident Children						
Discipling Practice	Number Indicating by Category					
	Never Practice			Practice at Least Monthly		
	<i>Questionnaire/ No. responding</i>			<i>Questionnaire/ No. responding</i>		
	PIQ	PQ	FQ	PIQ	PQ	FQ
Bible reading	3	4	3	7	9	8
Christian service	4	5	4	8	10	9
Devotional reading	9	6	4	5	7	7
Family devotions	6	6	5	6	7	10
Faith sharing/witnessing*	8	7	4	3	6	9
Fasting	16	15	16	0	0	0
Journaling	13	14	14	1	1	1
Meditation/Reflection	10	3	7	5	3	4
Prayer	0	0	0	13	16	12
Sunday school attendance	1	1	0	14	16	16
Tithing/Giving	2	1	1	14	13	12
Worship attendance	0	0	0	16	16	17
Christian social outreach	5	6	6	4	7	4
Christian missions*	11	7	10	3	6	3

* Indicate practices showing substantive change

The third operational question was: "As a result of their exposure to the curriculum, what substantive changes which occurred in the subjects' concepts and practices were short-term as opposed to longer term?" Short term change was understood to be a substantive change that occurred in the same category

from one questionnaire interval to the next.¹² Longer term change was understood as a substantive change that occurred from the first questionnaire interval to the final interval.¹³ With these understandings the study provided these findings based on the information in Tables 8 through 12.

The discipling concepts of the subjects exhibited the following short term changes. Table 7 showed a short-term substantive increase in the subjects' knowledge from the PIQ to the PQ. However when the criteria for substantive change used earlier for this area is applied, the increase in the subjects' knowledge from the PIQ to the FQ was not considered substantive.

Table 8 confirms that only two categories related to the question of how much of a role should different types of persons have in shaping the faith of the subjects' children had any substantive change. A longer term change occurred in ascribing a more limited role to school teachers in the FQ than had been true in the PIQ. A short term change from a substantive to more limited role was noted for the category "other relatives" between the PQ and the FQ.

Both short term and long term changes were seen in the role subjects felt various institutions or organizations should have in shaping their children's faith. Two categories in this item recorded both substantive short term and long term changes. Table 9 shows long term substantive changes for the categories government and television on the part of some of the subject group ascribing

¹² PIQ to PQ or PQ to FQ.

¹³ PIQ to FQ.

these categories no role in the PIQ to a limited role in the FQ. The school category saw a substantive change from more subjects ascribing less of a role for schools from the PQ to the FQ and a related longer term change in this same vein from the PIQ to the FQ. Likewise the popular music category showed a long term substantive change from less of the subject group not believing that popular music should have any role in shaping their children's faith to more of the subject group indicating at least some role for this category. Short term substantive change for this category occurred in the indicated degree of roles from the PIQ to the PQ and from the PQ to the FQ.

In the item on the questionnaires that asked the subjects to select and rank the five most important categories of persons, institutions, and organizations to their children's spiritual growth, Table 10 revealed only one notable change. The change being the absence of the child's friends category from also being ranked in the top five for the following two questionnaire intervals. The other categories remained in the top five for all three intervals. The one substantive finding in relation to the understanding subject's had of a parent's role in helping their children's spiritual growth was the increase in the number of subjects indicating an active role over a more passive role from the PIQ to the FQ.

One short term and one long term change were noted for two of the

categories of discipling practices the subjects taught or encouraged their children to practice. As Table 12 shows, there was a short term substantive change from never practicing to practicing at least monthly in the Christian missions category from the PIQ to the PQ. However, this change did not last for the longer term, PIQ to FQ. The one longer term substantive change noted was in the faith sharing/witnessing category from more subjects moving from never teaching or encouraging their children in this practice to more of the subject group at least teaching or encouraging this practice at least monthly.

The Findings of the Interviews

As previously mentioned the interviews provided information that has a bearing on research questions three and four. Again research question three states: "What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' concepts and practices as a result of their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?" Research question four was: "What aspects of the curriculum contributed to changes in subjects' concepts and practices?" Rather than ordering the findings by the respective research questions, as was the case in the Findings of the Questionnaires section of this chapter, I will, instead, present brief vignettes of the interviews I conducted with each of the seventeen subjects. I believe this method of presentation provides a more appropriate and integrated way to present the relevant data. For each of the following vignettes, I will present a brief background of the particular subject, an edited but accurate summary of the interview questions relevant to research questions three and four, my own

observations as the researcher for this study, seminar presenter, and the subjects' pastor. The vignettes will be presented in approximately the order the subjects were interviewed. Before presenting the vignettes, a brief explanation of the interview format should be mentioned. All seventeen subjects were interviewed individually in my office at Christ UMC. Each subject was asked the same set of questions. Of the twelve interview questions the first eight were designed to provide a simple means to evaluate whether the subject had a reasonable grasp of the major discipling topics covered during the course of the seminar. The last four questions were aimed at determining the subject's personal reporting of what changes resulted from participating in the seminar and what aspects of the seminar, or curriculum, had contributed to those changes. A copy of the interview questions can be found in the appendix.

Jim

Jim is a registered nurse and is the recently divorced father of two sons, one in elementary school and the other in middle school. Within the past year he has become increasingly active at church, especially the church's ministry, after a lengthy period of being inactive. He was in attendance at each of the seminar's seven sessions. He demonstrated a fair understanding of the discipling topics covered during the course of the seminar.

When asked how the seminar had changed his parent discipling concepts

or practices, he responded that he “spent more time” with his boys. He also stated that there were some ideas he had learned from the seminar and “wanted to do” but had not. He did not articulate what these were.

He cited the “love concept” as being the aspect of the curriculum that contributed to the changes he experienced as a participant in the seminar.¹⁴ He found the seminar to be helpful, saying that it served to refresh concepts that he already accepted.

Theresa

Theresa is the divorced mother of two school age sons. She is employed as a laborer in a local factory. She has been fairly active in her faith, attending worship regularly and participating as a member of the church’s bell choir. She attended all the seminar’s sessions. During the interview she exhibited a reasonably good knowledge of the topics covered in the course of the seminar.

One of the changes that resulted from Theresa’s participation in the seminar was that she was reading the Bible more regularly, especially with her youngest son. When asked the question of what aspect of the seminar produced this change her reply was, “everything.” She noted that the seminar “woke me up” and helped her better realize her role as a discipler of her children. In describing her current role as a discipler of her children she stated, that shaping the faith of her children needs to “come from me.” She related that the seminar had been helpful to her and that she had received worthwhile

¹⁴ Most likely a reference to some of the material related to parent-child bonding.

information related to discipling her children.

Terry

Terry, the married father of three resident children,¹⁵ owns and works at a hardware store. His store is located in a community located nearly seventy-five miles from Newcomerstown. Terry often stays at the store during the week and is home for part of the weekend. He regularly attends Sunday school and worship and has held some key church leadership roles in the past. He was present for all seven sessions of the seminar. He had a good understanding of the seminar's discipling topics.

Terry pointed out that the change the seminar produced for him was that it "made me aware of what we failed at" with his older children and motivated him to make "more of an attempt" or "second opportunity" to intentionally disciple his children, especially his youngest child. He noted that the aspects of the seminar (curriculum) that contributed to these changes were the seminar's topics ("Content was good."), and being able to participate in the seminar. Terry said the seminar had been helpful to him in providing him the resolve to "get it done."

Connie

Connie is married to Terry. Her four children range in age from four to nineteen. She is an elementary school teacher in the Newcomerstown school system. She seldom misses attending her Sunday school class or worship and is a long time member of the bell choir. The interview revealed Connie had a

¹⁵ Terry and his wife Connie have a fourth child, a son living on a college campus.

good grasp of the seminar's discipling topics.

When queried about what changes the seminar had produced in her discipling concepts or practices, Connie mentioned that it "renewed" in her the importance and practice of the spiritual disciplines for herself and her children. She went on to say that she wanted to "try harder" in her role as a discipler of her children and that her commitment to this was "strong." She indicated the seminar had helped her and "renewed my commitment to disciple my children on a daily basis."

Phil

Phil is the married father of two daughters. He makes his living as a sales representative for Kraft Foods. Although his work requires a lot of travel, he is usually able to be home evenings with his family. He has a high level of involvement in his church. He faithfully attends his Sunday school class and worship service. He has held or currently holds key leadership positions in the church. He also is active in Promise Keepers. He demonstrated an excellent grasp of the seminar's topics despite being absent for the sixth session.

The change the seminar produced for Phil was reminding him to be "intentional" and "consistent." The use and teaching of the spiritual disciplines was one example he noted for becoming more intentional and consistent. The aspects of the seminar that contributed to these changes for him were the discussion times with the other seminar participants and the session that highlighted the importance of teachable/faith moments. He said his wife and he

were the primary transmitters of faith for their children. He went to note that he considered this role to be a calling, a responsibility, and a trust from God. He found the seminar helped him realize the importance of “being an example” and deliberately and actively modeling the faith for his family.

Beth

Beth is married to Phil. She works as a member of the office staff at Baker’s Management, which is a company that owns and operates four area grocery stores. Her two daughters are in the ninth and third grades at school.

She is one of the most active members of Christ UMC. A faithful Sunday school and worship attender, she is long time member of the church choir and serves as church treasurer. She was present for six out of the seven sessions of the seminar and showed an adequate understanding of the seminar’s topics.

The seminar changed her concepts and practices in that it “brings to life how important what you at home with your kids is (sic.)”, and noted the importance of doing prayer, devotions, and Bible reading with her husband and children. The aspect of the seminar she mentioned as having contributed to these changes was the session that highlighted the important twin elements of the faith caught and faith taught. She said that she was strongly committed to her role as a discipler of her children. The seminar helped her by creating a greater awareness of the discipling topics presented in the course of the seminar.

Ron

The married father of a daughter and son, Ron works as an industrial arts teacher for a neighboring school district. He is active in the life of the church, faithfully attending Sunday school and worship. He has served several terms as a church trustee. The earlier interview questions indicated he had a fair grasp of the topics presented in the course of the seminar. He was present for every session.

His participation in the seminar made him “more aware” of how impressionable children are. He noted that the small group discussion was the seminar component that contributed to his increased awareness. He described his current parent discipling role as being a model for his children. Ron said the seminar helped him by reinforcing “what we should have been doing all along.”

Jennifer

Like her husband, Ron, Jennifer is a school teacher. She teaches a fourth grade class in the same school district as her husband. She faithfully attends Sunday school and worship, and has been active in a number of church leadership positions and groups. She demonstrated a fair understanding of the seminar’s topics and attended all its sessions.

Jennifer said the seminar helped by making her “more aware of my kids” and discipling them was a matter not of “if the time” but rather of “make the time.”

She mentioned that the presenter was an aspect of the seminar that helped make her more aware of her role in discipling her children. She also mentioned the mutual support of the other subjects also being a contributing factor. She

described she and her husband's role by stating, "We are the main source of teaching our kids" about Jesus. She found the seminar helped her by showing her different ways to teach faith to her children.

Joyce

Joyce is married and the mother of six children, two of whom still live at home. For the past seven years she has been employed as the secretary for the church. She is active in the life of the church serving for many years as a Sunday school teacher for the two and three year old Sunday school class, serving as chairperson of the Outreach committee, and faithfully attending worship. Joyce's husband is also active in the church but did not participate in the seminar.¹⁶ During the interview she manifested a good understanding of the seminar's discipling topics. She missed two sessions during the course of the seminar.

Joyce mentioned the seminar "let me know that is important to be a discipler" of her resident children. The small group discussion and topics were the seminar components that contributed to this change. She felt she needed to be committed in her discipling role, but explained that a busy lifestyle often got in the way of that commitment. The seminar was helpful to her and described the experience as an "awakening."

¹⁶ He serves as a member of my CRG.

Kelly

Married and the mother of a seven year old son and ten year old daughter, Kelly is a math intervention teacher for the local school system. Active in the life of her church, she faithfully attends Sunday school and worship and presently serves as an officer of the church's Board of Trustees. She demonstrated an excellent grasp of the seminar's topics in the course of the interview. She was present for all its sessions.

She noted that the seminar had not really changed her concepts about discipling her children but that the seminar had re-emphasized for her the importance of that role. She also said that her participation in the seminar had helped her become more "regular and disciplined" in her role. As to the contributing aspects of the seminar, Kelly noted the mutual sharing that took place as part of the small group discussion times, the content of the presentations, and the gaining of some new knowledge. She described her role and commitment to being a discipler of her children as "my most important job." She described the seminar as being "very helpful" saying it was "good to know other people are [also] committed" to the task of helping their children "become believers."

Tom

Tom is married to Kelly. He is a licensed funeral director and owns and operates the Addy Funeral Home. He is very involved in the life of the community. He is a Rotarian and serves as a member of the Park Board. He is

also active in the church, regularly attending Sunday school and worship, and has served on a number of church committees. During the interview he evidenced a fair grasp of the topics presented during the course of the seminar. Despite being in a profession where he is constantly “on call”, he missed only one session.

By being a seminar participant, Tom noted that the seminar “made me stop and think” and that he now was “taking more of a leadership role” in discipling his children. As to the aspects that contributed to this change, he credited the seminar experience as a whole. He described his current role as “taking advantage of those opportunities to disciple” his children. He stated the seminar was helpful. He concluded by saying it is “important for Kelly and I to lead our kids in the right direction.”

Nancy

Nancy is married and the mother of one child, a twelve year old son. She is a homemaker and is a self-employed crafter. She is active in the life of the church, regularly attending Sunday school and worship as well as just having finished a stint as Sunday school treasurer. She had a good understanding of the discipling topics covered in the seminar. She attended six out of the seminar’s seven sessions.

She credited the seminar with making her “more aware” and to “think more” about her role as a discipler of her child. She especially found the small group discussion component to be an aspect that reinforced her awareness of

her discipling role. She mentioned that she and her son always prayed together each evening before bedtime and that he would be the first one to remind her she happened to forget. She said the seminar experience was helpful to her and stated further that she always wanted to do 'a better job" in discipling her child.

Jeff

Jeff is married to Nancy. He is a senior sales representative for a company that sells and distributes of gloves for a variety of settings and applications. His employment requires him to travel out of state frequently. He is active in the church, regularly attending Sunday school and worship. He serves on the church's Finance committee and the Administrative Council.

Jeff stated the seminar made him more aware of his parent discipling role. He recalled the overall seminar experience as increasing his awareness. He specifically mentioned that the action assignments and the session dealing with the topic of teachable moments left an impression on him. He felt that the seminar was helpful to him and it "continues to bring forth the ideas that need to be done."

Jan

The mother of two children, a daughter in seventh grade and a son who is a high school sophomore, Jan is married. Although once employed outside the home, her health requires her to be at home. She regularly attends worship. She experienced some difficulty remembering some of the discipling topics covered during the seminar. She attended every session of the seminar.

Jan indicated that the seminar made her more aware of her parent discipling role. She noted the other subjects as contributing to this change. The seminar was "very helpful" to her because it "made me think what we're doing to the kids."

Al

Al is married to Jan and works as an industrial engineer for a company in a nearby town. He regularly attends church and occasionally attends Sunday school. He also is an active member of the local Masonic lodge. He attended every session of the seminar.

The seminar produced a major attitude shift for Al. He said that before the seminar he believed that the pastor and the church were primarily responsible for his children's spiritual nurture and growth. As a result of participating in the seminar he has concluded that parents are primarily responsible. Asked what aspect of the seminar contributed to this change, he noted it was the entire experience rather than a particular component. He now sees his role as being an example for his children. He said the seminar was helpful to him because it "made me see the light" of his role as a primary discipler of his children.

Joe

Joe is married and the father of two elementary age children, a daughter and a son. He works as the night editor for the "Times-Reporter", the daily newspaper that serves a four county area. Until the past year he had been

sporadic in attending Sunday school or worship. He now attends on a fairly regular basis. He showed a fair understanding of the seminar's topics in the course of the interview. He attended six out of the seven sessions.

The seminar had an impact on Joe. He mentioned that the thrust and purpose of the seminar had "knocked him up side the head" in making him more aware of his role as a primary influencer of his children's faith. He specifically mentioned that the seminar had changed his understanding about having an active role in helping his children grow in their faith. As he put it, before the seminar he felt that his children's spiritual direction and growth "depended on other people" and after his participation in the seminar his attitude was that "it has to be you." In noting the aspect of the seminar that contributed to this change, he said "the whole program was good" and talked specifically about the impact some of the action assignments had on him. He concluded by stating that the seminar had been helpful to him. He said, the seminar "opened my eyes to a lot of the things that should be obvious."

Cindy

Cindy is married to Joe. She teaches at Hopewell school, which is a school for developmentally handicapped persons. She has been a regular Sunday school attender and within the past year attended worship on a regular basis. She showed a fair understanding of the seminar's topics.

She indicated the seminar had a positive effect. She told how the seminar had helped her husband, Joe, become more committed to the family's

spiritual welfare, something she had desired to see for some time. She felt the small group discussion and the material presented in the course of the seminar had helped her. In regard to her children she said, "I want them to be followers." In answering the question if the seminar had been helpful to her, Cindy responded it had helped "to become stronger in my faith" and "get together as a family in coming to church."

Conclusion

The questionnaires and interviews generated a lot of information relevant to measuring the impact of a curriculum seeking to equip parents to be disciplers of their resident children.

Although the questionnaires revealed few substantive changes in the subjects' concepts and practices, the data gleaned from them support the findings that some discipling knowledge had been gained. In addition some slight changes were seen in some of the subjects' attitudes. This was true in some subjects' attitudes about the role school teachers, government, and popular music should have in shaping their children's faith. Another change that occurred concerned some of the subjects' understanding of their role in discipling their children. The questionnaires revealed a longer term change on a substantive part of the subject group from a passive to an active understanding of their role. One area that was notable because there was absolutely no change, was the unanimous consensus of the subject group in the same item for all three questionnaires indicating their belief that parents should be the most

influence shaping their children's spiritual growth. In terms of the discipling practices of the subject group only one substantive longer term change was noted. The practice of faith sharing/witnessing had a substantively higher number of subjects who stated they never engaged in this practice to indicating that they engaged in this practice at least monthly.

The interviews proved to be an especially good source for information about the subjects. Unlike the anonymous questionnaire, whose information provided a composite picture of the subject groups discipling concepts and practices, the interviews provided the subjects to personally express the kind of impact the seminar had for them. The interview experience brought a human element to collecting data that the impersonal nature of questionnaires could not in providing an important source of data to measure the impact of the curriculum for the parents who participated in the seminar. The interviews indicated the most frequent change, or impact, the subjects experienced from the seminar was becoming more aware of the importance of their role of being disciplers of their children. Other subjects remarked the seminar had impacted them by deepening their resolve or commitment to discipling their children. There was no consensus as to what aspect of the curriculum, or seminar, contributed to the changes experienced by the subjects. They cited different aspects such as the action assignment, the material, a particular session, the presenter, with small group discussion being the aspect most frequently mentioned.

Each of the seventeen persons who participated in the seminar stated that the experience had been helpful to them in one way or another and in one degree or another. Many of the men who participated were impacted the most by the seminar.

Although I had anticipated a greater degree of change in the subjects' actual discipling concepts and practices, I think the data presented in this chapter support the finding the curriculum did positively impact all of the subjects. The degree of the impact varied from subject to subject, but the evidence points to the seminar leaving its imprint on those who took part in the experience.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusions

The seminar experience did impact those who participated in the curriculum, or seminar. Although there was little substantive change for the subject group in terms of its collective discipling concepts and practices, most of those who participated in the experience came away with a greater understanding and deeper commitment to their role as the primary disciplers and shapers of their children's faith. The subjects universally testified the seminar was a positive experience and helped them, to one degree or another, in their role as disciplers of their children.

The enduring value and impact of the seminar may not have been in the actual topics presented, action assignments completed or small group discussions held. The enduring value of the seminar is that it acted as a catalyst in helping galvanize the commitment of the subjects in their role as disciplers of their children. In that sense the seminar's most important purpose was achieved.

While the objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of a curriculum designed and implemented to equip parents in the role of discipling their resident children, there were some other elements that deserve some mention. First, the seminar's format worked reasonably well. Since the sessions took place at approximately the same time and in the same place as Sunday school, the participation and attendance rates for the seminar were excellent.

One possible format that may work as well if not better would be to present the seminar in a small group format rather than the traditional class format used for this study. Second, the subject group was constituted entirely of persons who indicated they had been members of Christ UMC for seven years or more. They also tended to be among some of the most active persons involved in the life of the church. Taken into account, these two factors lead to the reasonable conclusion that the subject group was relatively “mature” in terms of their previous concepts and practices. It appears these may have led to the questionnaires revealing relatively few substantive change in the subject group’s discipling concepts or practices. Finally, the interviews point to the conclusion fathers (men), especially those who were average in terms of their previous involvement in the life of the church, seem to have been more impacted than mothers (women).

Evaluation and Interpretation of the Data

The first research question was, “What concepts did the subjects of this study have of a parent’s role in discipling their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?” The study showed the subjects had a reasonably good knowledge or understanding of some key parent discipling topics. It also showed the majority of subjects believed family members (parents, grandparents, siblings, other relatives), church leaders and members (pastor, youth director, Sunday school teachers, church members), and the child’s friends should have an important role in shaping their children’s

faith. Institutions and organizations the majority of subjects believed should have an important role in shaping their children's faith included the church and children's or youth groups. The subjects ranked the five most important factors in their children's spiritual growth to be:

1. Parents
2. Pastor
3. Sunday school teachers
4. Child's friends
5. Grandparents (tie)
5. Church (tie)

The majority of subjects characterized their role as "Intentionally and regularly modeling my faith before my children."

These results are consistent with a subject group whose profile is that all of its members have been connected to the church for at least seven years and included some of the congregation's most active members.

The discipling practices of the subjects was the focus of the second research question: "What discipling practices, if any, did the subjects employ with their resident children prior to their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?" The conclusion was the majority of subjects taught or encouraged their children to practice prayer, Sunday school attendance, tithing/giving, and worship attendance. The most surprising omission from this list was Bible reading. As was the case with the subjects' concepts, the results of this question

are consistent with a subject group having the characteristics described earlier.

Taken together the first two research questions provided a profile of the subjects' concepts and practices before their participation in the seminar. The profile showed the subjects to be somewhat familiar with discipling concepts and practices important to sharing the faith with their resident children.

The third research question was, "What substantive changes occurred in the subjects' concepts and practices as a result of their exposure to a parent discipling curriculum?" Overall the seminar produced few substantive changes in the subjects' concepts and practices as measured by the three questionnaires completed at three different intervals. A few substantive longer term attitude changes occurred from the initial questionnaire to the final questionnaire. The most important of these being that substantively more subjects indicated a more active parent discipling role than they had before their exposure to the curriculum. The only substantive longer term change in practice was in the category of faith sharing/witnessing, with several subjects moving from never teaching or encouraging this practice to their children to teaching or encouraging this practice on at least a monthly basis.

While the questionnaires revealed little substantive change in the subjects' concepts and practices, the interviews provided a different, but not contradictory, conclusion. The interviews point to a different kind of change in the concepts and practices than could be measured by the anonymous, impersonal questionnaires. The interviews revealed most of the subjects stating

the seminar had increased their awareness and importance of their role as the primary disciplers of their children. Many of the fathers came to see and acknowledge a more active role in helping their children grow spiritually.

While the seminar may not have produced a number of substantive, measurable changes in the subjects' discipling concepts and practices, it seemingly impacted the subjects' awareness and commitment to their role as disciplers of their children. Ideally the deeper levels of awareness and commitment the subjects indicated the seminar had catalyzed for them will result in their intentional and actual efforts to disciple their children.

The final research question was: "What aspects of the curriculum contributed to changes in subjects' concepts and practices?" My conclusion is that there was no single aspect of the curriculum that produced changes in the subjects' concepts and practices. Small group discussion was the most frequently mentioned aspect cited by the subjects. Other aspects that were mentioned included the presentations, the content, the presenter, the action assignments, and the experience as a whole.

It became obvious to me that each subjects' personality and interests usually determined what particular aspect of the curriculum was more or less helpful to and for them. This writer came to conclude that an important element of designing and executing any curriculum is to see that there are aspects or elements which can engage a variety of learners. An effective curriculum appears to be one that is learner centered, not presenter centered.

Implications of the Findings for Revising the Existing Literature

The principal finding of this study was that a parent discipling curriculum can have an impact in making parents more aware and committed to discipling their resident children. The Train Up a Child . . . :Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Resident Children curriculum was designed and implemented to equip parents for this important role. The topics presented during the seven week seminar were meant to engage the participants hearts and minds in the issues related to discipling their children. The small group discussion times, action assignments, and occasional class exercises attempted to help reinforce what had been learned. Certainly the curriculum that was presented to the subjects can be greatly improved. The researcher's Wesleyan heritage provides the basis for acknowledging the need to go on to perfection. The actual experience of presenting the curricula provided what amounted to a "road test" for the project and a few "bugs" were discovered on the journey.

The findings of this study are consistent with the literature authored by Donald Joy in the area of parent-child bonding. Each of the study's subjects indicated they felt parents were the most important factor in their children's spiritual development and growth. It is likely this result was a product of the subjects' recognition that the strength of the parent-child bond is a crucial factor in a child's developing faith. They also came to realize and appreciate the concept of being an essential element in what Joy terms the "first curriculum."

They grasped the importance and opportunity they have in imaging for their children God's nature and identity through their distinct, yet complementary roles of being mothers or fathers. They also came to see the correlations between the quality of their bond with their children and the quality of their children's faith bond with God.

The study's findings were also consonant with the work of James Fowler in the area of faith development. The interviews with the subjects showed that most of them had some understanding of the elements of faith development theory. This was especially true in their explanations of the discipling practices they employed with their children. There was a fundamental understanding that these practices needed to be appropriately tailored to their children's age or perceived level of spiritual maturity.

The subjects generally demonstrated a high degree of interest and desire in being intentional in either modeling or encouraging faith to their children. The underlying motives appeared to be driven by a genuine love for their children and their spiritual well-being as well as a parental commitment to nurturing their children's faith. The interviews conducted with the subjects showed the subjects to be more oriented towards a context based approach ("the faith caught") than a content based approach ("the faith taught"). As a group the subjects showed little inclination towards discipling their children through the use of the kind of rigid, hierarchical, and patriarchal approach advocated by Larry Christenson in his book The Christian Family.

The subjects' desire for a shared faith with their children partially confirmed the research of Merton and Irene Strommen. Interviews with the subjects demonstrated that, almost without exception, the subjects wanted their children to share with them a common understanding and practice of faith. However this subject groups desire for a shared faith with their children was not as the Strommen's found with their research, a "muted cry," but one that appeared to be backed by a resolve to both talk about and model faith for their children.

Limitations of the Study

The study's limitations and findings have been mentioned previously. Seventeen subjects do not constitute a large research base. The subject group was homogenous in terms of educational levels (almost all the subjects held at least a bachelor's degree), socio-economics (white, middle-class), length of church membership and level of activity (seven years or more; high), and level of participation in the seminar (high). With this in mind, the conclusions must be qualified by these factors. The findings of this study can be said to only indicate areas that may merit further investigation and study.

Unexpected Conclusions

Although most of the conclusions of this study were expected, three unexpected conclusions emerged. They have already been previously cited but bear mentioning again here.

The first unexpected result was the little substantive change that occurred in the subjects' concepts and practices as measured by the questionnaires. I had anticipated a higher number of substantive changes in these two areas at the time I inaugurated the seminar. Upon reflection, I have concluded the relative lack of substantive change may be based in two primary factors. The first has to do with the relative maturity of the subject group. The great majority of those who participated in the seminar have been active members of Christ UMC for at least seven years. It is plausible to postulate that a group of new or recent church members may have achieved a greater number of substantive changes. The second factor is that the questionnaires were measuring specific changes in the concepts (knowledge and attitudes) and practices of the subjects. The interviews gave the subjects an opportunity to express their personal observation of the changes in their concepts and practice. These observations provided a broader definition of concepts and practices than the questionnaires and led to the reporting of important changes the seminar had helped evoke in the subjects.

The second unexpected result was the relatively high number of subjects who never encourage or teach their children the practice of Bible reading. This result can be seen as a red flag in pointing out the need to motivate and encourage parents to teach and encourage their children to read Scripture. There is an apparent need to help parents understand that Scripture is as necessary for the well-being of the soul as food is to the body. Few parents

would allow their children to go physically hungry. The corresponding spiritual need is to help them see the value of scripture.

The third unexpected result was the number of fathers whose participation in the seminar helped them toward accepting a more active role in their children's spiritual development and growth. One possible explanation may be more fathers than mothers opt for a more passive role in their children's spiritual training. This result may point to the need to develop a discipling curriculum geared specifically for fathers.

Practical Applications and Further Studies

Judged by the impact the seminar had on the subjects, the project mostly achieved its purpose of equipping parents to disciple their children. Without exception the subjects stated the seminar had been helpful to them. Most cited the seminar had produced a greater awareness and deeper commitment to disciple their children. It is the aspiration of this researcher that intent will translate into action with the result that the children of these subjects are helped in becoming or continuing as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe this study suggests a need for additional parent discipling curriculums to be designed, written, and marketed that would seek to effectively equip parents to disciple their children. Although there are a number of books and articles that highlight the importance of parents in the faith development there appears to be relatively few, up to date, parent discipling curriculums available. Within the past year the United Methodist Publishing House has

recognized this need by publishing and marketing Faith Home, a nine week curriculum created by Dan and Joy Solomon and written by Debra Ball Kilbourne and MaryJane Pierce Norton. Due to the great theological, cultural, and denominational diversity that exists in the broad realm of Christianity, several different curricula which would meet the needs of the different and diverse faith communities. Many, if not most, Christian parents of resident children would benefit from having and using this kind of resource. The curriculum developed for this project was but one attempt to help parents in the critical role of discipling their children. Curriculum using other topics and methods may well be more effective in this task.

It is also clear that additional research would help us know more about the process of how faith is best transmitted from parent to child. Several studies have been done, many going back to the late 1950's and early 1960's, but few have focused on what makes for the effective transmission of faith from parent to child, especially from an evangelical standpoint. A team of researchers from Fuller School of Psychology is currently setting out on a four-year study to examine issues of faith development and human development in adolescents and children. The study will use data gleaned from the Search Institute. The institute's database was generated from its surveys of 99,000 American adolescents and children. The Fuller research teams hopes to use the data to better understand the relationships between faith and human development (Thomsen, 5). This research project could provide valuable insights in helping

parents foster their children's spiritual growth.

There is a critical need for basic research to be conducted on the question of whether children intentionally disciplined by their parents results in a greater likelihood that they will carry that faith into their adult years as compared to children whose parents do not intentionally disciple their children. The fruit of this kind of research could provide the basis for equipping parents to becoming more effective in discipling their children.

One of the conclusions I came to in the course of the research and writing of this project is that believing parents are a means of grace to their children. Although many Christian theologians and writers note the essential role and importance parents have in their children's spiritual development, there may be some value in pursuing the theological dimensions of viewing parents as a means of grace, particularly from a Wesleyan perspective.

Finally, if we believe the truth of the Scripture stating, "Behold children are a heritage from the LORD" (Psalm 127:3), then it is incumbent upon believing parents to be good and faithful stewards of the heritage entrusted to them. God helping, it is the sacred privilege and responsibility of parents to train up their children in the way and path of Christian discipleship. It is the sacred privilege and responsibility of the church and its leaders to effectively equip parents for that role.

Almost twenty centuries ago the gospel tells of a group of parents who brought their children to Jesus; now, twenty centuries later, there is a need for

believing parents to do the same. God continues to call parents to the privilege, responsibility, and joy of bringing their children to Jesus Christ.

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APPENDIX

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DATE: 02/07/97
EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (EMIS) PAGE: 1
DISTRICT PROFILE - FY96 (AMENDED)

DISTRICT: 045542 Newcomerstown Ex Vill SD COUNTY: Tuscarawas

Part I. HIGHLIGHTS

	District	State
Annual Average Daily Membership (ADM)	1,345	2,877
Median Income Per Tax Return (1994, from Ohio Dept. of Taxation)	\$18,710	\$23,478
Total Valuation Per Pupil (1994, from Ohio Dept. of Taxation)	\$40,346	\$86,014
Expenditure Per Pupil (Including Adjustments)	\$5,118	\$5,545
12 Pupil/Regular-Classroom-Teacher Ratio	19.8	20.8
Average Class Size (Regular Instruction K-4)	24.4	23.3
Teacher Average Salary	\$32,057	\$38,064
Dropout Rate (Number of dropouts versus fall enrollment)	3.5	5.4
Graduation Rate (Adjusted)	73.6	74.3
Student Attendance Rate	95.3	93.0
Staff Attendance Rate	95.6	95.7
9th Grade Proficiency Test Results (Number of 9th Graders Passing All Required Tests)	75	54

Note: Before comparisons between districts are made, it is important to completely understand the definitions of the statistics in this document, as some are legal requirements. Please refer to the EMIS District Profile Reference Manual for further details.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (EMIS) PAGE: 5
DISTRICT PROFILE - FY96 (AMENDED)

DISTRICT: 045542 Newcomerstown Ex Vill SD COUNTY: Tuscarawas

	District	State
1. Advanced Placement Class Registration (Percent of students, Grades 10-12)	33.6	7.9
2. Postsecondary Enrollment Participation (Percentage of students, Grades 11-12)	1.2	1.5
3. Extracurricular Participation (Grade levels 7-12, percentage of students)		
Academic/Subject-related	16.9	17.7
Academic/Intracurricular (Voc. Org.)	0.0	5.3
Athletics & Related Programs	38.5	31.3

Part III. STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Racial Ethnic Data (percentage)

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian, Pacific Islander	American Indian, Alaskan Native	Multi- Racial
District	96.9	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.6
State	81.9	15.2	1.4	1.0	0.1	0.4

2. Percentage of Students Disadvantaged	District	State
a. Academic	4.7	2.2
b. Aid to Dependent Children (Source: Dept. of Health & Human Services)	16.4	16.6

3. Disability Condition (percentage)	District	State
Multihandicapped	0.9	0.4
Deaf-Blind	0.0	0.0
Hearing Impaired	0.3	0.1
Visually Impaired	0.0	0.0
Speech Impaired	2.8	3.0
Orthopedically Impaired	0.0	0.1
Other Health Impaired	0.0	0.2
Severe Behavior	1.2	0.6
Developmentally Disabled	2.5	2.7
Specific Learning Disabled	5.0	4.4
Nonspecific Disabilities	1.1	0.6
Autism	0.0	0.0
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.0	0.0
Total	13.8	12.1

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DATE: 02/07/97
EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (EMIS) PAGE: 7
DISTRICT PROFILE - FY96 (AMENDED)

DISTRICT: 045542 Newcomerstown Ex Vill SD COUNTY: Tuscarawas

Part V. RESOURCES

✓ 1. Property Valuation
(Average valuation for state)

Total Valuation per Pupil (Thousands)

District: ***** \$40,346
State: ***** \$86,014

2. Valuation by type
(Percentage)

Residential

District: ***** 38.2
State: ***** 53.0

Agricultural

District: ***** 14.0
State: ** 4.0

Other Real

District: ***** 14.3
State: ***** 20.0

Tangible
(Includes Public Utility)
District: ***** 33.5
State: ***** 23.0



Christ United Methodist Church

648 Oak Street
NEWCOMERSTOWN, OHIO 43832

REV. GARY M. GEORGE, Pastor

Church Office (614) 498-8134
Parsonage (614) 498-8227

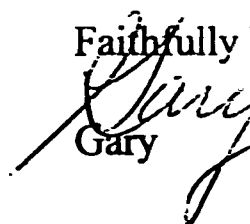
June 21, 1997

Dear _____,

One of God's greatest gifts to us is our children. I believe they are precious not only in God's sight, but in our eyes as well. As parents, God entrusts their upbringing to our care. Raising children requires an enormous investment of time, money, commitment, sacrifice, and most of all, love. Virtually every parent that I know wants the best for their child and will make every effort to see that their child is well fed, clothed, protected, and educated. Parents have a special joy in seeing their children grow and develop physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. The Bible directs parents to take an active role in their child's growth and development. In Proverbs 22:6 parents are urged to *"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."* This verse calls parents to take an active role in every aspect of their child's upbringing. I believe that parents have no greater privilege or responsibility than to help their children towards becoming faithful, committed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to invite you to participate in a seminar designed to help parents in this God given privilege, responsibility, and role. The seminar is entitled *"Train Up a Child . . . : Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children"* and will begin September 7th. The seminar will consist of seven sessions with each session lasting approximately seventy-five minutes and will take place on Sunday mornings from 8:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Childcare will be available. There is no cost to participate in this seminar, but participants will be asked to be committed to attend each of the seven sessions and to complete questionnaires related to the seminar's purpose and content. Those who choose to participate will also be included in a study I am doing as part of my Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree program. I hope that you will prayerfully consider and accept my invitation to participate in this seminar. I feel that the seminar will be provocative and helpful to parents who desire to see their children become faithful, committed disciples of Jesus Christ. I have enclosed a sheet that provides a brief outline of the seminar as well as a seminar registration form. If you choose to accept the invitation, please return the form to me or to the church office. I want to thank you for your time and consideration.

Faithfully Yours,


Gary

Train Up a Child in the Way . . .: Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children

*September 21st through November 2nd
Sunday mornings 8:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room
Childcare Available*

Session 1 Introduction

Session 2 Biblical and Theological Foundations for Discipling Our Kids

Session 3 Parent-Child Bonding: Understanding the Context for Discipling Our Kids.

Session 4 Sensing the Cry for Faith: Opening Our Eyes, Ears, and Hearts to Our Kids.

Session 5 Our Kid's Developing Faith: Recognizing Their Faith Potential.

Session 6 Helping Our Kids Towards Faith: Practical Suggestions for Nurturing Their Faith

Session 7 A Balanced Approach to Discipling Our Kids: Context and Content

SEMINAR REGISTRATION FORM

____ Yes, I would like to participate in the *Train Up a Child in the Way . . .: Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children* seminar led by Gary George. I agree to attend each session and to complete the questionnaires that are part of the seminar experience. I also give my permission to be included in the subject group of a study Gary is completing for his Doctor of Ministry program.

____ I decline the invitation to participate.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Signature _____

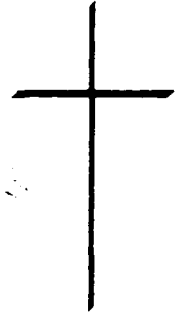
Please return to Gary or to the church office by September 14th. Thanks!

Christ United Methodist Church

648 Oak Street
Newcomerstown, Ohio 43832

Phone (614) 498-8134

FAX (614) 498-4382



MEMO

DATE: August 30, 1997
TO: Registered Seminar Participants
FROM: Gary
RE: Change of Beginning Date for *"Train Up a Child in the Way: Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children" Seminar*

Thanks for registering for the upcoming *"Train Up a Child in the Way: Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children"* seminar. I'm looking forward to having you as part of the group. The beginning date of the seminar has been moved back from Sept. 7th to Sept. 21st. I hope that this will not cause any undue inconvenience for you. The revised schedule for the seminar will now be as follows:

Sept. 21	Session 1	Introduction
Sept. 28	Session 2	Biblical and Theological Foundations for Discipling Our Kids
Oct. 5	Session 3	Parent-Child Bonding: Understanding the Context for Discipling Our Kids
Oct. 12	Session 4	Sensing the Cry for Faith: Opening our Ears, Eyes, and Hearts to Our Kids
Oct. 19	Session 5	Our Kid's Developing Faith: Recognizing Their Faith Potential
Oct. 26	Session 6	Helping Our Kids Towards Faith: Practical Suggestions for Nurturing Their Faith
Nov. 2	Session 7	A Balanced Approach to Discipling Our Kids: Context and Content

All the sessions will begin at 8:45 a.m. and end at 10:00 a.m. We will meet in the **New Life Sunday School Classroom (Classroom #4)**. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

“Train up a Child . . . : Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children” Seminar

PARTICIPANTS INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions

This questionnaire is designed to measure the concepts and practices of parents in relation to the their child’s spiritual growth. Place your participant code number in the lower right hand corner of this cover page. The use of the code number will make your responses to this questionnaire anonymous while allowing your responses to be compared to future questionnaires you will be asked to complete. Please be as honest as you can in marking your responses. Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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- DO NOT use ink or ballpoint pens
- Make heavy black marks to fill in the square
- Erase cleanly any response you wish to change
- Do not separate the pages of this questionnaire
- Give your completed questionnaire to the test administrator

EXAMPLES

Proper Mark

Improper Marks



Code Number _____

1. Are you a

☐ Father ☐ Mother ☐ Stepfather ☐ Stepmother ☐ None of these?

2. How many children live with you at home?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ Five ☐ Six or more

Of your children who live with you in your home:

3. How many are birth to four years old?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ All

4. How many are five to nine years old?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ All

5. How many are ten to thirteen years old?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ All

6. How many are fourteen to eighteen years old?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ All

7. How many are nineteen years old and older?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ All

8. What is your marital status?

☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐ Never Married ☐ Remarried ☐ Widow/er

9. If married, is your spouse a participant in the “*Train Up a Child . . .*” seminar?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Indicate if you are a:

☐ Member of Christ UMC ☐ Attend Christ UMC ☐ Neither

11. How long have you been a member or attended Christ UMC (see above)?

☐ Less than one year ☐ One to three years ☐ Four to six years ☐ Seven years or more

12. What was the main reason you decided to participate in this seminar?

☐ Invitation by pastor ☐ Encouraged by spouse ☐ Interested in topic ☐ Other_____

After each item please fill in the box ☐ next to the response you believe best completes the item.

13. The Bible:

- ☐ Contains no passages regarding parents' responsibility for their children's spiritual well-being.
- ☐ Is neutral when it comes to the subject of children's spiritual lives.
- ☐ Provides directives and guidance to parents regarding their responsibility to model and teach their children about knowing and trusting God.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

14. The concept that each person is made in God's image is:

- ☐ Was developed by B. F. Skinner.
- ☐ An essential truth of the Christian faith.
- ☐ An important theory.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

15. Parent-child bonding is:

- ☐ A parent providing bail for their child when the child is arrested and jailed.
- ☐ A common-sense way of stating that parents should stick by their children no matter what.
- ☐ A God created dynamic that produces a positive, healthy relationship between parent and child.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

16. The concept of bonding maintains that a mother and father provide their child:

- ☐ A clean, safe environment in which the child can be raised.
- ☐ Opposing and conflicting models for emotional development.
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17. Adolescent youth who are active, practicing Christians:

- ☐ Have unusually high levels of anxiety.
- ☐ Find joy in identifying with a personal God and being involved with a faith community.
- ☐ Are more likely to enjoy and appreciate music.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question..

18. A major study revealed that most parents:

- ☐ Felt that they (parents) should not influence their children's faith.
- ☐ Indicated that a shared faith with their children is important but seldom discuss matters of faith with their children.
- ☐ Actively encouraged, modeled, and discussed matters of faith with their children.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

19. Most four year old children:

- ☐ Are incapable of expressing faith.
- ☐ Are flexible and fluid in their understanding of God.
- ☐ Have specific, concrete understandings of basic faith concepts (i.e. forgiveness, love, Jesus).
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

20. As a child grows, his or her faith:

- ☐ Remains essentially the same.
- ☐ Develops in sequential stages.
- ☐ Tends to focus more on self than on others.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

21. The spiritual disciplines:

- ☐ Include the practices of prayer, Bible study, worship, contemplation, fasting, and tithing.
- ☐ Are a manual of instructions for Christian ethics.
- ☐ Were a series of writings authored by John Wesley.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

22. How much of a role do you believe the following persons do or will have in shaping your child's faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Important	Very Important	Not Sure
Grandparents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Siblings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday School Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pastor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. How much of a role do you believe the following persons should have in shaping your child's faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Important	Very Important	Not Sure
Grandparents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Siblings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday School Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pastor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. How much of a role do you believe the following institutions or organizations do or will have in shaping your child's faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Not Sure	Important	Very Important
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children/Youth Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Popular music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other media _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. How much of a role do you believe the following institutions or organizations should have in shaping your child’s faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Not Sure	Important	Very Important
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children/Youth Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Popular music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other media _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

26. Review the following list of persons, institutions, and organizations. Rank the items you feel are the five most important to your child’s spiritual growth. Mark your most important selections as “1”, your next most important selection as “2”, and so on until you have ranked five items with a number between one and five.

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| ___ Child’s Friends | ___ Other Adults | ___ Siblings |
| ___ Church | ___ Other Relatives | ___ Sunday School Teachers |
| ___ Church members | ___ Other media | ___ Television |
| ___ Clubs or Groups | ___ Parents | ___ Youth Director |
| ___ Government | ___ Pastor | ___ Other _____ |
| ___ Grandparents | ___ Popular music | |
| ___ Neighbors | ___ School | |

27. Which of the following descriptions best matches your present understanding of your role in helping your child grow spiritually? Please mark only one response.

- ☐ Seeing that my child regularly attends Sunday school, church, or other church related programs.
- ☐ Unsure of my role in helping my child's spiritual growth.
- ☐ Intentionally and regularly modeling my faith before my children.
- ☐ Intentionally encouraging my child's spiritual growth.
- ☐ Allowing my child's spiritual growth to happen naturally.
- ☐ My spouse should have the primary responsibility in our child's spiritual growth.

28. During the past year which of the following practices have you engaged in as a result of your faith experience? Fill in the square that best indicates their frequency.

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Not Sure
Bible reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement in a ministry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devotional reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family devotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith sharing/witnessing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fasting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journaling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meditation/reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday school attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tithing/giving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worship attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian social outreach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian missions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29. During the past year which of the following have you taught or encouraged your child to practice? Fill in the square that best describes how often you taught or encouraged your child in a particular practice or activity.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
Bible reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devotional reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family devotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith sharing/witnessing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fasting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journaling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meditation/reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. Fill in the square next to the statement that best describes your present experience of the Christian faith.

- ☐ I am growing in my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I occasionally struggle or experience inconsistency in my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I often have struggles or doubts about my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I am unsure of my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I am exploring the possibility of becoming a Christian.

31. Fill in the squares next to the items that you believe have been important factors in your faith experience.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday school teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian television |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth group | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian camp/retreat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday morning worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Revival services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sibling | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group | <input type="checkbox"/> Books/periodicals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandfather | <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandmother | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

“Train up a Child . . . : Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children” Seminar

PARTICIPANTS QUESTIONNAIRE

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EXAMPLES

Proper Mark



Improper Marks



Code Number _____

After each item please fill in the box ☐ next to the response you believe best completes the item.

1. The Bible:

- ☐ Contains no passages regarding parents' responsibility for their children's spiritual well-being.
- ☐ Is neutral when it comes to the subject of children's spiritual lives.
- ☐ Provides directives and guidance to parents regarding their responsibility to model and teach their children about knowing and trusting God.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

2. The concept that each person is made in God's image is:

- ☐ Was developed by B. F. Skinner.
- ☐ An essential truth of the Christian faith.
- ☐ An important theory.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

3. Parent-child bonding is:

- ☐ A parent providing bail for their child when the child is arrested and jailed.
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- ☐ Opposing and conflicting models for emotional development.
- ☐ A life-long, double image imprint that effects the child's relationship to and understanding of God.
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5. Adolescent youth who are active, practicing Christians:

- ☐ Have unusually high levels of anxiety.
- ☐ Find joy in identifying with a personal God and being involved with a faith community.
- ☐ Are more likely to enjoy and appreciate music.
- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question..

6. A major study revealed that most parents:

- ☐ Felt that they (parents) should not influence their children's faith.
- ☐ Indicated that a shared faith with their children is important but seldom discuss matters of faith with their children.
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7. Most four year old children:

- ☐ Are incapable of expressing faith.
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- ☐ I do not know the answer to this question.

8. As a child grows, his or her faith:

- ☐ Remains essentially the same.
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9. The spiritual disciplines:

- ☐ Include the practices of prayer, Bible study, worship, contemplation, fasting, and tithing.
- ☐ Are a manual of instructions for Christian ethics.
- ☐ Were a series of writings authored by John Wesley.
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10. How much of a role do you believe the following persons do or will have in shaping your child's faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Important	Very Important	Not Sure
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Siblings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday School Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pastor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. How much of a role do you believe the following persons should have in shaping your child's faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Important	Very Important	Not Sure
Grandparents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Siblings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday School Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pastor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. How much of a role do you believe the following institutions or organizations do or will have in shaping your child's faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Not Sure	Important	Very Important
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children/Youth Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Popular music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other media _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. How much of a role do you believe the following institutions or organizations should have in shaping your child's faith? Mark only one response for each item.

	None	Limited	Not Sure	Important	Very Important
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children/Youth Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Popular music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other media _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Review the following list of persons, institutions, and organizations. Rank the items you feel are the five most important to your child's spiritual growth. Mark your most important selections as "1", your next most important selection as "2", and so on until you have ranked five items with a number between one and five.

___ Child's Friends	___ Other Adults	___ Siblings
___ Church	___ Other Relatives	___ Sunday School Teachers
___ Church members	___ Other media	___ Television
___ Clubs or Groups	___ Parents	___ Youth Director
___ Government	___ Pastor	___ Other _____
___ Grandparents	___ Popular music	
___ Neighbors	___ School	

15. Which of the following descriptions best matches your present understanding of your role in helping your child grow spiritually? Please mark only one response.

- ☐ Seeing that my child regularly attends Sunday school, church, or other church related programs.
- ☐ Unsure of my role in helping my child's spiritual growth.
- ☐ Intentionally and regularly modeling my faith before my children.
- ☐ Intentionally encouraging my child's spiritual growth.
- ☐ Allowing my child's spiritual growth to happen naturally.
- ☐ My spouse should have the primary responsibility in our child's spiritual growth.

16. During the past year which of the following practices have you engaged in as a result of your faith experience? Fill in the square that best indicates their frequency.

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Not Sure
Bible reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement in a ministry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devotional reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family devotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith sharing/witnessing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fasting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journaling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meditation/reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday school attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tithing/giving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worship attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian social outreach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian missions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. During the past year which of the following have you taught or encouraged your child to practice? Fill in the square that best describes how often you taught or encouraged your child in a particular practice or activity.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
Bible reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devotional reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family devotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith sharing/witnessing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fasting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journaling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meditation/reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday school attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tithing/giving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worship attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian social outreach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian missions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Fill in the square next to the statement that best describes your present experience of the Christian faith.

- ☐ I am growing in my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I occasionally struggle or experience inconsistency in my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I often have struggles or doubts about my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I am unsure of my faith and relationship to Jesus Christ.
- ☐ I am exploring the possibility of becoming a Christian.

19. Fill in the squares next to the items that you believe have been important factors in your faith experience.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday school teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian television |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth group | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian camp/retreat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday morning worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Revival services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sibling | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group | <input type="checkbox"/> Books/periodicals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandfather | <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandmother | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

“Train up a Child . . . : Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their Children” Seminar

PARTICIPANTS FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions

This questionnaire is designed to measure the concepts and practices of parents in relation to the their child’s spiritual growth. Place your participant code number in the lower right hand corner of this cover page. The use of the code number will make your responses to this questionnaire anonymous while allowing your responses to be compared to future questionnaires you will be asked to complete. Please be as honest as you can in marking your responses. Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black lead pencil only (No. 2)
- DO NOT use ink or ballpoint pens
- Make heavy black marks to fill in the square
- Erase cleanly any response you wish to change
- Do not separate the pages of this questionnaire
- Give your completed questionnaire to the test administrator

EXAMPLES

Proper Mark	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improper Marks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Code Number _____

NOTE

The Final Participants Questionnaire is exactly the same as the Participants Questionnaire with the exception of the title page (previous page). Since both questionnaires are the same, only the title page from the Final Participants Questionnaire is included in this appendix.

Curriculum Guide

Train Up a Child . . . :

*Equipping Parents to Effectively Disciple Their
Children*



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Newcomerstown, Ohio*

Fall 1997

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Gary Mark George

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“Train up a child in the way he
should go, And when he is old
he will not depart from it.”

-Proverbs 22:6 NKJV

“Behold, children are a heritage
from the LORD . . .”

-Psalm 127:3 NKJV

TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY . . . : EQUIPPING PARENTS TO EFFECTIVELY DISCIPLE THEIR CHILDREN

First Session

Date: Sept. 21, 1997

Location: S.S. Classroom #4 Christ UMC Newcomerstown, OH

Title: Introduction

Overview: Participants will be welcomed to the seminar, invited to complete the Participant's Initial Questionnaire, and presented with an overview of the seven week seminar.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Experience a welcome to the seminar
2. Complete the Participant's Initial Questionnaire
3. Gain an understanding of the seminar's purpose
- 4 . Have a basic knowledge of and introduction to the seminar's main themes.

Session One Flow Plan

Gathering (15 minutes)

1. Breakfast items will be available to the participants as they gather.
2. Participants will be welcomed to the seminar by the presenter.
3. Brief announcements will be made regarding:
 - A. Childcare availability
 - B. Restrooms
 - C. Completion of the registration and waiver form if not yet completed.
 - D. Seminar schedule (NOTE: Change of time for Oct. 5- Session 3)
 1. Handout revised schedule
 - E. Seminar attendance and participation expectations
4. Opening Prayer (Receive prayer requests)

Participant's Initial Questionnaire (35 minutes)

1. Each seminar participant will receive a *Participant's Initial Questionnaire*
2. Participants will receive instructions about completing the questionnaire
 - A. Before completing the questionnaire, participants will be guided through the components of the questionnaire. Participants will be invited to ask questions that will help clarify any item or section a participant feels is unclear to him or her.
 - B. The participants will be reminded that the questionnaire code numbering system will make their responses anonymous to the presenter. They will be carefully guided through the process of using their code number. *(Note: Participants will be given a random code number during the **Gathering** phase of the session. A member of my CRG who is not participating in the seminar will distribute the code numbers to the participants and serve as a proctor.)*
 - C. Participants will complete the *Participant's Initial Questionnaire*. It is estimated that participants will need approximately thirty minutes to complete the questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, participants will return their questionnaire to the proctor.

Presentation (20 minutes)

1. Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it"* and Psalm 127:3a *"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD" (NKJV)* , will be displayed by an overhead projector. Participants will be invited to

interact with this verse in terms of its current or potential application to the lives of their children.

2. The participants will hear a brief account of the factors that led to the offering of this seminar as well as a statement of the seminar's main purpose.

A. Seminar purpose statement- *"This seminar is being offered to help you (parents participating in this seminar) to better understand, accept, and grow in the role, responsibility, and privilege of being the primary disciplers of your resident children. It is hoped that this seminar experience will equip you to be effective disciplers of your resident children."*

3. Participants will be led through a brief overview of the remaining sessions.

Session 2 Biblical and Theological Foundations for Discipling Our Kids- The Bible provides the basis, direction, and strategies for helping our children grow spiritually. Theology also provides parents with some good "handles" on the nature and importance of their call and responsibility as God's primary agents for sharing faith with their children.

Session 3 Parent-Child Bonding: Understanding the Context for Discipling Our Kids -God has designed the parent-child bond to be an optimal context for faith sharing by parents to and with their children. Using Don Joy's concepts and understanding of the parent-child bond, participants will explore, examine, and discuss the practical dimension the

parent-child bond has for their efforts to share their faith with their children.

Session 4 *Sensing the Cry for Faith: Opening our Ears, Eyes, and Hearts to Our Kids-* The ability to sense our children's openness and cries for faith provides parents with some golden opportunities to effectively share with their children how faith can provide a priceless resource for handling the challenges and opportunities life can pose. Using some of the findings of Merton Strommen's research of adolescent youth , participants will be exposed to information that can assist them in their ability to sense and act on those often spontaneous and serendipitous "faith moments" with their children.

Session 5 *Our Kid's Developing Faith: Recognizing Their Faith Potential* - Participants will explore some key tenets of faith development theory (James Fowler) and how an understanding of a child's faith stage can help parents recognize the possibilities and limitations of their child's faith growth.

Session 6 *Helping Our Kids Toward Faith: Practical Suggestions for Nurturing Their Faith* -The concept and use of the spiritual disciplines will be presented. We will identify, illustrate, and discuss how the committed, and consistent use of spiritual disciplines can nurture a child's faith. In addition some readily available resources related to teaching or using spiritual disciplines(print and electronic

media) will be identified.

Session 7 *A Balanced Approach to Discipling Our Kids:*

Content and Context -Participants will consider and discuss the twin dimensions of discipling (The Faith Caught and The Faith Taught) as it relates to the approach and strategies they employ in seeking to disciple their children. The participants will be reminded that they will be invited to complete the second of three questionnaires.

4. Participants will be presented with some potential benefits of their participation in the seminar.

- A. Receive information, inspiration, and practical strategies in helping children discover and experience a personal faith and relationship with God.
- B. Explore the reality and dimensions of your (participants)faith and relationship to God.
- C. Fellowship with other participants.

Discussion (3 minutes)

Due to the nature of the first session's objectives discussion groups will not be formed. Instead participants will be invited to ask any questions they wish pertaining to the seminar.

Wrap-Up (2 minutes)

- 1. In preparation for next week's session participants will be asked to read and reflect on Genesis 1:27-2:2 and Psalm 8. Each participant will be asked to bring pictures of their children with them to next week's session.
- 2. Closing prayer

Resources & Materials

1. Participant's Initial Questionnaire
2. The Holy Bible (NKJV)
3. Transparencies (1 & 2) /Overhead Projector

Second Session

Date: Sept. 28, 1997

Location: S.S. Classroom #4 Christ UMC Newcomerstown, OH

Title: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Discipling Our Kids

Overview:: In this session participants will encounter and discuss biblical passages and theological concepts related to their parental role, influence, and practices in discipling their children.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Engage in a class exercise designed to illustrate the concept of *Imago Dei* (Humans made in God's image)
2. Learn and be able to identify theological concepts and biblical passages related to the roles, influences, and practices of parents in discipling their children.
3. Explore and discuss with each other how an understanding of theological concepts and Biblical passages can provide parents with insights and strategies for discipling their children.

Session Two Flow Plan

Gathering (10 minutes)

1. Fellowship & refreshments
2. Welcome & announcements
3. Opening prayer
4. "Chip off the old block" exercise- Participants will exchange pictures of their children with other parents (see **Session One Wrap-Up #1**) and respond to the following questions:
 - a. Can you tell a resemblance between the child and his or her parent(s)?

b. What are some of the distinguishing characteristics that link the child to her or his parent(s) physically? . . . emotionally? . . . spiritually?

Presentation (40 minutes)

1. Participants will examine the biblical and theological concept of being created in God's image (*Imago Dei*) and how that concept relates to their parental relationship with their children. They will consider the implications of the following passages as it relates to this concept:

- a. Genesis 1:27- 2:3 - Special emphasis will be given to the image of God seen in both human male and female. (Note: Cite passages using both male and female imagery in describing God's relationship to humans to demonstrate the image of God male and female).
- b. Psalm 8- Emphasis will be given to the unique "glory and honor" God has bestowed upon humankind. Each human is infinitely valued in God's sight.

2. Using both Old and New Testament passages as a basis, participants will explore the concept that Scripture charges parents with the privilege and responsibility of revealing God to and sharing a life faith with their children. Scripture also provides some practical directions and wisdom in assisting them in this faith venture.

- a. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (The Sh'ma) -Classic O.T. text regarding the importance of transmitting faith within the community, family, and intergenerationally (See also Deuteronomy 4:5-10).
- b. Deuteronomy 11:18-23 - "Laying up" the word of God in the hearts of our children and its subsequent blessing of life.
- c. Proverbs 22:6 -Seminal passage emphasizes the active role Scripture assigns parents in caring for their spiritual development

and well-being.

d. Ephesians 6:4 -Verse highlights three key words (maturity, discipline, and instruction) that are important to understanding the nature and task of discipling children.

e. Matthew 19:13-15 -Passage shows the love and high regard Jesus had for children and their faith. Attention will be called to the point that parents, particularly mothers, who brought their children to Jesus. *(Note: The Gospels also contain several accounts of parents bringing their children to Jesus for physical healing- i.e. Jairus' daughter-thus showing that parents in Jesus' day had a degree of hope and trust in His ability to heal their children).*

f. Matthew 18:1-5- Passages illustrates the love Jesus had for children. Special emphasis will be given to the point that *"Jesus called a little child to him "*.

3. The participants will consider the Wesleyan concept of grace, especially prevenient grace, as it relates to parents' modeling and sharing their faith with their children.

a. The participants will be presented with a brief overview of the tripartite Wesleyan conception of grace (prevenient, saving, and sanctifying).

b. The participants will be presented with a scenario that illustrates the three aspects of grace in a person's life.

c. Participants will consider how God may be employing them as a means of grace in the life of their child(ren).

d. Participants will be encouraged to realize that the ultimate work of salvation rests with God. God can and does empower parents to assist the work and objective of seeing children come to faith in Christ.

Discussion (20 minutes)

1. Participants will be given the opportunity to interact with each other as well as the concepts they encountered in this session by dividing into discussion and sharing groups. Each group will consist of three or four members (four being the optimal number). Each participant will receive a handout containing a set of questions to share and discuss. The groups will have approximately twenty minutes to share as a group.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

1. Participants will be invited to ask questions or to make comments related to this session.
2. In preparation for next week's session participants will be asked to remember back to the birth of their child(ren) and to write down four or five phrases that expressed the thoughts, feelings, sights, sounds, smells, or other sensations they had during that event. Each person is to bring their written remembrances with them to the next session.
3. Closing prayer

Resources & Materials

1. Christian Theology, Vol. II
2. Clarke's Commentary
3. God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality (Chap. 1 pp. 12-23)
4. The Expositor's Bible Commentary
5. The Holy Bible (NKJV)
6. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
7. Theological Workbook of the Old Testament
8. Wesley's Notes on the Bible
9. Overhead projector/ transparencies /handouts

Session 2 Questions for Group Sharing & Discussion

1. As we look at our child(ren) what resemblance do they bear to their mother? . . . to their father? . . . to God? If it is true that parents bear God's image, what image of God do we portray to our children? Do you think it is important that a child sees the image of God in both parents? Why or why not?
2. What do you think the Psalmist meant by the phrase "*Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have ordained praise*" (Psalm 8:2)? In what sense do newborns and infants reveal the glory and honor God bestows upon humanity?
3. **Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & 11:18-23 again and respond to these questions.** What is the great commandment found in Deuteronomy 6:5? What options do we have regarding this commandment? What are the consequences of the available options? Why does God command to "diligently" teach this commandment to their children? What are some ways we can "lay up" God's word in the hearts of our children? What potential blessing can come to those who give themselves and their children by doing God's word?
4. Why does Jesus have such a high regard and love for children? What example does Jesus offer for how we view children, both our own and others? What does it mean when Jesus "called" little children to Him? How can we bring our children to Jesus?
5. What are some practical ways that parents can responsibly nourish, train, and instruct their children in the Christian faith?
6. What value does the Bible have for parents who are seeking to share their faith with their children? Share some examples of how the Bible does or can help you share the faith with your child(ren).
7. As a parent, what signs of grace do you see in the life of your child(ren)? . . . in your own life?

Third Session

Date: Oct. 5, 1997

Location: Fellowship Hall Christ UMC Newcomerstown, OH

Title: Parent-Child Bonding: Understanding the Context for Discipling Our Kids

Overview:: In this session participants will explore and consider the nature of parent-child bonding. Participants will also examine and discuss how parent-child bonding can positively influence their children's faith.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Experience Christian fellowship (see note below).
2. Share with other participants their remembrance of the birth of their child(ren).
3. Learn and identify some key concepts of parent-child bonding, particularly as it relates to discipling their children.
4. Learn some practical ways to use concepts from parent-child bonding in discipling their children as a result of their discussion with each other.

Session Three Flow Plan

NOTE: A light supper and fellowship will precede this session. This session had to be scheduled for 6:00 p.m. rather than the normal 8:45 to 10:00 a.m. time slot due to scheduling considerations.

Gathering (10 minutes)

1. Welcome & announcements
2. Opening prayer
3. Brief recap of the previous session
4. Participants will exchange and share their written remembrances of the

birth of their children with other participants. The purpose of the exercise is to evoke the initial parent-child bonding experience of the participants.

Presentation (40 minutes)

1. Participants will explore and discuss the following parent-child bonding concepts as articulated by Dr. Donald Joy in Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God.

a. Brief explanation and overview of bonding (INFANCY/Birth--ADULTHOOD/Pair--LIFE'S END/In God's Arms)

b. Birth bonding

1) "Magic moments (up to 3 hrs.) heightened awareness and senses of newborns--vision, hearing, touch, mouth

2) Natural gifts --odor, voice, eyes, warmth, touch

3) Effect of birth bonding--positive attachment of child to parent which provides a seed bed for healthy relationships, present and future

4) The principles and resources of birth bonding continue throughout life--not limited to infants, extends from infancy to adulthood.

5) Birth Bonding Illustrated --The Holy Family

c. Family as "first curriculum"

1) Define "first curriculum" --" *That basic curriculum consists of three things: 1. Parents 2. Intimacy 3. Sexuality in the image of God.*" (Risk-Proofing Your Family, 23). "*Basic human intimacies are images of the most profound spiritual reality;*" (Bonding, 177)

2) The Perfect Complement--Moms & Dads

•Mothers as Engrossers --imaging warmth, intimacy, caring, and attachment (Faithfulness)

- Fathers as Encompassers--imaging independence, power, otherness (Freedom)

- Mothers and Fathers provide a balanced, complementary image of God for their children-- child's understanding and relationship to God is correlated to their understanding and relationship to the child's mother and father

- d. God's purpose for bonding--True intimacy in our relationships with our spouses, children, and ultimately with God.

2. Participants will consider the relationships between the parent-child bond and discipling their children

- a. Parent-Child bond as the broad context for discipling children
- b. The correlation of the parent-child bond to discipling children
- c. "Image"-- potentials and problems
- d. Positive strategies

Discussion (20 minutes)

1. Participants will interact with each other and with the concepts they encountered in this session by dividing into discussion and sharing groups. Each group will consist of three or four members (four being the optimal number). Each participant will receive a handout containing a set of questions to share and discuss. The groups will have approximately twenty minutes for this segment of the session.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

- 1. Participants will be invited to ask questions or to make comments related to this session.
- 2. In preparation for next week's session participants will write down two or three "teachable moments" they have experienced with their children.

Participants will bring their “teachable moments” list with them to the next session.

3. Participants will be encouraged to create an “action plan” which seeks to further strengthen the bond between themselves and their children.

4. Closing prayer

Resources & Materials

1. The Holy Bible (NKJV)
2. Overhead projector/ transparencies /handouts
3. Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God*
4. Risk-Proofing Your Family

*Proper credit will be given to the following works Don Joy cites as contributors to his articulation and understanding of birth bonding: Birth and Bonding (Media for Childbirth Education, 1977); M.H. Klaus and J.H. Kennell, Parent-Infant Bonding (St. Louis: C.V. Mosby Co., 1976, 2nd ed.); D. McDonald, “Paternal Behavior at First Contact with the Newborn in a Birth Environment Without Instructions”, Birth Family Journal, Fall 1978.

Session 3 Questions for Group Sharing & Discussion

1. What do you remember most about the birth of each of your children? How did you feel in the first few hours after they were born? Do you continue to have some of those same feelings toward them? If so, explain.
2. Why is birth bonding crucial to a child's understanding and relationship to her or his parents? . . . to others? . . . to God?
3. What are some birth bonding principles that can be continued with the child past infancy into childhood? . . . into adolescence . . . into young adulthood?
4. How is the family the "first curriculum" for the child? What are the essential components of this "first curriculum"? How is the level of intimacy a child experiences with their mother and father related to their ability to relate to God?
5. What image of God do mothers convey to their children in a healthy parent-child bond? What image of God do fathers convey to their children in a healthy parent-child bond?
6. How important is a healthy parent-child bond to the child's spiritual life? How can an understanding of bonding help parents as they disciple their children?
7. Using the parent-child bond as a foundation, what specific strategies can parents use to help their children experience and trust God?
8. What questions and/or issues does the concept of bonding raise for you as a parent? . . . as a Christian?

Fourth Session

Date: Oct. 12, 1997

Location: S.S. Classroom #4 Christ UMC Newcomerstown, OH

Title: Sensing the Cry for Faith: Opening our Ears, Eyes, and Hearts to Our Kids

Overview:: In this session participants will wrestle with the concept of sensing children's openness and cries for faith that provides parents with some golden opportunities to effectively share how faith can provide a priceless resource for handling the challenges and opportunities life can pose with their children. Using findings from Merton Strommen's research with youth, participants will assess information that can assist them in their ability to sense and act on those often spontaneous and serendipitous "faith moments" with their children.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Share with each other two or three "teachable moments" they have experienced with their children.
2. Learn and be able to identify six characteristics that relate to a youth and child's Christian identity and purpose.
3. Learn and interact with the concept of "faith moments" and the concept relates to discipling their children.
4. Discover practical ways to maximize "faith moments" as result of discussion with other participants.

Session Four Flow Plan

Gathering (10 minutes)

1. Fellowship & refreshments
2. Welcome & announcements

3. Opening prayer
4. Brief recap of the previous session
4. Participants will share their “teachable moments” action assignment (see Session 3 Wrap-Up) with two others (not their spouses).

Presentation (40 minutes)

1. Participants will consider Merton Strommen’s concept of the “Cry of the Joyous” (Five Cries of Youth) in relation to sensing and responding to the emergence of faith in the lives of their children.

a. The Cry of the Joyous -*“It is the cry of youth whose joy is in a sense of identity and mission that centers in the person of Jesus Christ.”*

b. Six characteristics— 1. Sense of personal God 2. Active with God’s people 3. Desire to grow 4. Desire to serve 5. Moral responsibility 6. Hopeful outlook (Transperancy)

Note: While Merton Strommen’s research focused on church youth, I believe his concepts of the Cry of the Joyous and the Cry for Faith can be modified to include children as well as youth.

2. Participants will explore and discuss the concept of “faith moments” in the context of positively influencing their children’s faith.

a. Define “faith” moments” as those moments that occur in a child’s life and in the context of his or her relationship to his or her parent(s) that provide a catalytic opportunity for the parent(s) to positively influence their child towards maturity, particularly in the realm of the child’s faith and relationship to the Lord.

b. “Faith moment” as an instrument of God’s grace (prevenient, saving, sanctifying)

c. “Faith moments” as divine moments

1) Kairos and Chronos

d. "Faith moments" illustrated

1) Joseph and Mary's Experience Looking for Jesus (Luke 2:41-52)

2) Ask for the sharing of a teachable moment from the experience of one of the participants willing to share it with the entire group (see **Gathering**).

2. Participants will consider and discuss the concept of sensing those moments when children are open to and crying out for faith.

a. Major life events or occasions as "faith moments"

1) Birth of a child (sibling, relative, friend, etc.)

2) Death of a family member or pet

3) Wedding of a family member friend

4) Major illness

5) Other

b. Occasional or serendipitous occasions

1) Natural wonders (trip to the ocean, zoo, sky, mountains, etc.)

2) Holidays/Events (i.e. Christmas, Easter, etc.)

3) Encounter with new people or situations

4) Other

c. Warp & Woof (The Everyday)

1) Mealtimes

2) Family outings

3) Chores/Tasks

4) Other

d. Opening our ears, eyes, minds, and hearts to our kids cries for faith (Sensing our children's "cries" of faith)

1) The Parable Parallel (Mt. 16:13- *"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear."*)

- 2) Active listening
- 3) Attentive looking
- 4) Tender heart
- 5) Clear mind

e. The willingness to talk about faith with children

1) Strommen quote in Five Cries of Parents “*The cry for a shared faith is only a muted cry. Though religious faith ranks high in importance for parents . . . It is seldom a topic of discussion in the home.*”

Discussion (20 minutes)

1. Participants will interact with each other and with the concepts they encountered in this session by dividing into discussion and sharing groups. Each group will consist of three or four members (four being the optimal number). Each participant will receive a handout containing a set of questions to share and discuss. The groups will have approximately twenty minutes for this segment of the session.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

1. Participants will be invited to ask questions or to make comments related to this session.
2. In preparation for next week's session participants will ask one or more of their children the following question: Describe the place where God lives? Participants will record the response as well as the age of the child(ren) responding. The participants will bring their responses to the next session.
3. Closing prayer

Resources & Materials

1. The Holy Bible (NKJV)
2. Five Cries of Youth
3. Five Cries of Parents
4. Overhead projector/ transparencies /handouts

Session 4 Questions for Group Sharing & Discussion

1. Recall any moment when your child opened a question about God and share it with your discussion group. What do you think comes to mind when your child hears the word GOD or thinks about God?
2. How important do you feel it is to have your child(ren) active in church? . . . with other Christians? Why?
3. What do you believe your role as a parent should be in discussing matters of faith with your child(ren)? When are the best times to talk about matters of faith with your child(ren)? If possible, describe an occasion where you “knew” that God had provided you with a golden opportunity to share the faith with your child(ren)?
4. How is God involved in creating or providing opportunities for parents to share their faith with their child(ren)? What are some of the “signs” that child(ren) may be open to discussions about faith?
5. **Read Luke 2:41-52.** What does this story tell us about twelve year old Jesus’ openness to faith? How did Mary and Joseph react? How does this story apply to you as a parent?
6. Discuss whether you believe “faith moments” occur spontaneously, can be planned, discerned in the midst of everyday living, or by all of these means? What can parents do to maximize the value of “faith moments”?
7. Discuss the impact of the following statement. *“The cry for a shared faith is only a muted cry. Though religious faith ranks high in importance for parents . . . it is seldom a topic of conversation in the home.”* What can parents do to put faith on the “front burner”? What needs to be done to better equip Christian parents to more effectively talk about faith with their children?

Fifth Session

Date: Oct. 19, 1997

Location: S.S. Classroom #4 Christ UMC Newcomerstown, OH

Title: Our Kid's Developing Faith: Recognizing Their Faith Potential

Overview: Participants will confront and interact with basic tenets of faith development theory (James Fowler). Participants will consider and discuss how an understanding of a child's faith stage can help parents recognize the "possibilities" as well as "limitations" marking that particular stage.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Share the results of their query (see Session 4 Wrap-Up) with other participants.
2. Learn and be able to identify the concept of faith development.
3. Be able to identify and describe the first four stages of Fowler's faith development theory.
4. Consider how faith development concepts can provide parents with valuable insights about their children's faith development and appropriate discipling strategies that can be employed depending on a child's stage of faith development.

Session Five Flow Plan

Gathering (10 minutes)

1. Fellowship & refreshments
2. Welcome & announcements
3. Opening prayer
4. Brief recap of the previous session

5. Participants will share the responses their children gave to the question, “Describe the place where God lives?” with two other participants not their spouses. Some participants will share their findings with the entire group.

Presentation (40 minutes)

1. Participants will confront the general concept of development (stage) theory as it relates to various aspects of human growth and development.

a. Brief explanation and history of development (stage) theories

1. Piaget (Cognitive development)
2. Erikson (Psycho-social development)
3. Kohlberg (Moral development)
4. Fowler (Faith development)

b. Potential value of developmental (stage) theories

1. Provide helpful “lenses” in understanding process of human growth and development
2. Provide possible explanations for how humans develop and grow
3. Provide useful indicators of an individual’s growth in a particular area of development

c. Limitations of development (stage) theories

1. As human products they are necessarily imperfect constructs
2. Generalizations (cannot fully account for the infinite complexity of each individual person)
3. Tunnel vision/ “Johari” window effect

2. Participants will confront basic elements of James Fowler’s faith development theory (Stages of Faith), especially those stages (Pre-stage–Primal faith through Stage 3–Synthetic-Conventional Faith) which

usually occur between birth through adolescence (resident children).

a. Primal faith (Pre-stage)*

-Ages 0-2 years

1. Brief description—seedbed of trust, courage, hope, & love
2. Characteristics—little or no empirical signs
3. Basic faith issue(s)-Mutuality
4. Danger- dysfunctional mutuality-Narcissism<—>Isolation
5. Transition to next stage-speech development

b. Intuitive-Projective faith (Stage 1)*

-Ages 3-7 years

1. Brief description— fantasy & imitation
2. Characteristics- fluidity, self-awareness, ego-centrism
3. Basic faith issue(s)- ability to construct images, awareness of taboos
4. Danger -Locked images of terror or destruction
5. Transition to next stage- growing ability to differentiate the real from the imagined

c. Mythic-Literal faith (Stage 2)*

-Ages 8-adolescence

1. Brief description— “owning” the “story” of the community
2. Characteristics- Literal interpretation, reciprocity, deeply affected by symbol and drama
3. Basic faith issue(s)- use of story as a framework for conceiving and communicating experience
4. Danger - Perfectionism <—>Abasement
5. Transition to next stage- confronting contradictions

d. Synthetic-Conventional faith (Stage 3)*

-Adolescence-adult

1. Brief description— synthesis of relationships, values, &

faith in the context of identity and view of life and the world

2. Characteristics- consistent values, appeal to authority

3. Basic faith issue(s)- identity

4. Danger - Unquestioning acceptance <---->Cynical despair

5. Transition to next stage-clash between authority or values

Note: The last three stages will be covered briefly since the focus of this presentation is on those stages (Pre-stage through Stage 3) that effect resident children

e. Individuative-Reflective faith (Stage 4)

-Late adolescence-adult

1. Brief description - resolving key life paradoxes:

individual/corporate, objectivity/subjectivity, self-fulfillment/service to others

2. Characteristics - ability for critical reflection

3. Basic faith issue(s) - grasping reality

4. Danger - Overvaluing critical reflection

5. Transition- restlessness

f. Conjunctive faith (Stage 5)

-Adult

1. Brief description- integration and engagement of the self

2. Characteristics- acceptance of paradox, attempt to unify

3. Basic faith issue(s) - Transforming view in an untransformed setting

4. Danger- Paralysis of analysis

5. Transition- Resolving the paradox

g. Universalizing faith (Stage 6)

-Adult

1. Brief description- soul at peace

2. Characteristics- liberated/liberating

3. Basic faith issue(s) - ?

4. Danger- N/A

5. Transition- N/A

h. Practical dimensions

1. Sharing faith with a child in a way that s/he has a capacity to receive and respond

2. Fowler's quote- "The most critical context in the awakening and informing of children's faith today is the home and family."

3. All children have a capacity for faith

4. Adults (parents) can experience faith as they share faith with children

5. Recognizing children's faith potentials and limitations

Discussion (20 minutes)

1. Participants will interact with each other and with the concepts they encountered in this session by dividing into discussion and sharing groups. Each group will consist of three or four members (four being the optimal number). Each participant will receive a handout containing a set of questions to share and discuss. The groups will have approximately twenty minutes for this segment of the session.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

1. Participants will be invited to ask questions or to make comments related to this session.

2. In preparation for next week's session participants will bring an idea or resource they have used to disciple their child(ren) in the faith.

3. Closing prayer

Resources & Materials

1. The Holy Bible (NKJV)
2. Stages of Faith
3. "Gifting the Imagination"
4. Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian
5. Overhead projector/ transparencies /handouts

Session 5 Questions for Group Sharing & Discussion

1. Remembering our opening group exercise, what were your thoughts and/ or feelings in hearing how the children responded to the question, Where does God live? What do children's responses to these kind of questions reveal about their faith? our faith?
2. How can parents help nurture the faith of infants? What dimensions of faith do infants experience as a result of their relationship to their parents? What possible consequences do you believe can result if an infant or young child senses security? . . . abandonment?
3. What are some evidences that a child is developing a capacity for imagination? How can a child's capacity for imagination be a positive for their developing faith? What specific faith practices or actions can be used to help a child at this stage grow in their faith? What faith practices or actions would be ineffective at this stage?
4. What have you observed about how your child(ren)'s capacity for faith have changed? What were some of the "signs" that your child(ren) were moving onto another level or stage of faith? How old was your child(ren) when they were making the transition from one level or stage of faith to another? How did you respond to these changes?
5. How can an understanding of potential faith development help parents in nurturing the faith of their children?
6. What are some possible drawbacks from rigidly applying the tenets of faith development (or for that matter, any human development theory) to your child(ren)'s development? Can you think of a better yardstick to measure your children's progress in their openness and obedience to Jesus?

Sixth Session

Date: Oct. 26, 1997

Location: S.S. Classroom #4 Christ UMC Newcomerstown, OH

Title: Helping Our Kids Toward Faith: Practical Suggestions for Nurturing Their Faith

Overview: Participants will examine and discuss the use of spiritual disciplines and practices as it applies to discipling their children. Participants will explore, share, and discuss the use of specific spiritual disciplines and resources that can be used to disciple their children.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Able to define the concept of spiritual disciplines, particularly as it relates to discipling their children.
2. Identify common spiritual disciplines that are helpful in discipling their children.
3. Share discipling ideas, strategies, and resources with each other.
4. Create a plan to implement the strategic use of spiritual disciplines in discipling their children.

Session Six Flow Plan

Gathering (10 minutes)

1. Fellowship & refreshments
2. Welcome & announcements
3. Opening prayer
4. Brief recap of the previous session
5. Brief presentation of and participant response to article "*Millenium-Minded Dad: 25 Ways to Anchor Your Family for the Next Century-and Beyond*"

Presentation (40 minutes)

1. Participants will grapple with the concept of selected spiritual disciplines and practices and how these can be used as tools to effectively disciple their children.

a. The concept of spiritual disciplines/practices

1) Defining of spiritual disciplines/practices

b. Overview of the major spiritual disciplines/practices

1) Bible reading/study

2) Prayer (Individual/Family)

3) Journaling

4) Fasting

5) Devotional reading

6) Meditation

7) Worship

8) Fellowship

9) Christian missions/social outreach/ministry

10) Giving/Tithing

11) Faith sharing/witness

2. Participants will grapple with developing a strategic plan for discipling their children through the committed, consistent use of spiritual disciplines and practices.

a. Commitment to core disciplines/practices

b. Modeling disciplines/practices (parents ---->children)

c. Appropriating disciplines/practices to the age/stage of children

d. Consistency

e. Openness to information and formation

f. Staying focused

g. Parameters (Structured flexibility)

h. Centered in Jesus (Philippians 2:1-11)

3. Participants will explore potential resources that can assist parents in teaching their children in spiritual disciplines and practices.

- a. Print (books and periodicals) resources
- b. Video/audio tapes resources
- c. Radio/TV programming
- d. Computer software and Internet WEB sites
- e. Other

Discussion (20 minutes)

1. Participants will interact with each other and with the concepts and resources they encountered in this session by dividing into discussion and sharing groups. Each group will consist of three or four members (four being the optimal number). Each participant will receive a handout containing a set of questions to share and discuss. The groups will have approximately twenty minutes for this segment of the session.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

- 1. Participants will be invited to ask questions or to make comments related to this session.
- 2. In preparation for next week's session participants will develop a strategic plan (outline) for discipling their child(ren).
- 3. Closing prayer

Resources

- 1. "*Millenium-Minded Dad: 25 Ways to Anchor Your Family for the Next Century-and Beyond*" article (New Man, Oct. '97, pp. 53-55.)
- 2. The Holy Bible (NKJV)
- 3. Overhead projector/transperancies
- 4. Display table of child discipling resources

Session 6 Questions for Group Sharing & Discussion

1. What spiritual disciplines and practices have helped you grow in your relationship to Christ? . . . to your family? . . . to other Christians?
2. What spiritual disciplines and practices are you teaching your children? What results have you observed in your child(ren)'s spiritual growth as a result?
3. Which of the spiritual disciplines and practices would you consider to be the most important to your child(ren)'s spiritual growth?
4. Discuss with the other members of your group what discipling strategies you have developed or would like to develop that will help your child(ren) learn spiritual disciplines and practices.
5. Share the idea or resource you brought to today's session (last week's action assignment) that you have used to disciple your child(ren) in the faith with the others in your group.

If you brought a resource:

- What impact has this resource had in shaping your child(ren)'s spiritual life?
- Is this resource appropriate for children of any age?
- Where did you obtain this resource?

If you brought an idea:

- How do you believe this idea will help children grow spiritually?
- Is your idea appropriate for children of a specific age?
- How would you implement your idea for use?

If time permits please feel free to examine the resources on the resource table.

Seventh Session

Date: Nov. 2, 1997

Location: S.S. Classroom #4 Christ UMC Newcomerstown, OH

Title: A Balanced Approach to Discipling Our Kids: Content and Context

Overview: Participants will learn how to identify and reflect on the relationship, similarities, and differences between discipling approaches and practices that are either context or content oriented. They will explore and discuss practical ways to incorporate both context and content oriented discipleship as part of a strategic approach to discipling their children. They will complete the second questionnaire at this session.

Outcomes: As a result of this session participants will:

1. Be able to identify and differentiate between the concepts of Content (Faith Taught) and Context (Faith Caught) as it relates to discipling approaches and practices.
2. Be charged to accept the challenge, responsibility, opportunity, and privilege of being the primary disciplers of their children.
3. Complete the questionnaire administered at this session.

Session Seven Flow Plan

Gathering (10 minutes)

1. Fellowship & refreshments
2. Welcome & announcements
3. Opening prayer
4. Brief recap of the previous session
5. Each participant will share and interact with two other participants the strategic plan they were asked to develop at the last session.

Presentation (25 minutes)

1. The participants will explore to the concepts of content and context as it relates to the discipling of the their children. The participants will respond to the challenge, opportunity, responsibility, and privilege of discipling their children.

a. The Context of Discipleship (The Faith Caught)

- 1) The Call of Christ (Jn. 1:43;)
- 2) Love (Deu.6:4-5; John 13:34-35; I Cor. 13)
- 3) Relationships (I Tim. 1:2,18; II Tim. 2:2)
- 4) Modeling (- Eph.)

b. The Content of Discipleship (The Faith Taught)

- 1) The Command of Christ (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
- 2) Faith (Heb. 11:6; Jude 1:3)
- 3) Shaped by the Word (Psalm 119; II Tim. 3:16)
- 4) Teaching the Faith (Deu. 6:6-7)

c. Balancing Context and Content in Discipling Children

- 1) Both dynamics are essential
- 2) Both dynamic are complementary
- 3) Striving for Balance

d. A Charge to Keep--Disciplers of Our Children (Joshua 24:15)

- 1) Challenge
- 2) Responsibility
- 3) Opportunity
- 4) Privilege

e. Final comments

Discussion (30 minutes)

Note: In lieu of the normal discussion and sharing, the participants will be

instructed to complete the *Participant's Questionnaire*.

Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

1. Thank participants for their commitment to and completion of the seminar.
2. Remind participants of the exit interviews that will be completed in December. An interview schedule sign-up sheet will be made available at this session to schedule an interview date and time.
3. The participants will be receive the blessing of the presenter to continue in their calling and commitment to “train up” their children as disciples of Jesus Christ. A certificate will be presented to each participant recognizing the participant’s completion of the seminar.
3. Closing prayer

Resources

1. The Holy Bible (NKJV)
2. Overhead projector/transparencies
3. Participant’s Questionnaire

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Train Up a Child in the Way . . .
Post-Seminar Interview Questions

1. How would you define or explain the following terms: disciple, discipling, discipler? How do these terms relate to you as a parent?
2. Define the concept of Imago Dei? How is this concept related to discipling child(ren)? Has this concept influenced your commitment to or discipling of your children? If so, how?
3. What Scriptures have helped you in your role as a discipler of your child(ren)? Please describe how Scripture has influenced you in discipling your children?
4. Describe the concept of parent-child bonding. How is this concept related to parents discipling their children?
5. What is a teachable moment? How does this concept relate to discipling your child(ren)?
6. Briefly describe the main concepts of James Fowler's theory of faith development? Share how a basic understanding of faith development could influence you in terms of discipling your child(ren)?
7. What are spiritual disciplines? Identify some of the spiritual disciplines that you have taught to your children? To the best of your knowledge how often do your children practice these disciplines? Have these disciplines helped your children grow spiritually? If so, how?
8. What do you think the following two phrases mean? The faith caught? The faith taught? Is there any connection or relationship to what these two phrases express?
9. How has your participation in the seminar changed your concepts and practices in your role as a discipler of your child(ren)?
10. What aspects (i.e. content, concepts, presenter, other participants, small group discussion) of the curriculum do you believe contributed to these changes?
11. Describe your current commitment to your role as a discipler of your child(ren)?
12. Has the seminar been helpful to you? If so, how?