AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PARENTAL ROLE IN THE SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PARENTAL ROLE IN THE SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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Date ____________________________
To Jennifer,

*my wife and encourager*

and to

Drew and Madison,

*my precious gifts from God to whom I hope to fulfill my parental responsibilities*

and to

Herbert and Rita

*my father and mother who laid the foundation of biblical truth in my life*

Acknowledgement to

The Ridge Baptist Church and Tate Springs Baptist Church

*for support and assistance in helping me serve my Savior, Jesus Christ*
ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PARENTAL ROLE IN THE SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

This dissertation investigates the importance of the parents’ role as the primary spiritual educators of their elementary school-aged children. Participants were equipped to teach their children biblical truths through the use of object lessons in an attempt to fulfill Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Chapter 1 introduces the ministry setting, writer’s background, community’s culture, and demographic data surrounding the area where the research took place, and the purpose of the research.

Chapter 2 establishes the theological foundation for the role of parents in terms of discipline and spiritual education of children. Analysis of biblical texts relating to the parental role of educating children is provided. In addition to the examination of the biblical evidence of the importance of the parental role, a review of literature is provided, accompanied by a historical review of evidence relating to the parental role of educator.

Chapter 3 describes how the research will be constructed, including an introduction and explanation of the instruments used in the research study. Goals are established, along with a description of measurement tools, project procedures, and a review of the resources. Assumptions are made with consideration to the limitations, and key definitions are revealed.
Chapter 4 reports on each session of the study individually, describing the events of the sessions with emphasis on important occurrences during each session.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the conclusions made from the research, as well as suggesting improvements and alternatives for further research.

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Jack D. Terry School of Church and Family Ministry
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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

A clear command rang in the ears of every Hebrew parent as the children of Israel journeyed from their past imprisonment in Egypt to the freedom and blessings of the Promised Land. God’s command to His people was for the parents to educate their children, not just in terms of the mundane tasks of living and surviving in the wilderness, but to be the primary source of spiritual knowledge and godly living. The parents’ role as educators, specifically spiritual educators, was clear in the period in which the Old Testament was written. God considered the activity of spiritual education to be crucial, and it should be noted that the parents are commissioned to be the ones to fulfill this command. Deuteronomy 6 sets forth the commandment to love God with all of one’s heart, soul, and strength. Parents are then instructed to share the truths of God’s Word as they live their daily lives.¹ While few would argue the necessity of nomadic people educating their children in daily living, trades, and even spiritual matters, one must ask “does this command still hold relevance in modern times?”

¹Deut 6:4-9. Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references will be taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).
Contemporary culture asserts the same need for parental involvement that research substantiates. The overriding need for and importance of parental involvement crosses religious lines. Thus the parents’ ability to influence their children’s thinking and behavior holds significance. The following study and subsequent research will consider the parental involvement within the context of the spiritual education of school-aged children.

Ministry Setting

For eleven years, Brady Blevins has been involved in ministry to a suburban population. The first eight years were spent in economically depressed and educationally challenged neighborhoods. The last three years, ministry involvement has been in an area where the average annual income is $69,205, and 61 percent of the population possess degrees or is attending college. Despite the two differing ministry settings, one observation was made in both areas of service. The observation of the lack of parental involvement in the spiritual education of elementary school-aged children (defined by grades kindergarten-through-fourth, ages five-to-eleven) appeared to be just as prevalent in the lower income and educated communities as in the more affluent and educated community.

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Parents have reported to this writer a certain level of frustration between a desire to share various teachings of the Scripture with their children, but the failure to do so due to a lack of personal understanding of Bible doctrine. In consideration of the demographical research, the problem does not appear to be with this segment of the population’s ability to learn. Rather, the issue within this particular people group seems to be a combination of the lack of doctrinal knowledge and ability to teach children these truths. Demographic data shows that just fewer than 48 percent of the people living within a five-mile radius of this writer’s ministry setting prefer a Bible study discussion and prayer group as the most important avenue of spiritual growth and development. Based on the demographic data provided, a conclusion may be inferred that the people who comprise this ministry setting would be open to a Bible-study type group that would provide biblical teaching and a model for instruction to disseminate these spiritual truths to children.

Tate Springs Baptist Church is a 129 year-old church that has anchored the growing community in southwest Arlington, Texas. In 1882, the beginning of what would be Tate Springs was established by a group consisting of five confederate soldiers who desired to see a meeting place and school. Prior to the construction of a meeting place and school, only one school existed on the east side of town, with no presence of a

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Baptist church in the community.⁷ Through irregular church services and the apparent work of the parents in the home, the children of the community began to accept Christ, and the need for an established church became paramount. Therefore, on February 5, 1882, a group of ten believers united to establish Tate Springs Baptist Church.⁸

Since the late days of the nineteenth century, Tate Springs has grown to be a light to the community and a picture of stability and strength for the residents in the area. One of the core values of the ministry setting is the emphasis placed on the family. The church has worked to combine its love for the family and concern for the community by hosting a number of activities throughout the year, with special emphases during the summer that allows families to participate in activities that encourage family togetherness. The church enjoys a firm financial foundation, which allows them to achieve the ministerial objectives God has led them to accomplish.

The Kingdom impact Tate Springs has made over the years has affected innumerable lives. The church has planted or assisted in the planting of over five congregations—most recently, The Ridge Baptist Church, which this writer currently serves as the lead pastor. Tate Springs is the primary sponsor church for the Ridge, and is its most recent addition to the current ministries of the church. In addition to the church plant ministry of Tate Springs, the church has a Christian school as one of its tools in Kingdom expansion. The church has enjoyed a history of stability and increased growth, seeing a great increase of residents in the years following World War II. Like the city of Arlington, Tate Springs witnessed remarkable growth occurring in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.
Tate Springs has an average age of forty-seven, with a sizeable portion of membership being adults with school-aged children. The average Sunday morning attendance is approximately six hundred, with a resident membership of around twelve hundred. The church values family, and has crafted their programming with the family in mind. On Sunday evenings during the school year, they offer the AWANA Bible program that emphasizes scripture memorization. Additionally, the church uses the Elevate curriculum in their children’s worship that runs parallel to the adult worship. Elevate places an emphasis on teaching doctrine and biblical principles for daily living. In addition, the curriculum encourages parents to become involved in their children’s learning through a devotional that is included in the children’s take-home materials.

The church utilizes an in-house training program called Tate Springs University that provides a course that emphasizes some area of parenting in the fall or spring. In addition to these programs, Tate Springs also offers Vacation Bible School and camp in which parents are encouraged to come and serve as their children participate. Tate Springs has made changes in the scheduling of activities to ensure that all programming, such as AWANA, choir practice, adult Bible studies, Financial Peace University, begin and end at the same time. This is an intentional action on the part of the staff to express its value of the family. The ministries of Tate Springs Baptist Church serve 203 families that have at least one child between kindergarten and fourth grade. These families will be offered the opportunity to participate in the ministry research, as well as the teachers involved in the weekday educational program.
Community Culture

For the past thirty years, the community that makes up the ministry setting for this writer has grown from being the outskirts of town to a well-established and thriving area of Arlington. The city has grown 8.5 percent over the past ten years. The most significant growth occurred between 1970 and 1980, with 53 percent of the homes in the city being built during this time period. In this writer’s observation, the community rallies around the local high school, making this region of the city a destination location for those seeking residence in Arlington. The average age in the immediate community is 33.8, with 28 percent of the population holding at least a bachelor’s degree. In the writer’s ministry setting, over 66 percent of the population works in white-collar occupations, while the remainder works in blue-collar fields.

Tate Springs Baptist Church’s membership demographics mirror much of what the community’s demographical data reports. Additionally, demographics of the ministry setting area demonstrate that almost 40 percent of the population describe themselves as being strongly involved in their faith, while nearly 32 percent claim to be somewhat involved. Participants in the ministry setting seem to mirror the community’s overall openness to the prospects of becoming involved in their faith. The parents involved in the ministries of Tate Springs Baptist Church may be more inclined to see spiritual growth in

11Ibid., 8.
12Ibid.
their children, even though they may not be actively involved with their child’s spiritual education. This assumption is made because of the many parents involved in the weekday education program, but who do not belong to a local church.

The culture of the community in this writer’s ministry setting is that of concern for their children’s education.\textsuperscript{14} Parents appear to be concerned with their child’s ability to receive a good education; thus showing that there is a realization for the need of education. The need for a good education is within the awareness of the parents in the community and ministry setting. Therefore, one may infer that the need for a good education could also include a desire for spiritual education as well.

\textbf{Need Validation}

Research has reported that 60 percent of this writer’s ministry setting describes themselves as either somewhat or not at all involved in their faith.\textsuperscript{15} The need for parental-led spiritual education is evident in any culture according to Scripture.\textsuperscript{16} An examination of culture shows the importance that parents become active in their role as spiritual educators.\textsuperscript{17} Unfortunately, the role of spiritual educator appears to have been abdicated by many parents.\textsuperscript{18} This abandonment of the spiritual education on the part of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{16}Deut. 6:4-9.
  \item \textsuperscript{17}Benson, Peter L., and Carolyn H. Eklin. \textit{Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations—A Summary Report on Faith, Loyalty, and Congregational Life}. (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1990), 42.
  \item \textsuperscript{18}Voddie Baucham, \textit{Family Driven Faith} (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 11.
\end{itemize}
not just parents, but Christian parents, has made itself evident in the life of this writer. In the writer’s current ministry setting, there is an elementary school student who is being raised by both biological parents who have each trusted Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. This child should have the greatest benefit a child could hope for in terms of receiving the message of Christ clearly; however, when confronted with the Gospel message, the student was amazed, because she had always believed that the “Jesus thing was just a myth.” When the writer queried the parents, both admitted that the child should know more, but they just did not know how to share the biblical truths.

The words of the student moved this writer from an acknowledgement of need in this area of biblical training to a heartfelt Kingdom commitment to serve through the development of parental discipleship. One might think that this is an anomaly. After all, surely a child of two believers not knowing that Jesus Christ was God-incarnate come to provide the answer to man’s sin problem is not the norm. As research points out, this writer’s experience is all too common. In a 2001 report to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, an alarming statistic surfaced, noting that 70 percent of teenagers regularly involved in church youth groups were no longer attending church within two years of completing high school.19

One might argue that this figure must exclude those who have supportive parents who encourage church attendance and regularly attend with their high school student. However, a report from the 2002 Family Life Council stated that “88 percent of

children raised in evangelical homes leave church at the age of 18, never to return.”

This research indicates that just attending church does not guarantee that one’s child will be spiritually competent. Later in the paper, it will be shown, using Scripture, why this conclusion was proven millenniums ago; however, the answer to this problem is in the fulfillment of the parental role of primary spiritual educator.

The problem is greater than one may think. George Barna uncovered that approximately 40 percent of teenagers believed that Jesus made mistakes. One out of three surveyed teenagers denies that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. In addition, 60 percent of teenagers surveyed claimed to not believe that Satan is real. The majority of teenagers could not name half of the Ten Commandments or supply the name of the one who preached the Sermon on the Mount. The research provided by the Barna group provides a dim picture for the upcoming generation of believers.

On July 3, 2011, a survey among the parents in the writer’s ministry setting revealed that over 50 percent of the people surveyed did not feel adequate to teach their children precepts from the Bible (see Appendix 1). The majority of the parents surveyed


21 Ibid.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.
agreed that teaching their children principles for daily living is not the church’s responsibility. However, the majority of the parents did not feel confident or comfortable teaching their children the Word of God. According to the survey completed, the majority of people in the ministry setting believe they have an obligation to teach above and beyond the church’s educational offering; however, many struggle with feelings of inadequacy. The greatest need discovered in this survey was the fact that over 70 percent of the parents did not have a plan or strategy in place to teach their children the precepts of God’s Word.

Bauchman contends that the solution to this problem is in the decision that parents make to be active in the lives of their children.\(^\text{26}\) In some instances, parents will have to spend more time with their children so that the opportunity for spiritual education will occur. This task will be difficult for many parents as they juggle busy schedules and overbook their children with extracurricular activities. Many will argue that parents need only to schedule quality time with their children, and once that time is completed, the parents are free to resume their schedule of tasks. However, it is “often during quantity time that quality time emerges.”\(^\text{27}\) Parents cannot schedule quality time like one schedules a doctor’s appointment. This writer’s personal experience as a parent and child can affirm that it was in the most uneventful moments of life, such as sitting on a back porch or wrestling around on the floor, that the most meaningful moments arose.


Freudenburg champions the usage of quantity time in hopes of discovering as much quality time as possible.\textsuperscript{28}

**Purpose Statement**

Research has shown that, regardless of the home, a tremendous need exists for parents to be the primary spiritual educator.\textsuperscript{29} The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of school-aged children. This writer’s belief is that an intentional period should be incorporated where basic Bible doctrine is taught to parents so that a scriptural foundation may be laid. Along with the parents’ scriptural foundation, a method for fostering spiritual conversations between parents and school-aged children is necessary to produce children who are scripturally literate. An emphasis on a method for fostering spiritual conversations with the children will be developed so that biblical truths may be disseminated in both formal and informal settings. The hope is that this investigation will cause the ministry setting examined to be strengthened, as well as an increased number of children that accept Christ as Lord and Savior. The belief is that these objectives will benefit the ministry setting.

**Candidate Information**

I have been married to Jennifer since October 2001. The Lord has blessed us with two children—a son, Drew, born in June 2003, and a daughter, Madison, born in May 2005. Parenting has been one of the greatest blessings one could hope to have.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid.
Throughout Scripture, God the Father gives mankind the perfect example of what a father should be. I have gained a greater understanding of God and His attributes through the struggle of being a parent. I am thankful for the opportunity to be a parent and recognize the blessing God has allowed.

God calls people into different directions; each person has a unique plan that they have been gifted to fulfill. Along the path that God has for everyone, some have easier opportunities to learn more about God. The greatest benefit for Brady Blevins is that he has been blessed to earn a bachelor’s degree in Bible and pastoral ministries from a Bible college, a master’s degree in counseling from a Baptist university, and now stands at the precipice of completing a doctorate from an evangelical theological seminary. The plan that God developed allowed for an excellent knowledge of the Bible and proper preparation to spread the Word of God to others with competence. God’s plan for Blevins has equipped him for a more-than-adequate knowledge of Scripture; thus, the activity of being the primary spiritual educator of his children did not, and does not, seem like a daunting task. However, God did not call this writer exclusively to be a teacher, preacher, or professor of the Bible; rather, the role of father has been added to the mix, and for a little boy named Drew, and a little girl named Madison, this role is vital.

The role of a parent is difficult, because every child is different, and parents must sift their way through the thousands of books and seminars to identify true knowledge and direction. God has provided the answer and guidance for parents in His Word. The problem that arises is that the path chosen for this writer is not the path the majority of people are led down. Parents often feel at a loss when it comes to spiritual education, because they lack knowledge of Scripture and even proper Bible study
methods. Speaking with a number of people in the ministry setting revealed this thought of despair. Many parents have a sincere desire to be a source of knowledge to their children about spiritual truths, while lacking the knowledge to be comfortable being the spiritual educator God desires them to be. This writer empathized with the parents in the ministry setting, realizing what it would be like if God had not allowed him to experience the extrabiblical instruction. This writer could have experienced numerous other blessings and a great life to be led as a child of God, but a biblical knowledge is necessary if one desires to be the spiritual educator to his children.

As this writer considered the many parents that have passed through his ministry and the heartfelt concerns of the parents, the implications were sobering. Many children have not received the spiritual education they should have. This conclusion was heartbreaking when the realization dawned that many believers possess a sincere desire to know more about the Bible, but have not had an opportunity to learn, in-depth or at all, the various truths about the Scripture, because God had a different path for them. However, a way could and should be provided for people to learn more about God’s Word and to gain a better understanding of the doctrines of the Bible. This is the beginning of the realization that something must be done to assist parents in their role as the primary spiritual educators of their children. The problem is not with the parents’ lack of ability or even desire; instead, a clear and concise methodology of being the parent God desires for them to be must be established in an understandable format.

While it would require volumes to detail every little event that God used to make this idea and then turn it to reality, God used one event in the life of this writer to show him just what was desired. The writer’s son had just begun his final season of flag football, and the little boy had a desire to play the running-back position. After careful
study of the playbook and a quizzing of it by his father, the little boy struggled with recall and comprehension of the plays. With little time on hand to learn, a lot about the essence of education as spelled out in Scripture came to mind.

Drew did not need just head knowledge of the names of the plays and a vague understanding that the goal was to score a touchdown. He needed to receive the play with a clear knowledge of the integral parts; basically, it needed to mean something to him. As the writer struggled to help his son, God’s instruction to the Hebrew parents as they journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land rang true. The plays had to be modeled. For the boy to just see it on paper was insufficient. He believed the plays would work, and he had a strong desire to be obedient to the teachings of the playbook, but that did not help him in practical terms of learning the plays. He could have all the desire in the world, but without someone teaching him, he would never know.

After a few minutes of study, this writer comprehended the play and quickly transformed the living room into an offensive backfield. Taking each play one step at a time, the writer modeled to his son how the play was to be run, paying special attention to the parts that were pertinent to the running-back position. With the play modeled, it was time for the boy to try it out on his own, and before long, the boy mastered the plays as he had modeled his father’s footsteps which he had observed from just a short distance.

To remember that children are watching every step their parents make is imperative. In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul used this activity of learning.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you (Phil. 4:8-9).
Paul uses two sets of words in this passage to show the activity of learning and demonstrating knowledge. First, he uses the words “learned and received,” which give the connotation that one must learn the information possessing the head knowledge. However, just knowing the information is not enough—one must receive the information that is to take it to heart. The individual must take the teaching to heart and, thus, willfully choose to change something in his or her life to make the teaching evident.

“In Paul’s ministry, he not only taught the Word but also lived it so that his listeners could see the truth in his life.” Additionally, Scripture mentioned that it was not just the things that were learned and received, but those things that were seen and heard. Seeing and hearing is the action of a spectator, observing the action, or—in this case, the child watching the parent. Paul embodied this, and lived a life worthy of being emulated by others. James echoes a similar sentiment when he wrote, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

As this writer rehearsed every play in the playbook for his son, the little boy quietly fulfilled the biblical principles of Philippians 4:8-9 as he learned and received the plays, and then put it into action by hearing and seeing what was modeled for him. The Word of God is powerful, and it should come as no surprise when the teachings of Scripture continue to be found true. What this writer learned as he observed his son


31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.
learning football plays is this: the children are watching just as God said they would. The parents’ ability to model godly principles to their children will greatly impact the likelihood that the children will come to them with spiritual questions. Research has shown that the parents are the most influential persons in the lives of their children.\textsuperscript{34} Having observed this process, the necessity for an intentional teaching time to equip parents in the doctrines of the Bible and demonstrate a model that parents can utilize to be active in their child’s spiritual development is paramount.

One, if not the greatest, benefit for the writer was his own childhood. His parents are both Christians who love and serve God. The example provided by his parents served as a solid foundation for godly living. Over his lifetime, the writer observed his homemaker mother and his father, who was an aerospace engineer, faithfully attending church. The Blevins family was at church every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. If a visitation meeting was scheduled, the family was present ready to serve. The writer and his siblings were expected to take part in the ministries of the church, including programs such as AWANA. The result has yielded much fruit. Each of the Blevins children hold bachelor’s degree from a Bible college, and all are involved in church. The writer’s parents were not perfect, but they modeled the principles of God’s Word in their daily lives. The writer believes that a means to strengthen today’s church is for parents to live the teachings of God’s Word and to be intentional in teaching the Bible to their children.

\textsuperscript{34} Mark Holmen, \textit{Building Faith at Home} (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 26.
CHAPTER 2
PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

The writer’s ministry project intends to provide research that will lead to the development of parents as the primary spiritual educators of their children. Therefore, it will demonstrate through scriptural references and historical evidence the mandate given to parents to fulfill their biblical responsibility as educators. The following evidence will prove the necessity of the parental role and exhibit some of the biblical models to the spreading of biblical truths.

Biblical Evidence

The Bible is the guidebook for life and is the authority of the Christian’s life.\(^1\)

\(^1\) 2 Tim 3:16-17.

Therefore, an investigation of the Scriptures is necessary to reveal God’s intent and purpose for parents. Scripture must be studied so that the role of the parent is defined and the methodology of delivering these truths may be examined and practiced. While a multitude of passages could be examined, special attention will be given to a number of integral passages in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, to illustrate the importance God placed on the role of the parents.
Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Understanding God’s plan for the role of parents as spiritual educators is vital to the argument presented. The primary passage for this argument is found in the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is written in a pattern—a Hittite-type of suzerainty treaty. 2 This type of literary structure allows the reader “to see Deuteronomy as a national constitution: a binding agreement made between God as the nation’s ruler, and Israel as His people.” 3 Therefore, the words written throughout this book are understood by the reader as clear directives from God to His people. The children of Israel did not consider these words a mere suggestion made by God, but rather, as a command for living and a reminder of past, present, and future blessings.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is the central passage of study as it outlines God’s command for obedience to Him and the vital role that parents are to play in expressing the importance of knowing and teaching the truths of the Scripture to their children. This passage of Scripture is commonly referred to as the “Shema.” 4 When referencing the “Shema,” one is commonly referring to a liturgical prayer uttered by males twice a day as

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3 Ibid.

a statement of their faith.\textsuperscript{5} In verse four, the first word of the command is to “shema”; this is the Hebrew word that is translated “to hear.”\textsuperscript{6} This word is in the imperative mood to emphasize that the people were given a command to hear this message. “‘To hear,’ in Hebrew lexicography, is tantamount to ‘to obey,’ especially in covenant contexts such as this.”\textsuperscript{7} Thus, “to hear God without putting into effect the command is not to hear him at all.”\textsuperscript{8}

Therefore, one must realize that this is not simply a command to some general desire for auditory obedience, but rather a directive to live life by God’s standard. The singular form of the verb “to hear” emphasizes the collective nature of the message to the entire nation.\textsuperscript{9} Therefore, what was about to come was the command of God that was applicable to every person in the nation. The message that follows is the basic statement of faith for the Hebrew people.\textsuperscript{10}

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\textsuperscript{8}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid.

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The Hebrew people’s statement of faith reads: “The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”¹¹ In a land of polytheism, the children of Israel had this statement of faith that they worshipped one singular God. However, this was not just a statement that they were monotheistic people. Instead, the foundation of the Jewish religion is established in the acknowledgment that one singular God is to be worshipped by all.¹²

The children of Israel were to demonstrate a specific attitude toward God. The command to love God was a choice that the Israelites had to make, and in making this choice, they were entering into an intimate relationship with Him.¹³ Loving God meant that their love was demonstrated in their obedience to the commands of God.¹⁴ The Israelites were to love God with all their heart, which is the seat of the emotions; with all their soul, which is the center of the personality in man; and with all their strength, which is body and soul.¹⁵ “Loving the Lord with all the heart and soul and strength is placed at the head, as the spiritual principle from which the observance of the commandments was to flow.”¹⁶

The Israelites entered into the covenant relationship with God and as a nation; they made the choice to serve the one and only God. If one wondered about the

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¹¹Ibid., Deut 6:4.


¹³Walvoord, et al., Bible Knowledge Commentary, 274.

¹⁴Ibid.


¹⁶Ibid.
importance of verse five, it only takes an examination in the life and ministry of Jesus to see just how crucial this particular verse is. In Matthew 22:34-40, “when a scribe asked Jesus what he considered the essence of the law, he quoted (Deuteronomy) 6:5.”

This verse was the bottom line for Israelites, just as it is for contemporary Christians. Understanding the sober nature in which this relationship between God and His people is founded explains the importance of the following verses and the necessity to which the commands be followed.

In the sixth verse of Deuteronomy 6, the attention turns from just speaking the truths of verse five, but also committing them to memory. God requests that His people place this truth in their hearts, the person’s emotional seat. The cornerstone of the Jewish faith was to be at the heart of every person, and this truth of the single God was to be at the very forefront of their mind. Verses four through six are crucial in understanding the serious nature of God’s command to His people, and the way that God’s people were to act and react to the directive personally. However, it was never God’s intent just for all the people existing during that particular moment of human history to know and live this command. Instead, God desired this truth to continue into perpetuity, and the only way this could occur was if someone would share the truth to the next generation.


18Ibid.

19Walvoord, *et al., Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 274.

20Ibid.
The emphasis changes in verse seven; instead of speaking to the entire nation, the message shifts to the adults in the congregation and a specific action they are to assume. Verse number seven acts as a commissioning of parents to be the persons who would disseminate these truths to the next generation. This verse adds extra emphasis to the command that was already well understood by the Israelites. Knowing God’s command and reciting a prayer were certainly not enough. This message that God is singular and the command to live for the one, true God was not a novel suggestion; again, God points the reader to hide the words of Scripture in one’s heart, but increases the intensity by including the activity of teaching one’s children. These truths were to be taught to the children, and it was the parent who was selected by God to fulfill this task.  

“The Bible teaches that both mothers and fathers are to exercise leadership in the nurture, training, discipline, and teaching of their children.”

“Parents have a spiritual obligation to share their faith with their children by precept and practice.” Considered by many to be the father of family ministry, Charles Sell says that the activity of teaching was to be performed through both formal and informal educational activity. Parents should teach their children “not only in formal ways, but also in informal ways: when they are lying down, standing up, walking by the

21Ibid.


way; in short, in all of life’s circumstances.” The intent of verse seven is to emphasize the primary nature of an informal approach to teaching children the spiritual truths. God uses repetition later on in the book of Deuteronomy in order to expound further on the necessity of this informal style of education.

**Deuteronomy 11:18-21.** Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

“Parents should be alerted to the fact that the best approach to aiding their child’s faith development is not formal, but informal, instruction.” According to this passage of Scripture, education of children must come from the milieu and should be led by the father. “Clearly, God intends fathers to have a unique role in the home.”

Fathers, as the leaders of the home, should lead the way in this area of spiritual education. The father’s role in leading the charge is emphasized in other passages; “For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children” (Ps 78:5).

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God clearly commands the parents to be the spiritual educators, and fathers specifically should lead the way.

While verse seven emphasized the location and even the formality of the parental education, the next verse points to some specific activities that should be exercised in one way or another. In verse 8, God sets forth the directive: “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deut 6:8). The question exists amongst scholars on whether this verse was meant to be taken literally or figuratively. The Israelites took the passage literally as the men would wear phylacteries (frontlets in the text). Phylacteries were “small leather containers enclosing parchment with a number of Biblical verses upon it.” Additionally, phylacteries are referred to as “tefillin”; the leather containers had straps that a man would tie around the front of his head so that the pouch rested on his forehead, between his eyes. The pouch contained a couple of passages of Scripture—Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-2—to be worn on the forehead.

In addition to wearing the Scriptures on their person, they were to “write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut 6:9). “Orthodox Jewish homes have a mezuzah, a small box attached to the doorposts which contains various Scripture

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
quotations.” The reason why God established these principles was because He knew that the biggest challenge the Israelites faced as they entered the Promised Land was forgetting their divine benefactor. The history of the children of Israel is well documented throughout the pages of the Old Testament, and it appears that God’s directives were well noted as the nation consistently throughout the years strayed in and out of obedience. Israel’s redemptive factor in the Old Testament is that they would eventually remember those things they had been taught, which was to repent and eventually return to God. God’s plan for parents has not changed since the words in Deuteronomy were penned. This portion of Scripture illuminates the unchanging instruction from God. Of additional note is the second time the command was repeated in Deuteronomy. The repetition shows the reader that this is an important truth to God and His desire for the reader to know and practice the truth. An examination of additional passages will show that God’s plan for the parent is unchanging.

Deuteronomy 4:9-10 states; “Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren” (4:9). Moses tells Israel that the strength of the nation is in the law that God has given them. However, this strength could be easily lost the moment the people forgot about


36Ibid.

the law of God. The only way that Israel could prevent from losing their greatest strength is by teaching their children the statutes of God’s Word. Moses points out that the most important event they should remember is their time standing at the base of the mountain receiving God’s statutes and knowing the direction God desired the nation to go. Moses knew “when God’s Word becomes commonplace to the children of God in any time, and they no longer respect it, then they are heading for serious trouble.” The problem that Israel faced was idolatry, and they were subject to fall into this lifestyle in two different ways: they could forget about the great deeds of deliverance performed by God, or through apathy and laziness they could fail to teach their children. Either action could cause the Israelites to fall to the brink of annihilation; this was of the utmost concern to Moses.

Verse ten contains the specifics regarding what Moses desired for the Israelites—what they were to teach their children. Moses wanted the parents to teach their children about the various truths of God, but told them to remember one certain event—“especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children’” (Deut 4:10). This event was not only the strength of the Israelites, but


41Ibid.
was the motivation behind living a life of obedience to God. In addition to the motivation for godly living, remembering that day in Horeb was the fundamental principle that would lead them to God’s blessings. To say that it was imperative that the parents teach their children the spiritual truths is an understatement; not only did the nation’s prosperity depend on it, but the very existence of the nation was at stake.

Understanding the grave significance of this passage may be difficult for contemporary readers unable to attend the events that took place in Horeb. However, “the experience at Horeb was designed to produce a fear of God in the hearts of the people so that a covenant between them and the LORD could be possible.”\(^{42}\) This event was supernatural and awe-inspiring to a nation that needed to have an indelible mark engraved in its memory. This fear was intended to move in such a way that the people would never forget and, as a result, would pass the fear down to their children and to subsequent generations. “In the Old Testament the fear of God is more than awe or reverence though it includes both. Fearing God is becoming so acutely aware of His moral purity and omnipotence that one is genuinely afraid to disobey Him.”\(^{43}\)

With this understanding of what it means to fear God, one must consider this within the context of what is being stated. God desired the parents to remember this event that struck such fear, awe, and reverence in their hearts that they would never forget it and, in turn, teach their children and grandchildren. Thus, the parents were doing more than teaching their children some principles on a page; instead, they were teaching them a godly way of living that was centered on the purity, majesty, and awesome nature of the

\(^{42}\)Ibid.

\(^{43}\)Ibid.
one and only almighty God. Therefore, the importance of teaching children supersedes any other activity for the parent in relation to their child as it pertains to equipping the child for life inside and outside the care of his or her parents.

Proverbs 22:6 states; “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.” For many parents, this is a guarantee that if they take their children to church and Sunday school—that no matter what else happens, no matter how far their child strays, the child will eventually will return to the faith. However, no guarantees exist in parenting; each child will ultimately have to make the choice to do what is right or what is wrong. One must understand that many of the proverbs are truisms or maxims that are designed to demonstrate the likely outcome of what will occur if the principle is followed. “Proverbs 22:6 is an exhortation encouraging the importance of parental instruction.” Parents do have the ability to put their children in the best possible situation to pass life’s tests and answer God’s call. A literal translation of Proverbs 22:6 reads: “Give instruction to a youth about his way, Even when he is old he turneth not from it.” In the literal interpretation, one see’s that the instruction must


be given and teaching must occur and, as a result, the child—even when he is old—will be more inclined to turn back to that which he was taught.\textsuperscript{49}

The word translated “train up” in the passage can be understood as to dedicate or make narrow.\textsuperscript{50} Education of the child will help narrow the child’s path. The hope is that the narrow path will lead to fewer opportunities to wander off the best path God has for that individual. Again, the child has to make the decision throughout his or her life to continually choose to do the things he or she has been taught through the years. This is where the importance of modeling from the Deuteronomy passages exhibits its greatest strength. If the child has not received the education God intended them to receive through their parents, then the path they are on is wider and more likely to face opposition to God’s will. Consider the words of Christ: “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide \textit{is} the gate and broad \textit{is} the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow \textit{is} the gate and difficult \textit{is} the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt 7:13-14).

Another contemporary translation rendered the passage: “Teach your children to choose the right path, and when they are older, they will remain upon it” (Prov 22:6, \textit{New Living Translation} (NLT)). The implications of this passage mirror that of Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Additionally, the Hebrew word that is translated “train up” or “teach” can be translated “dedicate.”\textsuperscript{51} This helps to understand that God’s desire was and


is for parents to dedicate their children to a specific path of life, this path being that of obedience to God.\textsuperscript{52} Other interpretations of this passage include: “‘Dedicate the child to God,’ ‘Prepare the child for his future responsibilities,’ ‘Exercise or train the child for adulthood’.\textsuperscript{53} All the interpretations ultimately lead the reader to the same conclusion—that the parent must be active in the spiritual education of their children for the best possible results to occur. Although no guarantees exist, parents certainly should have a proper understanding of what their responsibility is with regard to their children’s biblical knowledge and daily living.

\textbf{Psalm 78:1-4.} Give ear, O my people, to my law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

“This long ‘historical psalm’ is essentially a retelling of Israel’s record of disobedience and unbelief in the face of all that God had done for His people.”\textsuperscript{54} Psalm 78 begins with eight verses that show the necessity of following the command of God to educating children on spiritual principles, but it also shows the consequences that will inevitably occur when the action is forsaken. Asaph, the author of this Psalm, begins by

\textsuperscript{52}Walvoord, \textit{et al.}, \textit{Bible Knowledge Commentary}, 953.


demanding an attentive ear from the nation as he begins to speak in parables and utter the “dark sayings” or riddles that needed an accompaniment of explanation.\(^{55}\)

The first four verses begin with a stern reminder that their fathers had been faithful to show them the spiritual truths of God; he continues to say that they will not be the ones to hide the truth from their children. “Asaph pinpoints what each generation needs to pass on to the next: ‘the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord’.”\(^{56}\)

Thus, in the first four verses of this chapter Asaph reveals that the passing of spiritual truths needs to occur. A sense of responsibility and even national pride was involved for the parents to share with their children the great things God had done. Often, Israel was a rebellious nation and what they and the generations to follow needed was the reminder of what God had done for them.

**Psalm78:5-8.** For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children, That they may set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments; And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Asaph paints a slightly different picture as the intensity of this passage increases greatly. The first four verses of this chapter pointed out the activity of being the spiritual educators of children, pointing the reader back to the deeds of the Lord.\(^{57}\) Parents were reminded of the message to pass down, but Asaph’s words are about to be


\(^{56}\)Richards, *Bible Readers Companion*, 368.

\(^{57}\)Walvoord, *et al.*, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 851.
more dramatic for the reader. In verse five, Asaph transitions to focusing on the words of the Lord. “The ‘testimony’ and the ‘law’ are the whole series of commands given by God to his people, beginning with the directions concerning circumcision in Genesis (17:10-14), and ending with the last precept in Deuteronomy (32:46).”

Israel received clear direction from God as to how they should live; the guidelines had been established, thus leaving no excuse for the rebellious nature of the people. The creation of the law allowed the Israelites to know what they needed to do, but they had obviously neglected one other commandment from God, and that was to take the law and pass it down to the other generations. These words were a reference back to Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:7, and 11:19. This command for parental spiritual education was essential so that the generations would know the words and deeds of the Lord. The idea in this text is for each generation to be just as active as the previous so that a perpetual continuation of scripturally grounded people would always be present. The hope is that the rebellion would stop and God could begin blessing His people as in times past, rather than being in a constant state of rebuke and correction to a disobedient nation.

The grim reality of what is to come is pointed out in the final verses of this portion of Scripture. Asaph points ahead to the future by bringing up the past and current situations in which Israel has had involvement. The concern presented at the end of the passage is that they would not turn out to be like their fathers who were described as being stubborn and rebellious. A principle presented in this verse is an age-old truth in

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59Ibid., 124.
that the generation who fails to learn from their parents’ mistakes is destined and doomed to repeat them. The goal of the writer here was to exhort these people to teach their children so that the nation’s current state of rebellion would not become their permanent state.60

Isaiah 38:19 states; “The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day; The father shall make known Your truth to the children” (Isa 38:19). Hezekiah, king of Judah (the southern kingdom) had an illness that, according to Isaiah 38:21, had something to do with a boil, and Isaiah had told the king he would die. Hezekiah prayed and asked God to extend his days, and God saw fit to do thus. As one would imagine, Hezekiah was thankful for God’s intervention. With more time on earth, Hezekiah records some of his new or renewed appreciations in life; which included service to God.61

In Hezekiah’s praise to the Lord, he declares that the father should make known to his children the truths of God. With his new-found look at life, Hezekiah realizes that serving God begins by serving in the home, where parents familiarize themselves with the teaching of the Scriptures in the lives of their children. Hezekiah’s consideration of the end of his life allowed him truly to understand what the Scriptures had already stated, a truth he had no doubt been taught as a child.

Ephesians 6:4. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” And you, fathers, do not

60Willmington, Willmington's Bible Handbook, 317.

provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

In this letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul admonishes the children to obey their parents. Paul writes that children should obey their parents because of their own relationships with God, because it is the right thing to do, because it is commanded by God, and because it will bring God’s blessings. With this quick word to the children, he continues in the theme of the passage, submission to one another, and places the focus on the father. In the Jewish household, the father was the head of the house and set the example for the family. Therefore, Paul’s address to the father is most appropriate as he would be the trend setter for the family. The father’s actions were very important as the family would take their cues from him and he is told immediately not to provoke his children. The word translated “provoke” in the passage can be understood as “make angry,” an action the father would want to avoid so that he would not cause the child to sin. The best interpretation seems to be “to rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger.” Fathers should not exasperate or excite their children to anger, although proper

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62 Ibid., 101.
64 Ibid., 378.
discipline most likely will cause children to be upset. The father’s actions should not be sufficient to cause the child to sin against God. This passage contains two other important words.

The parent’s job, as described in this verse, was to “bring them up” in training and admonition. In Greek this phrase, “bring them up,” is condensed to one word, “ἐκτρεφω.” “The word is not confined to the nourishing of a child physically, but rather includes its bringing up or rearing in the various departments of its life.”67 The word “training” is used to identify what is needed from the father and mother. Training may mean various things to many people, but the Greek word (παιδεια) translated in this passage should be understood in a slightly different manner. Training infers “the whole training and education of children which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose, now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment.”68 Training actually covers general education as well as spiritual education. The unique aspect of this verse over the parenting verses in the Old Testament is that this passage speaks to the family about the need for parental training. This passage specifically singles out the father to fulfill this role of teacher.

In verse four, Paul uses one more important word that deserves attention, and that is the word “admonition.” This Greek word (νουθεσίᾳ) carries a connotation of educating others through a positive word and consistent discipline through the necessary means. Additionally, the word may carry the connotation of argument, reproof, and/or

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.
The combination of training (παιδεία) and admonition (νουθεσίᾳ) examines the education of children as a whole. Areas such as morality, purpose, discipline, and punishment are covered. The word translated for admonition (νουθεσίᾳ) has a distinctive feature. “Its distinctive feature is training by word of mouth, as is shown by its classical usage in connection with words meaning to exhort or teach.”

The special relationship of these two words is important. Strong notes that the word translated “admonition” can mean to “put in mind,” by implication. Therefore, one realizes that parents are to teach their children and ingrain the Lord in their minds. Teaching shapes and trains minds of children so that they are able to make good decisions, heed warnings, and live a life that pleases the Lord. Verse four gives parents the command to go and teach their children the truths of God’s Word, unwavering in the area of discipline.

2 Timothy 3:14-17. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This passage is vital to the argument contending for the importance of the investigation of the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of children.

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69 Ibid.


The first two verses of this portion of Scripture demonstrate that the biblical mandate on parents to be the primary spiritual educators was still in effect during New Testament days. Further, this passage serves as a reminder that all the Scripture is profitable for doctrine, which is translated from the Greek word for “teaching.”73 The people were to be taught for “instruction in righteousness,” and the word used for “instruction” is the same Greek word (παιδεια) that was used in Ephesians 6:4 for “training.”74 Additionally, this same word (παιδεια) can be translated literally as “child-training.”75 To place even greater emphasis on the parental role, the Apostle Paul gave this instruction to a young pastor named Timothy, who Paul revered as a son in the ministry.76

**Historical Evidence**

A review of the Scriptures proved that the idea of parental education, specifically spiritual in nature, was a common theme throughout God’s Word. One must consider what other literary works have stated concerning this topic that the Bible found to be imperative. An examination of literature is of the utmost necessity for this investigation to provide a complete review of the various perspectives as it relates to the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of elementary school-aged children.


74 Ibid., 4082.

75 Walvoord, *et al.*, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 757.

76 1 Tim 1:2.
Review of Literature

An absence of literature speaking to the direct work of the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of the school-aged children is evident. A number of works that examine the moral development of children and adolescents have been published. In addition, the parents’ influence on their children has been studied and is pertinent in understanding the important position parents have in the lives of their children. This section will examine a number of views from secular psychologists and their theories on the moral development of children as it pertains to the role of the parents. Additionally, this section will explore Christian literature to examine what contemporary writers propose concerning God’s view of the parents and children.

Value of Parental Monitoring

The moral and cognitive development of children is a subject area that is examined with the hopes of understanding more about the development of the human mind. The first aspect of understanding how children learn, and what they learn, is discovered by examining the parent-child interaction. Theorists believe that, as the child reaches school-age, a decreased need exists for building autonomy and establishing daily routines. Instead, a greater emphasis is placed on work habits and achievement. The development and overall academic success of the child depends on the ability of the


78 Ibid.
parents to monitor their children.\textsuperscript{79} Parents who take the time to monitor their children’s behavior see the greater results academically; thus, parental contact plays a positive role on the child’s success. An increase in parental contact seems to be helpful in areas of education of children. The idea of parental monitoring and the positive effects that follow seem to confirm the words in Deuteronomy.

\textbf{Scaffolding Used as a Technique of Training School-aged Children}

Accompanying the idea of monitoring as an appropriate tool to enhance the child’s ability to obtain an increased acuity in academics or other subjects, theorists suggest that parents can also consider another method of assisting their children in achieving the most success. One technique available to parents is called scaffolding.\textsuperscript{80} Scaffolding is a technique a parent can use to break down a large truth or task into smaller parts; the parent can then transfer responsibility to the child.\textsuperscript{81} The hope is that the child would be able to regulate his or her own behavior, which is to make wise and proper decisions based on cultural norms and the desires of his or her parent.\textsuperscript{82} Some theorists argue that a development of “co-regulation” must exist in order for the child and


\textsuperscript{81}Grace J. Craig and Don Baucum, \textit{Human Development}, 9\textsuperscript{th} ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 361.

\textsuperscript{82}Ibid.
parent to reach the best possible place of understanding.\textsuperscript{83} The correlation can be made back to the Scriptures studied to identify a parallel in the research presented that the activity of the parent plays a vital role in the overall success of the education of the child. This success seems to occur in either the academic or home setting as long as parents are actively involved in some form in their children’s lives.

\textbf{Fowler’s Six Stages of Faith Development}

Parental monitoring and scaffolding are techniques used in the education and mental development of school-aged children. As this study intends to investigate the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of school-aged children, one must consider the ability of the child to develop his or her personal belief system.\textsuperscript{84} This study places its emphasis on the parents of children who are school-aged, defined as children ages five-to-eleven, the period modern psychology refers to as “middle childhood.”\textsuperscript{85}

One prevailing aspect of the school-aged or middle-childhood period is the child’s ability to connect to or be active in some type of faith development. Professor and theorist James W. Fowler theorized the existence of six stages of faith development.\textsuperscript{86} Fowler states that during middle childhood (the period between five-to-eleven years), the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83}Ibid., 361-62.
\item \textsuperscript{85}Nancy J. Cobb, \textit{Adolescence}, 7\textsuperscript{th} ed. (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associated Publishers, 2010), 372.
\item \textsuperscript{86}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
child deals in concrete operational thought. Children in this stage of development are open to accept the views of their parents readily. In the second stage of the theory, children are classified as being in “a world based on reciprocal fairness and an immanent justice based on reciprocity.” The strength of this stage is in the child’s ability to follow narratives as “the emergence of story, drama and myth as ways of finding and giving coherence to experience.” Parents should be mindful of the information provided by Fowler as it appears, based on his work, that children are capable of learning the stories of the Bible and applying the principles to their lives. The theory of faith development assists parents in understanding how their children can be reached with biblical principles.

**Religious Identity**

During the school-aged or middle-childhood period, children began to develop a religious identity. A religious identity is developed when an individual becomes aware of belonging to a religious group. While many may argue over the importance of being part of a religious group, or of which group one should be a part, the reality is that, at some point, children will develop an identity relating to a religious group. Even if children possess an absence of religious identity, they will develop one during this period of human development. This identity is developed through the association of the parents’

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87 Ibid.


89 Ibid., 228.

religious example. According to this thought, parents play the decisive role in the molding of their children’s religious identification. Therefore, the comprehension of biblical truth is essential to parents who desire their children to be associated with the Christian faith. Thus, the role of the mother and father will be the greatest indicator of a child’s religious association.

Mother’s Role

Mothers are often considered to be warm, loving, selfless, caring, and accepting. While many children revere their mothers, seemingly, this appreciation is often not received by mothers, thus making motherhood seem less than prestigious. “When stacked up against money, power, and achievement, motherhood unfortunately doesn’t fare too well, and mothers rarely receive the appreciation they want.” To compound the issue further, society often attributes fault to the mother when a child fails to succeed or achieve desired accomplishments. According to secular writers, mothers are the target of blame—even though fathers have assumed increased child-rearing responsibilities. The role of the mother has morphed over the years and now is that of

91Ibid.


93Ibid.


95Ibid.
primary caretaker, influencer, and financial contributor of the family.\textsuperscript{96} The influence of the feminist movement has propelled women to become more concerned about achieving their career goals rather than being a mother to their children, a wife to their husbands, or a manager of their homes.\textsuperscript{97}

The biblical view of the role of the mother is a stark contrast in comparison to the secular view. According to the Bible, mothers are to be revered and obeyed.\textsuperscript{98} In Titus 2:3-5, the Apostle Paul “admonishes the older women to teach the younger women, among other things, ‘to love their husbands and children, . . . to be busy at home (οἰκουργός, Greek, literally ‘home-workers’).”\textsuperscript{99} The biblical picture of a woman is that of a mother who is concerned with the management of her house and the welfare of her family. Her family does not blame her for its problems; rather, they call her blessed.\textsuperscript{100} She is not lazy, but strives to be an example and teacher to her children, while managing the affairs of the household.\textsuperscript{101} The mother may work outside the home for the benefit of the family, but her concentration and dedication remains on her family; she does not become consumed by her outside affairs.\textsuperscript{102} From a biblical perspective, mothers are

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{96}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{97}Piper and Grudem, \textit{Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood}, 371. \\
\textsuperscript{98}Exod 20:12. \\
\textsuperscript{99}Piper and Grudem, \textit{Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood}, 366. \\
\textsuperscript{100}Prov 31:28. \\
\textsuperscript{101}Prov 31:10-31. \\
\textsuperscript{102}Ibid.
\end{flushright}
women dedicated to their families above all else; motherhood is considered a noble profession and one that a woman should embrace.\textsuperscript{103}

**Father’s Role**

Throughout the years, fathers have been the primary breadwinners for families; thus, their ability to spend time with their children is not as great as that of the mother.\textsuperscript{104} However, research has shown that fathers have increased the amount of time spent with their children over the past two decades.\textsuperscript{105} Despite the increase of time, fathers still fall short in comparison to mothers in the amount of time spent with their children.\textsuperscript{106} The description of the father in the Bible is one of a man who spends time with his children teaching them the various truths of God’s Word.\textsuperscript{107} Secular research has found that the father who spends more time with his children, raises children who are well-adjusted, productive members of society.\textsuperscript{108} The role of the father from the viewpoint of secular literature seems to be that of an absent figure whose presence could provide a positive significant impact. Research demonstrates that “one of every four American children has

\textsuperscript{103}Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 371.

\textsuperscript{104}Santrock, *Adolescence*, 280.

\textsuperscript{105}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{106}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{107}Deut 6:4-9.

no father in the home to welcome him or her at the time of birth.” Of additional note is that “only 41 percent of today’s children will grow up in a two-parent family.”

While secular literature paints a vague picture of the role of the father, the need for his presence in the home is obvious. The Bible paints a clearer picture as to the role of the father. To give men a clear picture as to what they should strive to be, while on earth Jesus modeled and pointed out specific attributes of God the Father that men could emulate with their children. Some of the attributes of the father include being interested and encouraging to one’s children. God the Father was encouraged to God the Son in Mark 1:11 when He said, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Additionally, God modeled for fathers an accepting attitude by choosing to love humankind. “What manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1). The Bible says “we love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Further, fathers are to be committed to their families; abandonment never runs through his mind as he “bears all things” (1 Cor 13:7). Men are called upon to be caring, loving, and a unifier of the family. Colossians 3:14 commands men “above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.” God modeled unselfishness in giving of that which He loves the most. “For God so loved the world that He gave His onlybegotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Fathers should love their families and have the same zeal and fervor as God does for His people. God’s passion for His people is seen in Zechariah 8:2: “I am zealous


110 Ibid.
for Zion with great zeal,” and “with great fervor I am zealous for her.” Finally, children should be a reflection of the father as the father models right attributes. Jesus declared that “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Parents’ Role in Education

The parents’ role, as explained by Scripture, is a two-pronged approach that deals with training and discipline. Proverbs 22:6 is the foundation verse for training children and directing them down a specific path. As explained by Schultz, discipline is an essential aspect to the education of children in the home. The verse used to champion this idea is Proverbs 3:12. While Proverbs 22:6 has been examined in detail, the passage in Proverbs 3:12 reads: “For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.” Both Christian and secular writing has been presented concerning parenting, and while each may differ about specific aspects of parenting, both seem to agree that parents need to be present and active in the home for the best results to occur.

For parents to accomplish adequately the goal of educating their children, a consistent activity on the part of the parent in training and disciplining must exist. For the spiritual educational goal to be reached, parents must be active in the discipline of their children; however, this discipline must be balanced. Discipline is viewed as keeping one under control both inwardly and outwardly. “If we do not evaluate and balance control, we will either overprotect or overdiscipline our children.”


112 Ibid.

113 Ibid., 73.
balance and are able to create an environment that allows the child to know their boundaries and understand the expectations, they will have a better chance at success.\textsuperscript{114}

The truism of Proverbs 22:6 is still in effect, and the child will have to make the right choices continually, but the environment created by the parents that includes discipline as part of the training will foster an attitude in the child that will be most conducive to living in a godly manner. Thus, the role of parents encompasses a blend of trainer, disciplinarian, caretaker, and nurturer. The love of the parent must be felt by the child so that the relationship can be cultivated. When parents build relationship, with their children, the discipline aspect of parenting will be accepted with less resistance, because “rules without relationships always breed rebellion.”\textsuperscript{115}

The activity of the parent in terms of being consistent with their message will greatly benefit the child. Jesus, the master teacher, embodied this by modeling perfect behavior and responses to all scenarios. While Jesus was perfect, and all parents are imperfect; parents must remember that they should strive to embody the principles they are attempting to teach their children. When parents realize that their walk must equal their talk, they have made the first step of being the primary spiritual educator of their children. Scripture identifies modeling the right behavior as a necessary first step for all people. “In both the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount who we are in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 74.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the Lord comes before what we do for the Lord.\textsuperscript{116} As parents live in accordance to biblical principles, their ability to teach the maxims will become more impactful.

**Implications for Use**

While an absence of literature exists relating specifically to the topic of training parents to be the primary spiritual educators of their children, an overabundance of documents on parenting and education are available. This fact may be realized through a review of library or bookstore shelves. The review of literature focused on the parental involvement and activity of parents as it related to their school-aged child. While the secular literature presented areas of concern so that children would be productive members in society,\textsuperscript{117} the goal of this presentation is not just productive members in society, but also spiritually obedient children who grow to be godly adults. A parallel should be considered from parental monitoring and the biblical instruction given to parents. Deuteronomy 4:9-10, 6:4-9 and 11:18-21 gives implicit instruction to parents on what they should do to be the primary spiritual educators of their children. Within this scriptural teaching is the implication that parents spend time with their children. More exists to the scriptural mandate than simply monitoring the children.

Should parents monitor their children’s actions? According to both secular and scriptural literature, the answer is yes, but what any parent or practitioner must question is whether monitoring is enough. The summation of the argument, with consideration to


the research, seems to be no, because of the need to do more than simply observe. Action is involved in the raising of a child—primarily, the actions of leading the child to accepting Christ as Lord and Savior, and the continued work of learning as much about God and His Word as possible throughout one’s life. The goal of Scripture is to make children life-long students of God’s word rather than just productive members of society.

Of the literature reviewed, possibly the most intriguing to this writer was the use of an educational technique referred to as scaffolding. This technique was designed as a progressive tool used to assist in the education of children by breaking down large truths into smaller units, allowing the child to learn the material. As the child learns the information, the parent can then transfer responsibility to the child. Scaffolding holds value, as the goal of the parent is to help the child become a responsible, God-fearing adult. Co-regulating the child’s behavior is an important aspect in scaffolding. In fact, the goal of scaffolding is for the child to be able to regulate his or her own behavior in an acceptable fashion.

This thought process agrees with the Christian writing that states a balance must be struck between the outward control of the parent and the inward self-control of

118 Schultz, *Kingdom Education*, 32.

119 Ibid.

120 Rogoff, *Apprenticeship in Thinking*, 94.

121 Craig and Baucum, *Human Development*, 361.

122 Ibid., 361-62.
the child.\textsuperscript{123} Children’s inward control should increase as they get older, and the parents’ outward control of the children should decrease at the same gradual level.\textsuperscript{124} The principles that constitute the scaffolding technique appear to match the biblical principles of parental education, specifically Proverbs 22:6. The job of parents is to take the large truth, which is the entire Word of God, and teach it to their children. At the same time, the principles and absolutes of Scripture must be taught to the children in such a way that the children are able to apply the maxims to their lives. The result should be children who fear, love, and honor God with their lives. When one considers the co-regulation aspect of scaffolding, it is apparent that, as the parents direct their children down the right path, a gradual release of responsibility occurs. Proverbs 22:6, as previously noted, is a truism not a guarantee.\textsuperscript{125} Therefore, the parent is actively involved in the release of responsibility to their child as he or she grows into adulthood. Parents who follow the biblical principles laid out in Scripture would most likely fulfill the axioms of the scaffolding technique.

Fowler’s six stages of faith development chronicle a child’s journey of ability to comprehend matters of faith.\textsuperscript{126} Fowler states what the Bible already implies in that school-aged, or as he stated, “middle childhood” children are capable of comprehending spiritual truths. While Fowler attempts to dissect the type of faith that can be developed, Jesus’ words clarify the subject: “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{123}Schultz, \textit{Kingdom Education}, 74.
\item\textsuperscript{124}Ibid., 74.
\item\textsuperscript{125}Caldwell, \textit{Raising G Rated Kids in an R Rated World}, 13.
\item\textsuperscript{126}Cobb, \textit{Adolescence}, 372.
\end{enumerate}
them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it” (Mark 10:14-15).

Jesus not only identifies that children are capable of developing faith, but He also surpasses this by explaining that they were capable of saving faith. In fact, one could argue that the faith of children is the model of faith that all people should have regardless of age or any other factor of position or authority. Jesus’ words carried a significant weight with the people, because “at the age of five, children began to learn the arts and duties of life under the care of their fathers.”127 Children display a considerable amount of faith in their lives as they are totally dependent on their parents for survival. In the same manner, Jesus desires for all people to have the same type of faith on Him as the children have on their parents. Therefore, the usefulness of this tool may not be as greatly needed as one may have suspected.

Another aspect of the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of school-aged children is the acknowledgment of religious identity. It may be useful to acknowledge that, at a certain age, children possess the awareness to identify with a religious group.128 What could possibly be important about this finding is that this could help parents to recognize that their children are beginning to develop a religious identity. This study could be crucial as a railing point of this research that attempts to entice parents into the action of teaching spiritual truths to their children.

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128Cobb, Adolescence, 373.
appears to have a place within Scripture, as children are said to have the ability to obtain a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{129}

The role of the mother and father in secular literature differs greatly to that of Christian literature. While the differences are great, and could be noted in detail, what is most important are the few similarities, one of which is the repeated statement of the need for interaction between parents and children.\textsuperscript{130} Interaction between the parents and children is not important; rather, it is imperative. According to Scripture, the design to train a child in the way he should go involves a mother and father working in tandem to complete the rearing of the child. Unfortunately, divorce has invaded far too many homes in this country, and has left many parents with the difficult job of two on the back of one. The role of the father in secular literature has declared that the father is basically an absentee, and the mother is the target for all blame.\textsuperscript{131} This finding has found itself to be true, but at the fault of the parents. Mothers and fathers alike are commanded to be involved in the spiritual education of their children, an education that would include the acceptance of personal responsibility and the command of God on children to honor their mothers and fathers.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{129}Luke 18:15-17.

\textsuperscript{130}Santrock, Adolescence, 280.

\textsuperscript{131}Ibid., 279-80.

\textsuperscript{132}Deut 6:4-9; Matt 12:37; Gal 6:5; and Exod 20:12.
Conclusion

The Bible is clear in its instruction to parents to be the primary spiritual educators of their school-aged children. The numerous passages from God’s Word should serve as an alarm as one considers the secular literature’s observations of the modern family. The most alarming feature of the secular research and literature is that, for the most part, the items reviewed were simple observations. The failure of the family was not reported, because parents were incapable and inept, but that they were apathetic to their children’s needs. Pursuit of a career, a deteriorated family unit composed of parts that fail to complete the whole as God designed, along with other factors, has resulted in a generation that lacks a religious identity and biblical principles.

The summation of the material featured in this section brings to light the need for a response to the epidemic that has swept this nation. Parents must fulfill God’s plan as the primary spiritual educators of their children. For parents to succeed in this endeavor, they will need to increase their own spiritual acuities and learn how to transmit and disseminate their biblical knowledge to their children in an effective manner. The fulfillment of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is not an impossible task to complete, but rather, a welcomed challenge to the well-equipped parent. Therefore, the construction of a research that will lead parents to the goal of God’s plan for them as parents is of the utmost importance, and will be considered in detail in the following section.
CHAPTER 3
THE PLAN

Introduction

Chapter 1 provided an explanation of the problem facing the ministry setting of The Ridge Baptist Church and Tate Springs Baptist Church. Chapter 2 explained the theological foundation and provided a historical review of literature regarding spiritual education in the family. Chapter 3 will explain the details of the project.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to investigate the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of school-aged children. Research has placed a spotlight on the glaring problem that is causing churches to lose an entire generation of people.¹ This research intends to create an excitement about returning to biblical instruction for parents. The hope of this writer is that the parents involved in this research will learn principles from God’s Word to share with their children. Additionally, this writer anticipates that, because of this research, children will feel comfortable in speaking to their parents about spiritual matters and, in turn, parents will be equipped to answer questions that arise. While the teachings are thousands of years old, the truths have survived the test of time. With a renewed emphasis on parent-child relationships, the

¹Pinkney, “Report.”
writer is optimistic that this will have a profound impact on those associated with The Ridge Baptist Church and Tate Springs Baptist Church.

**Population**

Participants in this study will be parents, grandparents, or guardians who are primary caregivers to children between the grades of kindergarten and fourth grade. The approximate ages of the children will range between five-to-ten years of age. The age of the primary caregiver is only a secondary item of interest. Other areas of consideration—such as occupation, age, ethnicity, or any other outside factor—will be considered secondary to the study. Research participants will be members or regular attendees of The Ridge Baptist Church, Tate Springs Baptist Church, or any of the ministries associated with the two churches.

**Goals and Outcomes**

**Goal One:** The writer will develop and implement a research plan to enhance participants’ knowledge, attitude, and skills so that they can fulfill their parental roles in the spiritual education of school-aged children.

**Cognitive:** Participants will identify biblical truths of which they were not previously aware.

**Affective:** Participants will differentiate their attitudes between the biblical design of parental responsibility and their own ideas.

**Application:** Participants will integrate the biblical truths into their own lives by modeling and teaching the precepts to their children.

**Goal Two:** The writer will then determine: (a) how well the research plan was prepared, (b) how effectively the research was implemented, (c) how much change was brought about in the ministry setting as a result of the research, and (d) the contribution this research has made to the parents’ abilities to be the spiritual educators in the lives of their children.
Measurement Tools

The writer will interview each family participating in the research. The interview will be used to determine the parents’ base level of biblical competency, the parents’ attitudes toward biblical responsibility of parenting, and the parents’ activity levels in educating their children in precepts from the Bible (Appendix 2). Interviews will be conducted of all participants at the beginning and again at the end of the research. Results from both interviews will be compared to measure the impact and progress made during the research. Additionally, the interview will allow the writer opportunities to discuss with each participant the strengths and weaknesses associated with the research. Each family will complete an enrollment card at the end of the initial interview that will ask for pertinent information needed for the research, as well as a commitment to attend all sessions and to participate in the exit interview (Appendix 3). The writer expects to see an average increase of three points per category in the pre and post parent interview (Appendix 3).

Procedures

Research will take place on the campus of Tate Springs Baptist Church, located at 4001-A; Little Road, Arlington; Texas. The six sessions will take place in room 208 of the Christian school building. Each session will last approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. The sessions will be held on Wednesdays while the children are involved in the regular age-specified programming. The room provides sufficient square footage, as well as access to a multimedia projector.

Each of the six sessions will follow the same format, but will teach different biblical truths (Appendix 4). Sessions will include a moment for prayer and the asking of
God’s blessing upon the time of study. Once the prayer has concluded, scriptural truths will be introduced. The introduction will include personal stories from the writer, video clips, and other methods of drawing participants’ attention into the area of study. The introduction will play a valuable role in the overall success of the lesson; therefore, a sufficient amount of time will be granted as deemed necessary to capture the attention of the participants. The primary objective of this portion of the session will be to draw the affective side of the participants into the discussion of doctrine. The writer will accomplish this objective by connecting participants to the spiritual truth/topic discussed. This section, with prayer, will take approximately fifteen minutes.

The scriptural foundation is the portion of the session that focuses on the writer’s teaching of scriptural truths to the participants. This teaching will focus on presenting six doctrinal teachings to the participants. Each week, one doctrine will be introduced through a primary passage of Scripture, which the writer will exegete. This period of teaching will allow for an interaction between the writer and the participants. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions during this period of the session. Scriptural foundation for the doctrinal teaching must be understood by the participants during this portion of the session. Parents’ ability to comprehend the truth taught is necessary in order for the parents to teach the spiritual truth to their children at a later time. This portion of the session will last twenty to twenty-five minutes.

Once the scriptural truth is taught, a period for applying the truth will be introduced. The objective during this period of time will be to relate the scriptural truth taught to the lives of the participants. The application section will focus on specific ways the Bible affects the way a Christian should live his or her life. Special attention will be given to how participants should react now that they are aware of the scriptural truth.
This section will utilize illustrations of scenarios that identify clearly the actions of the believer because of the truth presented. This portion of the session will last approximately ten minutes.

Once the truth has been introduced, taught, and applied, the project leader will introduce the methodology of teaching the same scriptural truth to children. Parents will be encouraged at this point to be creative in their presentation of scriptural truths by relating things the child already knows to the scriptural truth.\(^2\) Using the principle of Deuteronomy 6:7, the writer will guide the participants through practical ways to teach these truths. Specific ways to introduce the topic will be presented, as well as ways to make the topic relevant to children. Potential questions from children will be fielded, as well as ways to teach the truth in a clear and concise manner. Practical teaching of certain biblical truths will be provided in written form through a handout created by the project leader (Appendix 5). The participants’ ability to understand how to demonstrate scriptural truths to their children will be vital to the success of the research. Therefore, this aspect of the research is crucial and considers a significant amount of attention. The primary way the writer will instruct the parents to teach is through the use of examples.\(^3\) During learning periods, children often use schemas to relate what they are learning to what they already know. Therefore, the use of examples and object lessons seemingly are the best


\(^3\)Ibid.
ways to communicate both simple and complex spiritual truths. This section will last approximately fifteen minutes.

The final section of the session will incorporate the activity of discussion strategies of teaching scriptural truths. Previous examples provided will be discussed for usefulness within the family structure. An examination of potential obstacles in the introduction and teaching of the topic to the participants’ children will be discussed. Each of the participants will develop a plan of action. Their plans of action will include: a targeted time to teach the truth, a method of introducing the topic to the child, the outcome the parent hopes to achieve, and a place for the participant to record whether the object was achieved or not (Appendix 6). Each of these areas will be recorded on a weekly basis and returned to the writer at the beginning of each meeting. This session will end with a word of prayer. This section will last approximately ten minutes.

Resources

To complete this research a number of costs must be accounted for to ensure the completion of the research. One of the monetary expenses is the use of a facility to hold the six sessions. Tate Springs has allowed the writer use of its facility at no charge. This includes the time required for set-up, and the use of projector, utilities, and cleaning expenses. For the research to draw as many families as desired, a significant amount of promotional materials is required (Appendices 7-9). A graphic artist has been acquired, and will volunteer her services for the design and development of all promotional items related to the research. Tate Springs has donated the use of a plotter and copier for all

signs, bulletin inserts, and flyers for the research study. In addition to the promotional material, the church has offered the writer free printing for all materials related to the research. Given the milieu related to the research, childcare is a necessary consideration. The church has worked with the writer to make this part of its Wednesday offering to the church congregation; thus, childcare is already provided for the other ministries of the church. Other monetary expenses for this research will include travel expense to conduct approximately twenty entrance interviews and twenty exit interviews, a cost estimated at fifty dollars.

Another major cost to completing this research will be time. Approximately fifty hours will be required between entrance and exit interviews, along with approximately eight hours to complete the six sessions. Additionally, the writer will need to allow for preparation time and collection of materials for each session, which will take approximately five hours each week. The construction and development of PowerPoint slides and handouts before the research begins will take approximately fifty hours. The projected timeline for this research to commence is July 2011, at which time the writer will complete the interview guide. The writer will spend the second week of the month focused solely on the development, review, and finalization of the curriculum for the six sessions. After the research is approved, in September 2011, the promotional materials will be finalized and materials will be distributed. The research will start in September and conclude the final week of October. All exit interviews will be completed by the first week of November.
Assumptions

Multiple assumptions are present, some of which deal directly with the parents involved in the study, while other assumptions relate to the writer and his goals for the research. For the successful completion of this research, the writer will have to work under the following assumptions. Of the assumptions made by the writer, the first is that at least ten-to-twelve families will be willing to participate in the research. Another assumption is that at least ten families will attend all six sessions from beginning to end. A further assumption is that the parents will complete the outside assignments given in the sessions. The parents are assumed to have an interest in the subject matter that is planned to be taught by the writer. The completion of the weekly journal will provide the data necessary to assess how and whether the object lessons and teaching method was successful. Without the journaling and completion of assignments, no objective data will be available for proof of success or failure of the research goals. An additional assumption is that the parents involved in the research will maintain some level of spiritual maturity. The writer assumes that the children will maintain some level of willingness to participate with their parents in the learning activities. Along with spiritual maturity, parents will need to have the desire to fulfill the biblical commands God provides in Scripture.

Other assumptions do not relate directly to the parents involved in the research. These assumptions include the interview process. First, the writer assumes that he will be able to secure the proper number of interviews and complete them prior to the first session. The interview guide is assumed to be sufficient to provide adequate information to assess. Another assumption is that the writer will be able adequately to teach the information to the parents in a way that they can comprehend. In addition to this, the
writer assumes he will be able to instruct the parents in a methodology of informal teaching that they will then be able adequately to teach the information to their children. Additionally, the writer assumes that the parents will be able to recognize opportunities the biblical truths to teach their children. The final assumption of the writer is that the research goal will be attained. The writer’s goal is to witness parents learn spiritual truths and intentionally teach those truths to their children in informal settings.

**Limitations**

While this research endeavors to maintain a specific goal, a number of limitations must be considered as the completion of the research takes place.

1. This research is limited to the members and regular attendees of The Ridge Baptist Church and Tate Springs Baptist Church who have at least one child between the grades of kindergarten and fourth grade.

2. This research is limited to a six-week period from September 14, 2011 to October 26, 2011.

3. This research is limited to the topic of spiritual training and equipping of parents to be their children’s primary spiritual educators.

4. This research is limited to one instructor on the topic of parental education and equipping.

5. This research is limited to the physical and mental abilities of the selected members.

**Key Definitions**

This research uses some words that need a definition attached for the sake of clarity. Listed below are the following words:

1. **Parents**: one who is the biological mother or father of a child or children; one who is a legal guardian or one who is the primary caretaker of the child.

2. **Primary spiritual educator**: an individual who provides the most education to the child on matters relating to God or the Bible.
3. **School-aged children**: a child who is between the grades of kindergarten to the completion of fourth grade.
CHAPTER 4

PROJECT REPORT

Introduction

The project designed for this research was entitled “Parenting with a Purpose.”

The project was planned in a workshop fashion. Each session was intended to focus on an area of doctrinal truth. Additionally, participants were given materials to assist in the spiritual training of their children. The following will report on the events of each session.

Session Reports

The project spanned six weeks and followed a similar format each week (Appendix 4). Six doctrinal truths were taught during the sessions. The six truths include: the Bible, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, man, and salvation. Additionally, sessions included the distribution of the “Ready-Made Object Lessons” (Appendix 5) and weekly journals (Appendix 6).

Session One

The first session took place on the campus of Tate Springs Baptist Church, located at 4001-A Little Road, Arlington, Texas, in room 208 of the Christian school building. The session lasted approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. As the participants entered, they received an enrollment card and parent interview (Appendices 2-3). There were ten total participants involved in the duration of the project.
Participants were given instructions regarding both documents and a brief welcome to the project. After sufficient time was given to complete the documents, a formal welcome was given, which included an explanation of the nature and purpose of the project. The project leader gave a brief personal history of how this issue grew in importance to him, which served as an introduction to the spiritual truth for the evening.

The first biblical passage introduced in the session was Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The passage was featured as the foundational passage of this research. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 was read and an explanation was given. Emphasis was made on the application of the passage as it relates to the parental responsibility of educating one’s child in God’s Word. Parents were encouraged to compare the instruction in God’s Word to their daily activities and interaction with their children. God’s methodology of educating children in the principles and practices of daily living was presented, and the necessity of knowing God’s Word from a personal perspective was emphasized.

The project leader expressed the importance of daily Bible study and prayer time for the realization of the closest relationship with God. An explanation was given that parents must know and be willing to continue to learn the Word of God to fulfill God’s imperative instruction from the Deuteronomy passage. Once this was established, the project leader transitioned to the doctrinal emphasis of the first session. The Bible was introduced first with an explanation of 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and 2 Peter 1:21. The credibility, infallibility, and purpose of God’s Word were presented. Parents were encouraged to see the Bible as God’s love letter to mankind and as the source for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. The goal of this teaching was stress why the Bible is important.
After completion of the teaching on the Bible, the project leader discussed how a truth such as why the Bible is important could be taught to children. The project leader discussed the facets of education as it relates to school-aged children and the influence parents have on their children. The booklet entitled “Ready-made Object Lessons” was distributed (Appendix 5), and instructions for use of the tool were given. The project leader explained how the booklet could be used to introduce such topics as the importance of the Bible and subsequent spiritual truths to one’s child. Examples were given on how specific object lessons were used to instruct the project leader’s children and what type of responses could be expected. Parents were advised to consider their child’s education level, personality, and any other factor that could affect the teaching of a spiritual truth prior to the introduction of a truth.

Parents were encouraged to select one of the object lessons in the booklet (Appendix 5) and plan a time to teach their child or children the spiritual truth. Questions such as “How do you plan to communicate this truth your child?” and “Do you believe you have a sufficient understanding to teach the selected spiritual truth?” were asked in an attempt to challenge the parents’ preparedness to face the challenges. Parents were given a paper titled “weekly journal” (Appendix 6) and were asked to provide feedback regarding their preparation and execution of their attempts at teaching their children a spiritual truth. Once this document was distributed, parents were invited to ask questions regarding any of the information discussed, presented, or distributed. After all questions were answered to the satisfaction of the parents, the project leader closed the session with a word of prayer.
Session Two

The second session featured a location move from 4001-A Little Road, Arlington, Texas, room 208 of the Christian school building to the main campus on 4201 Little Road, room 151. This move was made for the convenience of all parties involved. The classroom was outfitted with a large flat-screen television for the display of PowerPoint slides, and was located near the childcare area. Participants unable to make the previous session were emailed a handout and weekly journal (Appendix 6) to complete during the week. The project leader followed the lesson plan that was presented in Appendix 4.

Session two began with prayer, followed by an open discussion of the parents’ first attempt at engaging their children in spiritual conversations. Parents discussed difficulties as well as success. Advice and instructions were provided by the project leader to ensure the optimal level of success in future endeavors in sharing God’s Word with children.

The project leader introduced the session two topic by reaffirming the command given by God in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. With the command of God placed on the parent to be the primary spiritual educator, the project leader explained that no topic could be avoided regardless of the difficulty. The project leader then introduced the subject of the existence of God. A reminder was issued that, before one can teach on a particular subject, he or she must first develop more than a simple working knowledge of the subject. In the previous session, the Bible was presented as the believer’s guidebook to life and the source for all the answers one would need in life. The main character in God’s Word is God; therefore, it was essential that His existence be examined throughout the Bible. However, the project leader explained that arguments for the existence of God
must be approached in such a way that children are capable of comprehending and repeating the argument in their own words. Therefore, the project leader presented two arguments for the existence of God.

The first argument presented was the cosmological argument, which is easily seen in both Scripture and in daily life. The project leader explained how children are concrete thinkers, and how primarily those between the ages of seven and eleven years would need to have information presented in these terms. This argument was helpful because of various scriptures relating to God’s creation and the proof of His existence. The second argument presented was the teleological argument. Parents were able to see how God’s existence is seen by the very nature of things in the world and the universe. This argument appealed to the concrete operational thinking of children by describing how the law of entropy affects one’s conclusion that God must exist. Children understand that some toys need batteries to run and that someone had to put the batteries in place, or how someone had to wind the wind-up toy for it to operate. Parents were encouraged to consider how their children think and the impact these principles and arguments have in terms of eternity and the present moment.

The application of these two arguments was presented via object lessons for the parents. The project leader used a banana, hula hoop, and aluminum can to illustrate how the scientific laws applied and how Scripture is proven by these factors. Parents were encouraged to consider the object lessons used by the project leader to see how objects can be used in a teaching situation. The project leader led the parents to examine the “Ready-made Object Lessons” booklet (Appendix 5) and to see the examples given for the teaching of the existence of God. A discussion ensued as to how the lesson could be implemented and how the arrangement of time and circumstances could be engineered.
to the parents’ benefit. Questions were answered regarding how best to use the object lessons and what to expect from children as various topics are being taught. Weekly journals (Appendix 6) were collected for the previous week, new journal pages were provided, and parents discussed what they hoped to accomplish in the following week. The second session closed with a word of prayer.

Session Three

The location of the third session remained on the main campus of Tate Springs Baptist Church in room 151. Attendance was down slightly from the second session, but accommodations were made for those who could not attend. The project leader communicated via e-mail with those who missed the session, and the session was recorded and posted on The Ridge Baptist Church website. All sessions were recorded to allow participants the opportunity to catch up on missed sessions or to review what had been discussed in the previous sessions. Absent participants were e-mailed weekly journals (Appendix 6) and handouts for the missed session. The third session followed the lesson plan as presented in Appendix 4.

The third session began with a word of prayer and open dialogue concerning the past week’s successes and difficulties. Participants openly discussed their advancement and findings in becoming their children’s primary spiritual educator. The discussion allowed parents to express their progress and difficulties in educating their children. This allowed the project leader to assess what adjustments needed to be made in upcoming sessions. Parents noted a great satisfaction in sharing biblical truths to their children and fostering conversations that centered on the Bible, doctrine, and Christian principles for daily living.
In the previous session, the existence of God was examined, and arguments made from both creation and the nature of things with an emphasis on the law of entropy. With this in mind, the project leader made notice of the central figure of the Bible. This figure is the hope of the Old Testament and is realized in person in the New Testament. Jesus stands as the focal point of God’s Word. The project leader placed emphasis on the deity of Christ and His active role in the creation of the world. The relationship between God the Father and God the Son was examined. Emphasis was placed on His equal union with God the Father as well as the eternality of Jesus. In addition to Jesus’ deity, His purpose was examined in-depth. The purpose of Christ was explained as Jesus’ sacrificial death and victorious resurrection. The role Jesus played in the redemption of mankind was presented, along with a plethora of passages for parents to be able to reference and consider in the teaching of this truth.

Parents were challenged to apply the truth of who Christ is to their own lives. While all parents involved claimed to have already accepted Christ as Savior, each was to consider the truths about Him that were discussed and how these truths would be received by their children. The project leader placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the presentation of Jesus to the children. Various unbiblical teachings as well as common misconceptions were discussed, and sound biblical answers were given in a proactive defense to difficulties in comprehension the children may have.

Parents were shown a number of different object lessons from the “Ready-made Object Lessons” (Appendix 5) as it related to Jesus. The object lessons (Appendix 5) were discussed, and the writer presented each lesson in a “how-to” format. Scenarios were created and discussed regarding the usage of each of the object lessons (Appendix 5), and anticipation was made regarding potential questions the parents should expect to
field. Once the discussion was complete, the project leader acquired the participation of some of the participants to engage in the role-play of some of the object lessons from the booklet (Appendix 5). The project leader assumed the role of parent, while participants filled the role of the child. Participants embraced the role of a child posing difficult replies back to the writer. This allowed the project leader to demonstrate how the parent could handle various questions. Each question was answered from the perspectives of not knowing the answer and knowing and providing the answer for the child. The project leader illustrated how the parents could handle situations where parents were posed questions for which they might not be ready or for which they had not yet attained a comfortable level of knowledge to answer the question with confidence. Additionally the project leader demonstrated the advantage of anticipating questions and having a thoughtful answer ready prior to the question being asked. Once the role-playing was completed, weekly journals (Appendix 6) were collected and questions were completed regarding what object lessons (Appendix 5) should be used in the upcoming week. The third session ended with a word of prayer.

**Session Four**

The location of the fourth session remained on the main campus of Tate Springs Baptist Church in room 151. The attendance increased from the third session. However, a couple of participants were missing from this session. Accommodations were made for those who could not attend. The project leader communicated via e-mail with those who missed the session, and the session was recorded and posted on The Ridge Baptist Church website. The project leader e-mailed weekly journals (Appendix 6) to the absentees and fielded questions regarding the teaching and execution of the object lessons
Additionally, the project leader verified the website’s tracking system that the sessions were actually accessed. The fourth session followed the lesson plan as presented in Appendix 4.

The fourth session began with a word of prayer and an invitation to discuss the previous week’s successes and difficulties in the presentation of the object lesson (Appendix 5). Parents expressed an increased level of success stating their abilities better to discern the time and factors surrounding when they chose to teach the spiritual truth. During the discussion, the project leader explained that planning a spontaneous moment often provided the best result in terms of the child’s receptive attitude to the teaching. The project leader pointed out that planning a spontaneous moment may appear to be oxymoronic, but the idea maintains a certain quality illuminated in Scripture. The Bible states in 1 Peter 3:15: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

The project leader explained that the parents’ abilities to give a defense of their faith, at any moment, to their children are the fulfillment of the basic principle behind Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The planning of when and how the object lesson (Appendix 5) is presented is vitally important. The project leader contended that the object lessons (Appendix 5) would be received better if the parent carefully considered the topic and the factors surrounding the presentation of the subject. In addition to this, the project leader stated as essential that the object lesson (Appendix 5) be presented in such a way that the child does not realize that this was a prepared teaching event. He explained further that the parents’ ability to engage their child in conversation would not only increase the likelihood of success of the teaching, but would open the lines of communication for
further questions. In addition, opening the lines of communication would foster continued
growth in the parent-child relationship and increase the probability of a better relationship
into the teenage years. The project leader pointed out that the only way learning would
occur was through the work of the Holy Spirit, thus introducing the spiritual truth studied
in the fourth session.

The Holy Spirit’s work and purpose was studied in depth in the fourth session. Participants were educated on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion, as well as His work convicting the individual of their sins prior to conversion. The most important aspect of the teaching for the participants was the discussion of the activity of the Holy Spirit as it relates to the sealing of the believer. The parents were concerned with being able to express adequately to their children, who had already accepted Christ, that their salvation was secured. Therefore, extra time was spent speaking of the Holy Spirit’s work within the believer and the implications for all believers.

The project leader made it clear that when a person accepts Christ, and the Holy Spirit comes into him or her, that a person receives all of the Spirit—not just a portion of the Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit was likened to mercury in a thermometer. The thermometer always contains the same amount of mercury just like the amount of the Holy Spirit inside the believer is always the same. Thus, being filled with the Spirit is dependent on the believer’s choosing to walk in the Spirit—that is living and doing those things that bring honor and glory to God. Additionally, a discussion ensued as to how the Holy Spirit’s indwelling could be expressed or taught to children struggling with the work of the Holy Spirit in their life.
In addition to the sealing work of the Holy Spirit, emphasis was placed on the teaching work of the Spirit. Parents were reminded that their best efforts to teach their children were only opportunities that they were providing for the Holy Spirit to complete the job of teaching the child. Therefore, importance was placed on the prayer life and obedience of the parent in maintaining a proper walk with God. Parents were encouraged by the empowerment given to all believers by the Holy Spirit and were reminded to be confident in their presentations; knowing that the very power of God was with them as they taught their children. The teaching on the Holy Spirit concluded with how one can see the results of the Holy Spirit living inside them. The project leader went through Galatians 5:22-23, explaining the Fruit of the Spirit and how believers should produce evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling.

Parents discussed how the principles concerning the Holy Spirit could be taught in their respective homes. The project leader presented more “Ready-made Object Lessons” (Appendix 5). Participants role-played through various scenarios. Parents were able to work through different object lessons (Appendix 5) and to consider how they needed to prepare themselves to teach the lessons in their homes. In addition to role-playing, parents discussed other attempts that they had made at teaching spiritual truths, along with ideas for developing scenarios in their home that would give them the best opportunity to teach specific biblical truths to their children. During the part of the session where parents were encouraged to put the lessons into action, the project leader presented new object lessons (Appendix 5) that were not included in the original handout. These lessons included the use of the popular toy Legos and additional ways to teach the existence of God. The fourth session concluded with the collection of weekly journals (Appendix 6), followed by a prayer.
Session Five

The location of the fifth session remained on the main campus of Tate Springs Baptist Church in room 151. The attendance remained steady from the fourth session; however, a couple of participants were absent from this session. Accommodations were made for those who could not attend. The project leader communicated via e-mail with those who missed the session, and the session was recorded and posted on The Ridge Baptist Church website. The project leader e-mailed weekly journals (Appendix 6) to those absent and fielded questions regarding the teaching and execution of the object lessons. Additionally, the project leader verified the website’s tracking system that the sessions were accessed. The fifth session followed the lesson plan as presented in Appendix 4.

The fifth session began with prayer and led to a discussion of the parents’ past week attempts at sharing God’s Word with their children. Parents expressed a great deal of success, believing that as the weeks progressed, they felt more comfortable using the “Ready-made Object Lessons” (Appendix 5) and understanding how the tool was best used in their situation. Parents communicated an excitement about being able to make the contact and introduction of spiritual topics in a natural manner with their children. Some parents stated that they had been active in sharing the Word of God with their children, but had never consciously developed a plan to spread specific biblical truths with their children. They affirmed that the exercise of completing the weekly journal (Appendix 6) caused them to strategize how, where, and why they planned to share a biblical truth to their children each week.

The project leader introduced the topic of man in the fifth session. Man’s sin nature and condition was studied. The project leader illuminated the Scripture passages
that spoke of the sinful condition of man. Passages concerning the sinful nature of man were read, and the project leader noted that man was born a sinner and that this sinful condition is a result of what happened in the third chapter of Genesis. Questions from the parents prompted the project leader to give an explanation of the federal and seminal headship of Christ. The participants continued asking questions regarding the implications of sin and the law. The project leader discussed why and how death reigned between the Garden of Eden and the giving of the Law.¹

The project leader explained how sin is a blood issue. When Adam sinned against God, he immediately changed. He may not have felt the change, but his blood became contaminated by sin. The penalty of sin is death; therefore, man is facing an imminent curse for his sin. Man, on his own, is eternally hopeless because of this and is in need of some type of redemption. This is why the innocent blood of animals was used as a temporary covering of sin and why the blood of Jesus provides a permanent covering of sin. Blood comes from the father, and since Adam is the father of the human race, the sinful blood has been passed down throughout the generations. Therefore, when one considers the virgin birth of Christ, it is realized that the blood flowing through His veins was not the same contaminated blood of every other person in the human race. Because of this, Jesus could provide a remedy for man’s sin problem.

This teaching captured the attention of the participants and spurred a discussion of how that related to them personally as well as the implications the curse of sin had on their children. The discussion allowed for an opportunity to show how extended knowledge of a subject is necessary in the instruction of others. Parents were encouraged

¹Rom 5:12-14.
to think ahead of what conversations may arise of just one of the object lessons (Appendix 5) used from the booklet. In addition to this discussion of man, the purpose of man was examined. The project leader noted that man’s primary purpose on earth was to bring honor and glory to God. Parents were challenged to consider how their parenting could fulfill this purpose. In consideration of man’s temporal state on the earth, the final aspect of man’s condition was considered and that is the destination of man after he dies. Based on Scripture, the conclusion was made that when man dies, he either goes to heaven or hell. The difference depends on whether or not a man has experienced the salvation that only Christ provides. The project leader announced that the topic of salvation would be discussed in the final session.

Man’s condition and purpose proved to be an important topic for the participants in the project. The discussion that ensued regarding how to teach these truths to children proved to be equally important for the participants. The project leader maintained the importance of presenting mankind to one’s child as the Bible explains man’s nature. The Bible illustrates the depravity of man which is important for the children so that they can see who they are without Christ. Additionally, understanding man’s sinful state serves as a reminder as to why one continues to sin after salvation. Mankind is a sinner. The only thing that separates one man from another is the acceptance of the free gift of eternal life offered by Jesus Christ.

The participants discussed how they could introduce the topic, and utilize the strategies developed in the session. The parents also discussed how their approach may change with their children at different ages. The project leader made a point to recognize how one teaching can splinter into multiple questions ranging in multiple topics and spiritual truths. The necessity of being a student of God’s Word was reemphasized. The
only discussion regarded the “Ready-made Object Lessons” (Appendix 5), and no role-play took place in this session.

Parents were encouraged to select one of the object lessons under the topic of man (Appendix 5) to teach their children in the following week. Weekly journals (Appendix 6) were discussed further as a strategic tool, and the previous week’s journals were collected. The session closed in a word of prayer.

Session Six

The location of the sixth and final session remained on the main campus of Tate Springs Baptist Church, but was moved across the hall to room 150. The attendance remained steady from the fifth session; however, a couple of participants were absent from this session. Accommodations were made for those who could not attend. The project leader communicated via e-mail with those who missed the session, and the session was recorded and posted on The Ridge Baptist Church website. The project leader e-mailed weekly journals (Appendix 6) to absentees and fielded questions regarding the teaching and execution of the object lessons. Additionally, the project leader verified the website’s tracking system that the sessions were accessed. The fifth session followed the lesson plan that was presented in Appendix 4. Arrangements were made to complete the parental interview (Appendix 2) that doubled as the post test for the project.

The sixth session began with a word of prayer and the introduction of the topic of salvation as it relates to the teaching of children. Participants were given a handout with session notes on it with all blanks already completed. The project leader desired to lead the group in a discussion on the topic and allow the parents to complete the parent
interviews (Appendix 2) and maintain the time constraints. Salvation was discussed first from the standpoint of how it is obtained. The project leader explained that heaven is a free gift, as explained in Ephesians 2:8-9, and can only be received by the individual’s free will. Salvation cannot be imposed or forced upon another individual. The project leader presented a basic way of presenting the salvation message. This method consists of having the individual admit that he or she is a sinner, then having them state their belief that Christ died on the cross for their sins, and leading them in confessing their sins to the Lord. Another area related to the issue of salvation is the security of the believer. This topic had already been brought up in the discussion concerning man in sessions four and five, but was only briefly discussed.

In this session, the security of the believer was discussed from the perspectives of Christ’s death and atoning blood, man’s inability to lose the gift of salvation once receiving it, God’s unwillingness to renege on a promise made to mankind, and the inability of Satan or outside factors to take away or cause one to lose his or her salvation. Additionally, salvation was presented as the inclusion into the family of God and the promise that God gives concerning those who are his children. The project leader referenced John 1:12-13, 1 John 5:11-13, and Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30 as passages that carry the promise of being in and never being cast out of God’s family.

One of the issues brought up from the participants was helping the children to know for certain that they have truly received the gift of eternal life. This project leader discussed 1 John 5:13: “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.” The importance of the parents knowing and having a confidence in their salvation experience is vital to leading a child into the same
confident state. Therefore, questions were asked about their certainty of where one would spend eternity if they were to die at that moment. Additionally, participants were asked what reason they would give to God if he were to ask why they should be allowed into heaven. This allowed the parents to see the certainty that God has intended for believers to have concerning their eternal life in Jesus Christ.

The topic of salvation brought a number of concerns from the participants in this project. One concern regarded the age at which a child is ready to accept Christ as Savior. The project leader answered the question by contending that the matter could only be answered on an individual basis, and one should consider the maturity and understanding of the child before passing any judgment. The project leader added that the likelihood of a child who has attended church from infancy—or at least the preschool age—and who has parents who actively discuss and teach God’s Word in the home, could expect their child to start asking questions regarding salvation at an earlier age. Parents were warned not to push a child to make a salvation decision, but to allow the Holy Spirit to do His job of convicting.

The parents’ primary responsibilities to their children prior to salvation is to teach them the Word of God and to pray regularly that they would heed the leading of the Holy Spirit and accept the gift of eternal life. A subsequent issue discussed was when to lead the child in a prayer of acceptance of salvation. Parents were cautioned not to dismiss their children’s plea to accept Christ. Understanding that if parents teach their children what salvation is and how it is obtained, it will be natural for the child to use the vocabulary of the adults who have taught them about salvation. Therefore, they may express themselves in terms that are beyond their comprehension, but should not be disqualified by the parent because they could not use their own words.
Teaching children about salvation is vitally important and the “Ready-made Object Lessons” (Appendix 5) offered a number of different ways to teach the same message. However, teaching the lesson was not the concern of the participants. The greatest need expressed was how to be proactive or, in some cases, reactively guard against the inevitable doubts that a child may have now or in years to come regarding their salvation experience. A common ploy of Satan is to cause an adult man or woman to question the decision they made for Christ as a child. Therefore, as part of the handout, the project leader included a salvation contract that parents could use when their children make a decision for Christ.

The project leader explained that the following contract could be used as a guide for the parent and child to create a document that would solidify the event of the day allowing the parents to be witness to the most important decision the child will ever make in his or her life. The project leader added that certain rules should be followed in the construction of the contract: the child should write it, parental help should be given to make sure pertinent details are added, the child should sign it, parents and anyone else who is present should sign as witnesses, and copies should be made and kept in a secure location. The following was the example given:

I, (child’s name), know that I am a sinner and that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead on the third day for my sins. Today, the (day’s full date), I asked Jesus to come into my heart and forgive me of my sins. I have made this decision on my own and completely understand the decision that I have made today in asking Jesus to come into my heart.

The child would sign and print their name below the contract and date the document to the side like a regular contract. They would draw a line for each witness to sign on and label witness under each signature. Below all signatures, the project leader
suggested that the child write the reference to three passages: Ephesians 2:8-9 to remind the child that salvation is a free gift that is neither earned nor deserved, and 1 John 4:4 and Ephesians 4:30, each of which should have a star drawn next to it. These two verses would serve as scripture the children can revisit when Satan attempts to make them doubt their salvation. Each of these verses emphasizes God’s power to keep them as his children.

The sixth session concluded with the project leader giving the parent interview (Appendix 2) to the participants. Once all the completed interviews and weekly journals (Appendix 6) were collected, the project leader asked for any final questions or comments. One parent mentioned, and the others in attendance concurred, that they found the “Ready-made Object Lessons” (Appendix 5) most useful when a number of the lesson ideas were committed to memory. Participants stated that having the knowledge of various lessons helped them in identifying teachable moments and expressing biblical truth in a more precise manner. Additionally, they concurred that they were able to teach more lessons when they had committed thought to more lessons. One participant stated that his Bible study was affected in a positive way as his considered teaching spiritual truths to his children. The project leader encouraged the parents to continue to use the weekly journals (Appendix 6) as a way of game planning specific truths that they desire to teach their children. The final session concluded with a word of prayer.

**Conclusion**

The six sessions that made up the project “Parenting with a Purpose” allowed the axioms of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to be presented to a willing participant group. The variables concerning the project were fulfilled. The facilities were able to satisfy the
needs of the project. The participants were able to complete the project requirements. The project leader was able to promote the project adequately, and the goals and assumptions were able to be measured.

The parents involved showed a sincere desire to fulfill their biblical, God-given command to be their children’s primary spiritual educators. The project leader was able to explore the assumptions concerning the parents’ willingness and activity levels. Specific areas of doctrine were taught and received. Parents confronted their children with a number of spiritual truths. God was honored through this attempt to be obedient to the commands given in Scripture.
CHAPTER 5
PROJECT EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The project, “Parenting with a Purpose,” was the attempt of developing parents to become the primary spiritual educators of their children. The project served as a wonderful opportunity to connect parents to a strategy of fulfilling their God-given responsibilities to teach their children. For six weeks, parents committed themselves to developing skills, exercising strategies, and connecting with their children in new and creative ways. The following will chronicle the progress that was made toward helping parents fulfill the commandment given in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Goal One

The first goal stated in chapter 3 focused on the development and implementation of a research plan to enhance participants’ knowledge, attitude, and skills for the purpose of fulfilling their parental roles in the spiritual education of school-aged children. The writer prepared an instrument that was used for pre-test and post-test purposes. The instrument was designed to measure the participant’s knowledge of the Word of God in specific doctrinal areas, gauge perspectives on their attitudes toward the biblical education of their children, and their current level of participation in the teaching and modeling of biblical truths to their children. Participants received the parent interview (Appendix 2) at the beginning of the project and again at the conclusion of the
project. The same instrument was used for both interviews; no questions were changed or altered in any way. The parent interview was divided into three parts: attitude, acuity, and activity. The results for each of these three areas will be discussed in the following pages.

**Attitude**

Participants were asked to answer six questions using a Likert scale. Their choices were to circle numbers one through four which represented: never, not often, often, and always. The first statement read: “I have a desire to teach my children the Bible and its precepts, but feel inadequate to do so.” Eighty percent of the participants indicated that “not often” did they feel adequate to teach their children the Bible. However, when asked to respond to the same statement at the end of the project, 80 percent indicated an increase in their feeling by replying that they “often” feel adequate to share biblical truths to their children. Only one participant involved in the study reported that he felt no change in his ability to share biblical truths to his children.

The second statement read: “I believe that it is my responsibility to teach my children stories from the Bible.” Ninety percent responded “always” to the second statement. In the conclusion of the project, all participants responded “always” to the second statement of the parent interview.

The third statement read: “I am confident and comfortable answering my children’s questions about the Word of God.” This statement provided division among the participants as 25 percent responded they were “not often” confident, but 50 percent identified that they “often” felt comfortable, while 25 percent stated they were “always” comfortable. The conclusion of the project reported that 90 percent reported that they
were “always” comfortable, with the remaining 10 percent indicating that they were “often” comfortable.

The fourth statement read: “I believe it is the church’s obligation to teach my children principles for daily living from the Bible.” In the first implementation of the parent interview, a few parents expressed confusion regarding this question. The writer explained that this question was asking participants to express their attitudes concerning the church’s role in teaching their children. Participants made their selection with no one changing their answers. Thirty percent stated that it was “never” the church’s obligation to teach their principles for daily living. Twenty-five percent responded “not often,” while the remaining 50 percent responded “always.” In the concluding interview, 50 percent responded “always,” while 25 percent responded “often,” and the remaining 25 percent responded “not often.”

The fifth statement read: “I believe it is important to pray with my children at least four times a week.” Ninety percent answered “always” to this statement, with the remaining 10 percent answering “often.” All of the participants answered “always” in the final interview. The final statement in this category read: “I depend on the church to be the chief provider of Bible education to my children.” Ninety percent of the participants responded “not often” to this statement, while 10 percent responded “never.” At the conclusion of the project, the participants’ answers did not change.

The participants indicated that they had a desire to teach their children the Word of God as instructed in Scripture. Participants’ cumulative average scores in the attitude category increased three points from the pre-interview and post-interview (Figure 1). These scores agreed with the impressions the writer experienced in his interaction with the participants. Each of the parents involved in this study believed that they had a
After biblical instruction, this belief was solidified and even became more fervent.

**Acuity**

The second major area measured for this project was the participants’ acuity as it relates to biblical knowledge. While it would be a daunting task to have a complete understanding of a person’s biblical knowledge, the writer chose to examine aspects of the six biblical truths that would be presented in the project. Participants were asked fill-in-the blank questions so that answers could be assessed by the writer, and scores could be given based on the quality of the answer. The writer rated each response with a score from zero to four. If the participant responded with an answer that would need no further explanation or exceeded the requirement of the question, then a score of four was given. Answers that sufficiently answered the question were awarded three points, and answers
that exhibited a working knowledge of the subject, but lacked components of a sufficient answer were awarded two points. Participants who attempted to answer the question, but provided a primarily inaccurate answer were awarded one point. Participants who left an answer choice blank or responded that they did not know the answer were awarded zero points.

The first question asked of the participants was: “What are God’s intentions in providing mankind with the Bible?” In the pre-interview, the participants’ average answer represented a sufficient knowledge; however, in the post-interview, the participants’ average response indicated an exceptional knowledge. The participants were asked to give an argument for the existence of God. The average response from the participants in the pre-interview for this question indicated that the majority had a working knowledge; however, in the post-interview, the participants’ displayed an exceptional knowledge.

The final four questions of this section were: What was the purpose of Jesus coming to earth? What does the Holy Spirit do? Can you identify one passage that tells us that man is a sinner? What must a person do to accept God’s gift of eternal life? Participants scored, on average, in the exceptional knowledge for each of these questions. The writer expected a working knowledge from the participants, but was surprised to see that the responses for the final four topics represented an exceptional knowledge. The writer was pleased to see that a small increase in the acuity, indicating that the teaching was beneficial. Figure 2 contrasts the average cumulative scores in the acuity section of the pre- and and post-interviews. Only a one-and-a-half point differential existed between the pre-interview and the post-interview. This represents a deeper than expected comprehension of God’s Word.
Activity

Participants’ attitudes toward teaching their children were very important; their acuity was essential, but neither of those two categories would matter if the participants would have been already doing what was presented in this project. Participants were asked to respond to seven statements using the same Likert scale from the first section of the parent interview. The purpose of these statements was to gauge accurately the parents’ current level of participation in regard to the education of their children. The statements ranged from the planning to the fulfillment of teaching spiritual truths.

The first statement parents were asked to respond to was: “I currently have a plan or strategy for teaching my child precepts from God’s Word.” Over 60 percent of the participants responded “not often” to the previous statement. However, 20 percent responded “always” to this response.
The second statement read: “I intentionally tell my children something about God or the Bible more than once a week.” This question garnered the highest pre-interview score with 90 percent responding “always.” The remaining 10 percent responded “often.”

The third statement read: “I answer questions my children have about God, the Bible, and/or Christian living.” Sixty percent of the participants responded “often,” while the remaining 40 percent responded “always.”

The fourth statement read: “I look for opportunities to teach my children a spiritual truth from God’s Word.” Sixty percent of the participants answered “often,” while the other 40 percent was split between “not often” and “always.”

The fifth statement read: “I pray with my children four or more nights a week.” Seventy percent of the participants responded “not often” to the previous statement. Twenty-five percent responded “never” to the statement, while 5 percent responded “always.”

The sixth statement posed resulted in the lowest responses. The statement read: “I read the Bible to my children at least three times a week.” Ninety percent of the participants responded “not often,” while the remaining 10 percent responded “never.”

The final statement read: “My children receive most of their spiritual education outside of the home.” This statement was explained by the writer as the parents’ activity in taking their children to church; however, the question was not amended in the parent interview. Ninety percent of the participants responded “often,” while the remaining 10 percent stated “not often.” The average cumulative score in this section rose four points from the pre-interview to the post-interview, marking the highest change in response from one category (Figure 3).
The writer was pleased to see the increase in this section because of the implications of the responses. This section shows a level of success in the project as the participants increased their activity of teaching their children spiritual truths from God’s Word. Additionally, this indicates that the parents were succeeding in fulfilling God’s commands in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 at greater levels than what they were prior to the implementation of this project. The average overall scores from the pre- and post-interviews indicated an increase from the participants (Figure 4).

The final measurement device used in the project was the weekly journal (Appendix 6). This tool was used primarily as the participants’ communication tool to the writer to express how the Ready-made Object Lessons (Appendix 5) were completed each week. While subjective in nature, this tool allowed the writer to view the participants’ self-reports as to how their children’s education was progressing.
Additionally, it allowed the writer to gauge how the introduction and role play of the Ready-made Object Lessons would be conducted in the next session. The weekly journal asked the participants to gauge their encounters with their child as profitable or not and suggest improvements they could make or changes to the Ready-made Object Lessons. As a way of planning and preparation, participants were expected to complete the majority of the journal entry prior to teaching their children the biblical truth. The remainder of the journal entry was to be completed after the teaching as a way of reporting what had occurred and reflection of what could be done different or better the next time the subject would be taught.

### Figure 4
**Average Cumulative Score of Parent Interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Pre-Interview</th>
<th>Post-Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal Two

The second goal made by the writer included the report of how well the research plan was prepared, how effectively the research was implemented, how much
change was brought about in the ministry setting as a result of the research, and the contribution this research has made to the parents’ abilities to be the spiritual educators in the lives of their children. The following will report on each of these areas and include the writer’s assessment of the ministry project.

Plan

The plan formulated by the writer was to meet six weeks with parents, grandparents, or guardians who are the primary caregivers to children between the grades of kindergarten and fourth grade. The approximate ages of the children will range between five-to-ten years of age. Research participants were to be members or regular attendees of The Ridge Baptist Church, Tate Springs Baptist Church, or any of the ministries associated with the two churches. These participants were scheduled to meet for six consecutive weeks at which time six different doctrinal topics were taught and the Ready-made Object Lessons were introduced. Participants were given parent interviews at the beginning of the project and again at the end of the project. Participants were asked to complete weekly journals as a way to communicate their progress to the writer.

The project was completed as planned. The six sessions proved to be difficult for participants, as each week participants were missing with some having to listen online to the recorded sessions. One adjustment made during the project was in regard to the teaching aspect. Originally the writer expected to have to spend more of the session time on teaching biblical truths; however, after the examination of the pre-interviews, it became apparent that the teaching needed to be presented differently than planned. The writer shortened the lessons, but increased the depth of each lesson to give opportunities for review and introduction to the deeper aspects of each truth. This was the greatest
miscalculation the writer made in the development of the plan. However, this adjustment appeared to produce some fruit as an increase was reported from the group in overall acuity.

The time allowance for each session worked well for the participants and was adequate for the writer to teach the biblical truth, review the previous week’s progress or difficulties, and role play the Ready-made Object Lessons. After the first session, the location was moved to the main church campus, as previously reported, and this proved to be more efficient for the participants and the writer. The resources needed to complete the session were provided by Tate Springs Baptist Church, and their assistance was available for the entire project.

**Implementation**

Each session followed the same lesson plan, with each session introducing a new biblical truth. The first session introduced the parent’s responsibilities, which led to a lengthy explanation of Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The parents’ responsibilities of their children’s education are vitally important to this study, but the teaching should have been scheduled and time consideration given to proper introduction of the topic. The teaching on Deuteronomy 6:4-9, coupled with the plan of teaching on the Bible, weighed down the first session and may have kept the first session from being the best it could be.

Participants in this session were asked to complete the enrollment card (Appendix 3), answer the parent interview, listen to two lessons, and be introduced to the Ready-made Object Lessons. This appeared to be overwhelming for the parents, and prevented the writer from being able to connect with the group as well as he had planned.
The teaching aspects of the sessions were focused in the following areas and were taught in the respected order: Bible, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Man, and Salvation. The topic order seemed to flow and make logical order. The placement of the teaching within the session should have been moved back with a special emphasis to the Ready-made Object Lessons made prior to the teaching. Participants would have benefited earlier in the project if more time had been given to how the object lessons were going to work within the scope of the teaching sessions. Instead, the writer presented the teaching lesson separately, then made some attempts to tie the lessons and teaching together at the end.

The verbal feedback from the participants was a lack of understanding of how the teaching worked with the lessons. This was corrected by the writer in the third session by making a note of the lessons and how the lessons and knowledge of the subject work in tandem to produce the most fruitful result. An additional aspect regarding the sessions is the preparation of the paperwork. The writer struggled early in the project to maintain a clear order of all the materials involved. Better organization or condensing handouts would have alleviated confusion and expedited the sessions.

The data provided by the parent interview served helpful for the understanding of the participants’ aptitude and willingness to fulfill God’s command for parents. The writer discovered that the participants’ unique relationships with their children necessitated that a greater emphasis be placed on the Ready-Made Object Lessons as being a guide to teaching children. Weekly journals were the most important measurement tools the writer had to gauge subjectively the progress of the participants. The journals did not contain a point value to objectify the data gathered, but rather exhibited the participants attitude, acuity, and action. The journals were to be completed
in two parts. The first four questions were to be completed prior to the teaching event, and the final two questions were designed to be completed at the conclusion of the participants’ interaction with their children.

The weekly journal asked the participants to report the biblical truth and passage they taught to their children. Additionally, participants were responsible for writing out how they planned to teach the truth to their children, as well as, considering what they wanted their children to know at the conclusion of the lesson. In addition to this, participants were asked if they were able to accomplish what they had planned to achieve through their teaching.

The writer learned a number of things from the weekly journal. He learned that the participants’ unique relationships with their children necessitated that he place a greater emphasis to the parents that the Ready-made Object Lessons were a guide to teaching children. The participants reported great success in the use of the Ready-made Object Lessons, but also communicated adjustments made to fit their individual needs. While the writer never intended for the Ready-made Object Lessons to be followed exactly as written—but rather as a guide for parents to use, follow, and make their own—it was not communicated well in the beginning. Additionally, the writer noted that success was predicated by the completion of the weekly journal. Participants who completed the weekly journal reported a successful interaction; however, all participants who did not complete a weekly journal verbally communicated to the writer that they did not achieve success, often citing lack of planning or a failure to have a clear educational goal for their child as the reason for the lack of success.
Leader Evaluation

The writer proposed the expectation of seeing the average score per section of the parent interview increase an average of three points. Participants reported an average increase of exactly three points in the attitude section. This indicated that the writer was successful in communicating the necessity of parental leadership in the education of elementary school-aged children. This reported growth demonstrates that the participants received the information introduced primarily in the first session and repeated throughout the other five sessions. Participants demonstrated their increased desire to be the primary spiritual educators of their children through their responses in the post interview.

The acuity section of the parent interview showed a minimal increase of one-and-a-half points. The writer attributes the failure toward goal achievement of an average three-point increase to a higher-than-expected initial score on the parent interview. Despite the failure to reach the expected goal, the writer was encouraged by the increase, given the higher-than-expected initial scores. Additionally, participants were measured by their report of activity in reference to their sharing and teaching biblical truths to their children. This section also saw an average increase of three points.

Participants’ activity level was an area of great importance to the writer. The hope for this writer was to see a significant increase in the parent’s activity of teaching their children the Word of God. While a three-point differential between pre- and post-test interviews was achieved, it was hoped that a greater increase would have occurred. The writer was successful in motivating and equipping participants to be more purposeful in how they communicated biblical truths to their children. The increase does provide insight to increased activity and success within the project. The objective was reached in two of the three sections of the parent interview, thus proving the leader’s ability to
accomplish the primary intentions of the ministry project, which was to create an excitement and to motivate parents to become their children’s primary spiritual educator. While the writer achieved success in two categories, the shortcomings experienced in the second section should be considered. The goal was missed by one-and-a-half points on average. The writer’s failure in this area should be considered in his attention to the pre-interview scores and a refined emphasis on the doctrinal areas that showed the greatest promise for increase.

Participants were asked to complete a leadership evaluation instrument (Appendix 10). The participants strongly agreed that the researcher clearly communicated the expectations of the project to the participants. Further, participants strongly agreed that the researcher interacted well with the participants. Participants were asked if the leader guided the participants in learning the biblical truths and how to share the truths with children. All participants who completed the leadership evaluation strongly agreed with the previous statement. Additionally, participants were asked to respond to the statement: “The project leader provided adequate material to equip the participants in fulfilling the project objective of sharing biblical truths to children.” Participants strongly agreed with the previous statement. The participants also strongly agreed that the project leader equipped the participants to fulfill God’s command in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Complete agreement was present among those who completed the leadership evaluation that the project leader completed the objectives of this project.

**Implications for Further Study**

This ministry project allows for a number of different implications for further study. The implications addressed in this section will include the possibility of a
longitudinal study, the refining of the workshop format into a parenting class, additional longitudinal considerations, and the reuse of this project as a workshop with corrections made.

Participants from this study could be tracked, and their success or failure as their child’s primary spiritual educator could be examined. This study could be tracked in five-year increments for ten years with self-report instruments similar to the parent interview, but with modifications made. Additionally, the writer would consider constructing an instrument that the children could complete gauging the increase in their spiritual knowledge. For this to work, parents would need to choose specific areas of doctrine they wanted to teach so that these areas could be tracked. It would also be necessary to work in cooperation with the children’s minister of their churches to know what doctrinal areas were being taught in the children’s program and, if at all possible, to maintain a separation between what is being taught at home versus the church.

Special consideration would need to be given to those children who attended Christian schools, so that the differential could be made between what they were learning from home opposed to what they were learning at school. For this current study to be transformed into a longitudinal study, these instruments, assessments, and interviews would have to be created. The children of the participants would also have to be included in the study so that proper tracking could occur. Further, parents would have to report their involvement through the use of weekly journals. In addition, more object lessons would need to be created with a comprehensive consideration to the various doctrines and biblical truths for daily living.

Another implication that may be useful would be to take the current format of the workshop and transform it into a parenting class. This would necessitate the addition
of other doctrinal topics, as well as Christian-living issues as made pertinent by the daily culture. Classes would have to focus on the application of biblical truths as it relates to the believer, then transition the teaching to how these truths could be communicated to children using the Ready-made Object Lessons. The addition of more object lessons would be necessary for the completion of this type of study. In this environment, the participants would meet once a week for one hour, and the weekly journal would serve as the primary gauge of progress. Revisions would need to be made to the journal so that it could be used as a more objective instrument.

A longitudinal study could be constructed by seeking out parents of kindergarteners from a ministry setting and offering either an annual parent workshop, or weekly parenting classes during the church’s regular small group instruction time. This instruction could continue for five years using many of the instruments made available through this project, as well as the creation of a new instrument to gauge a fourth grader’s biblical knowledge.

This study would work under the assumption that the families involved stayed at the church during the length of the study, and that not all parents of kindergarteners would choose to participate at all during the five-year period. At the conclusion of the five-year period, the writer would test all fourth graders in the children’s ministry, with the parents’ approval, in order to determine how the students whose parents participated in the parent workshops or classes did as compared to those parents who did not participate. An additional question to both the students and parents about the parents’ activity in teaching biblical truths at home would be crucial in accurate outcome to the study.
This project could be re-attempted in a workshop format. However, changes would need to be made to the various components of the workshop. One may consider issuing a survey to those who meet the criteria of having a child five-to-ten-years old to determine the best time of year to hold the workshop and what time it should be held. The parent interview would need to have revisions made, possibly adding more questions or refining existing sections. Topics for consideration may need to be examined outside the doctrinal issues presented. Parents may be struggling with other issues, and an investigation as to what those topics are may result in more participants, greater attendance, or even the quality of effort from the participants. The foundation and idea presented in the ministry project is not completely flawed—nor does it lack value, but a restructuring of certain aspects could be even more fruitful than the first attempt at this ministry project.

**Summary**

The investigation of the importance of the parental role in the spiritual education of elementary-school-aged children was a profitable study and time of growth for the writer and participants of the ministry project. This research allowed the writer to examine the parental role and responsibility God designed and to examine how this vital function could be achieved in this day and age. The writer was blessed to examine the Scripture and come to an understanding of God’s expectations on parents, and then have the opportunity to share these biblical truths with parents who had a sincere desire to be obedient to God’s command.

The writer learned through the ministry project that parents have a desire to do what is right and to be obedient to God’s command. However, a clear direction or
understanding of how to reach that destination eludes most parents. While this writer possesses many shortcomings as father and servant of God; he has learned that there must be a goal set. In this case, the goal of being the child’s primary spiritual educator must be accomplished by the purposeful and intentional choice to share God’s Word with one’s children. Parents speak to their children on a daily basis, but how often do parents initiate or entice their children to discuss biblical truths? In the weekly journal, the question is asked, “What do I want my child to learn, begin doing, or stop doing because of this teaching?” The formulation of this question spoke to the writer’s heart, because it is the core of what this writer learned. One must identify their goals—where they wish to end up, if they intend on accomplishing the goals, hopes, and desires they set out to achieve.

A common speculation for the writer is the changes that would be made should the opportunity present itself to redo the project. One of the changes that would be made is that the number of sessions would be reduced to four. A greater emphasis would be placed on teaching how to utilize the Ready-made Object Lessons to the greatest potential. The parent interview would have some revisions made, one of which would be changing question seven of the activity section; this question did not make sense within the context of the other questions. Additional questions would be added to the activity section to review how principles for Christian living are being taught in the home. It appeared that the participants had an appropriate handle on major doctrinal areas; therefore, an emphasis would have been placed on how to live in obedience to the principles found in Scripture. These changes would increase the effectiveness for both the parents and the children.

The writer believes that this ministry project was successful, because the participants gained an awareness of God’s command—a command of which they
otherwise were unaware. Additionally, this project was successful, because it equipped the parents to fulfill their biblical responsibilities, accomplishing the goals that were made. Finally, it was successful, because it connected parents to their children in a way that had not previously taken place in their homes. The writer asserts that this project was a success, but also believes that it could have been more successful. There were additional people who fit the criteria that for one reason or another were not compelled by the advertising to come and participate in the project. Other people attended either the first or second session and did not return. The writer believes that changes mentioned in the previous paragraph could have made an impact and possibly have retained some of these participants. The project proved to be successful; it was a benefit to those who were willing to follow the leadership of the Lord. Overall, the writer counts the time spent on this project, time with participants, and the materials developed to have been worthwhile and personally rewarding as well as pleasing to God.
APPENDIX 1

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Parents, please answer the following questions/statements by circling “Yes” or “No.” Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and used solely as a basis for substantiating the need for training and encouraging parents to have an active role in their children’s discipleship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe it is the church’s obligation to teach my children principles for daily living from the Bible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am always confident and comfortable when teaching my children the Word of God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I depend on the church to be the chief provider of Bible education to my children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not believe that it is my responsibility to teach my children stories from the Bible.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I read the Bible to my children at least three times a week.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I tell my children something about God or the Bible at least once a week.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I pray with my children four or more nights a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My children receive most of their spiritual education outside the home.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a desire to teach my children the Bible and its precepts, but feel inadequate to do so.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I currently have a plan or strategy for teaching my child precepts from God’s Word.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2
PARENT INTERVIEW

Please respond to the following statements or questions by circling the number that best represents your answer: 1 = never, 2 = not often, 3 = often, 4 = always

Attitude

1. I have a desire to teach my children the Bible and its precepts, but feel inadequate to do so. 1 2 3 4

2. I believe that it is my responsibility to teach my children stories from the Bible. 1 2 3 4

3. I am confident and comfortable answering my children’s questions about the Word of God. 1 2 3 4

4. I believe it is the church’s obligation to teach my children principles for daily living from the Bible. 1 2 3 4

5. I believe it is important to pray with my children at least four times a week. 1 2 3 4

6. I depend on the church to be the chief provider of Bible education to my children. 1 2 3 4

Acuity

1. What are God’s intentions in providing mankind with the Bible? __________

__________________________
________________________________________________________________________
2. Give an argument for the existence of God. ____________________________________________
                                                                                       ______________________________________________________________
3. What was the purpose of Jesus coming to earth? ________________________________
                                                                                       ______________________________________________________________
                                                                                       ______________________________________________________________
5. Can you identify one passage that tells us that man is a sinner? ______________
                                                                                       ______________________________________________________________
6. What must a person do to accept God’s gift of eternal life? ____________________
                                                                                       ______________________________________________________________

Activity

1. I currently have a plan or strategy for teaching my child precepts from God’s Word.    1  2  3  4

2. I intentionally tell my children something about God or the Bible more than once a week. 1  2  3  4

3. I answer questions my children have about God, the Bible and/or Christian living. 1  2  3  4

4. I look for opportunities to teach my children a spiritual truth from God’s Word. 1  2  3  4

5. I pray with my children four or more nights a week. 1  2  3  4

6. I read the Bible to my children at least three times a week. 1  2  3  4

7. My children receive most of their spiritual education outside of the home. 1  2  3  4
APPENDIX 3
ENROLLMENT CARD

Family #___________

Father’s Information
Name: ___________________________ Age __________
Address: ___________________________________
Occupation: __________________________ Ethnicity: ______
Email: ___________________________ Phone: _______________________

Mother’s Information
Name: ___________________________ Age __________
Address: ___________________________________
Occupation: __________________________ Ethnicity: ______
Email: ___________________________ Phone: _______________________

Marital Status
Married   Divorced   Single   Remarried

Children’s Information
Name-Age-Grade-Gender

1. _______________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________
4. _______________________________________________________

I commit to attend all sessions, participate in the project, and complete an exit interview.
_________________________________________ ____________________________
APPENDIX 4

LESSON PLANS

Session 1

I. Prayer
II. Introduction of Scriptural Truth
III. Bible—God’s Inspired Word
IV. Why is the Bible Important?
V. Teaching my Children about the Bible
VI. Putting it into Action
VII. Prayer

Session 2

I. Prayer
II. Introduction of Scriptural Truth
III. God—Creator of Everything
IV. Application of Scriptural Truth
V. Practical Teaching
VI. Putting it into Action
VII. Prayer

Session 3

I. Prayer
II. Introduction of Scriptural Truth
III. Jesus—the Son of God—His Role and Purpose
IV. Application of Scriptural Truth
V. Practical Teaching
VI. Putting it into Action
VII. Prayer
Session 4

I. Prayer
II. Introduction of Scriptural Truth
III. Holy Spirit—What He Does in the Believer’s Life
IV. Application of Scriptural Truth
V. Practical Teaching
VI. Putting it into Action
VII. Prayer

Session 5

I. Prayer
II. Introduction of Scriptural Truth
III. Man—His Nature and Results of Sin
IV. Application of Scriptural Truth
V. Practical Teaching
VI. Putting it into Action
VII. Prayer

Session 6

I. Prayer
II. Introduction of Scriptural Truth
III. Salvation—God’s Plan of Redemption for Man
IV. Application of Scriptural Truth
V. Practical Teaching
VI. Putting it into Action
VII. Prayer
APPENDIX 5

READY-MADE OBJECT LESSONS

The following table is a list of topics, scriptures, objects, and explanations to assist parents in teaching their children spiritual truths with objects that are readily available in household settings.

Directions: Prayerfully consider a spiritual truth you would like to teach your child. Study the passage and read the instructions associated with the topic. Anticipate the questions your child will have and any words or additional knowledge you may need to have. With the object or event in mind make plans to share the truth. Timing is important; so you need to develop planned spontaneity. Be sure that you are selecting the best possible time and location for your child to receive the truth that you will teach him or her. These object lessons are tools for your use but consider your child’s unique personality in your preparation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Object-Event</th>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16</td>
<td>The Bible is a special book that God wrote through men in order that we could know Him. Take a moment to share with your child that the Bible is more than just another book. This topic could be introduced at a bookstore or at home while the child works on homework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>Reminder</td>
<td>Psalm 119:16</td>
<td>God wants us to remember His Word by memorizing Scripture. Whether you are at home or on the road, schedule a reminder on your phone or place a post-it note with some task so that your child can see it. Take that moment to say “reminders are great, because they help me to remember things.” Then, explain that God says it is important to remember His Word. Help the child memorize Psalm 119:16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Salt and Light</td>
<td>Matthew 5:13-16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>This truth can be taught at the dinner table, while cooking, or any time you want to point out light. This passage points out the usefulness of the believer fulfilling his/her purpose of bringing honor and glory to God by obedient living. Use salt and light as examples of items that are useful as they fulfill their purposes. Have the child think of ways they personally can be useful for God.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct</th>
<th>Bad Attitudes</th>
<th>Galatians 5:16-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take advantage of a time when you see someone exhibiting a bad attitude. This could be a television show, someone in public, or so forth. Use this opportunity to talk about the various ways God does not want people to act. Have the child think of some ways they could change bad actions they have done in the past (example: instead of yelling, speak softly).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct</th>
<th>Television Radio</th>
<th>Psalm 101:3</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Many television shows or songs on the radio are available for us to watch and hear. However, the Bible tells us that we should be careful what we absorb into our minds. Model for your children the right type of programs to watch and songs to which to listen. Point out why you only watch and list the programs you watch. Use this verse to show them why.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Colossians 3:8-11</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>While helping your child dress, explain how the Bible says we should take off sinful actions and put on the right actions just as we take dress and undress. Using the illustration of removing clothing and putting on new clothes, explain that we have the ability, through God’s power, to stop acting sinfully and to put on good behavior.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct</th>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Galatians 5:22-26</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When you are in the produce section of the grocery store, or in the kitchen eating fruit, explain to your children some of the benefits fruit provides. Then, explain that,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Sun/Moon</td>
<td>Genesis 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decisions</td>
<td>TV/TV Guide</td>
<td>Joshua 24:15 &amp; James 4:13-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Hebrews 12:7-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Scripture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>Running Errands Matthew 28:19-20</td>
<td>While running errands or even traveling, explain to your children that it is the duty of the believer to tell people about Jesus everywhere they go. Model this activity for your children by sharing the Gospel message with someone with whom you come in contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism (lifestyle)</td>
<td>Flashlight Matthew 5:16</td>
<td>This can be done at night, or maybe when the electricity is out. Take a flashlight and explain that just as the light shines in the darkroom, so our actions can shine in the places where we go. When we do the things that honor God, others will see us, and this is an opportunity for us to glorify God. Have your child think of ways they could act to bring honor to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Chair         Ephesians 2:8-9</td>
<td>Tell your child that a chair reminds you a lot of faith. When they ask why, explain that a chair looks like it could hold you up. It has four legs to support you, and is already standing by itself. The chair looks like it could be a place where you could sit down, but it is not until you put your faith in that chair by sitting down on it that you will know it can hold you up (sit down in the chair). Explain that faith works the same way. We do not know that faith will save us until we put our trust in Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favoritism</td>
<td>M&amp;M’s         James 2:1-9</td>
<td>Give your child M &amp; M’s for a treat. Then, explain that we have something in common with M &amp; M’s. M &amp; M’s look different, and they come in many different colors, but they all taste the same, because they are all the same inside. We are like M &amp; M’s in that we all look different, but we are the same inside. God views us all the same way. He does not care if we are red, yellow, brown, or blue. We are all the same to Him. He does not favor one of us over the other, and just like God does not play favorites, neither should...</td>
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</table>
we play favorites. In fact, the Bible says it is a sin when we are partial to one person over another.

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<tr>
<th>Friendship/ Salvation</th>
<th>Friend</th>
<th>John 15:12-17 Romans 5:8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When talking about friends or maybe having a friend over, tell your child about Jesus’ command to love one another. Also use this as an opportunity to explain the friend we have in Jesus. Explain how the greatest thing a person could do is lay down their life for a friend. Then tell them about how Jesus laid down His life for us.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giving</th>
<th>Giving/ Tithing</th>
<th>Malachi 3:8-12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fill out an offering envelope in front of your children. Ask them if they know what you are doing (anything to engage them in conversation). When they ask explain that you are giving your tithes and offering. Explain the difference between the tithe and offering. Then tell them why it is so important to give. You can then read to them the passage in Malachi and tell them what God says when we do not give.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giving</th>
<th>Giving/ Tithing</th>
<th>2 Corinthians 9:6-13</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up with your children after worship about how important the offering time is at church. Show your children an offering envelope and explain to your children that it is important to give and list some of the practical reasons why the church needs money (building, utilities, supplies, curriculum, staff to teach, etc…). Share with your child that our attitude when we give is as important to God as our giving. Tell them that God wants us to be excited to give to Him. Be sure to explain the difference between a tithe (ten percent of one’s gross wages) and an offering which is a freewill gift given above and beyond the tithe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God (creation)</td>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>Genesis 1:24-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God (existence)</td>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>Genesis 1:24-25; Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God (existence)</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>Genesis 1; Psalm 19:1</td>
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</table>
He did it and what order He created everything. Therefore, we can look at the sky, trees, water and everything on the earth and realize that there must be a God who created all of this; specifically the God of the Bible.

|God (existence) | Mowing the Lawn/Yard Work | Romans 1:18-20  
|                |                           | Psalm 19:1 |
|                |                           |           |
| Have the entire family come together for yard work. After a while, take a break and talk about the grass, flowers, birds, and everything else you see in nature and explain how God created every single thing. We can know that God is real through His creation. Where else could the trees, birds, grass, etc., come from unless God created it? |

|God (guidance) | GPS/Map | Proverbs 3:5-6 |
|              |         |               |
| While traveling point out to your children how the GPS or map shows you the path to get to your destination. Explain that if we trust in God and follow His path for us we will arrive at the destination of a God-honoring life. Have your child think of some areas that they could trust God and use His guidance. |

|God (guidance) | Planner/Calendar | Jeremiah 1:1-8 |
|               |                  |               |
| Think ahead to event or trip you are planning to take. Use this to help your children learn about planning for an activity (e.g. packing). Then seize the opportunity to explain that God had a plan for each one of us before we were ever born. His desire for each of us is the same, in that we were created to bring honor and glory to God. |

|God (guidance) | Planner/Calendar | Jeremiah 29:11 |
|               |                  |               |
| Follow up on the Jeremiah 1:1-8 passage. Remind your child of the lesson they had already learned about God’s plan. God’s plan is to bring us to the greatest possible outcome to please Him. This may not always mean that we get what we want; instead God will use events in our life so that we are able to honor and glorify God through our life. |

<p>|God (order) | Putting away toys, dishes | 1 Cor. 14:33 |
|           |                          |             |
| When cleaning the dishes or the children’s room talk to your children about the importance of order and cleanliness. Explain that God cares about order and that proper order should be characteristic of everything we do. This is another way |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God (provisions)</th>
<th>Rain/Thunderstorm</th>
<th>Genesis 6:1-8:22</th>
<th>Take advantage of the next thunderstorm or rain event and tell your children about the time it rained forty days and nights. Explain how God made provisions for Noah and his family to be saved from the flood. You can also talk about the faith it took to build the ark even though it had never rained before.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit</td>
<td>Child as Helper</td>
<td>John 14:15-18, 25-26</td>
<td>Ask your child to assist you in some household chore. Thank them for being your helper. Then tell them that God has given us a helper called the Holy Spirit. When the believer receives God’s gift of eternal life the Holy Spirit lives inside them. The Holy Spirit has a couple of jobs but the main job is to help and guide us as we live for Him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrologic Cycle</td>
<td>Rain, Thunderstorm</td>
<td>Job 36:27-28</td>
<td>Working with older children through their science class; show them how the hydrologic cycle was in the pages of the Bible long before it made its way into the pages of the textbook. Use this opportunity to prove the existence and wisdom of God. Examine your child’s science textbook to find the section on the hydrologic cycle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Jesus (Good Shepherd) | Candy Cane | John 10:11-15 | Tell your child that tradition holds that candy makers long ago made the candy cane in the shape that is in on purpose to make it look like a shepherd's crook. That way at Christmas time while the thoughts were on the birth of Jesus people could remember the work of Christ in His life. The reminder for everyone is that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd in that He loves and cares for His sheep (mankind) and that He, like a good shepherd will lay down His life for His sheep which He did on the cross. Explain that Jesus died on the cross to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jesus</th>
<th>Christmas</th>
<th>Luke 2:1-7</th>
<th>Before any present is open in your home for Christmas take a brief moment and read Luke 2:1-7. Briefly explain that Jesus is the reason for Christmas and He is the greatest gift that God has given us.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>Matthew 27:35-50; 28:1-8</td>
<td>Before any Easter celebration takes place spend a moment and explain that Jesus died on the cross to pay the sins of mankind. Then read Matthew 28:1-8 and explain that at Easter we celebrate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead; defeating death and the grave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus (relationship with)</td>
<td>Door</td>
<td>Revelation 3:20</td>
<td>When knocking on a door or maybe cleaning a door with your child, explain that the Bible said that Jesus knocked on a door. When you receive a puzzled look, tell the children that Jesus said that He is standing at the door knocking, wanting to have a relationship with the believers of the church. The same is true for us; Jesus wants to have a relationship with us, and we can do that by being obedient and praying to Him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus (who He is)</td>
<td>Family Pictures</td>
<td>John 20:31</td>
<td>Look through an old family album with your children. Point out people they do not know. After awhile, tell them there is someone else who is really important to your family that they may not know about. Then tell them about Jesus and His purpose on earth to die on the cross and rise from the dead.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Good Day</td>
<td>Psalm 126:3</td>
<td>At the end of a great day, tell your children that God desires for them to have the kind of joy you feel right now every day. Even on “bad” days, God wants us to have joy in our hearts, and we can and should because of the blessings He has provided us. Have the children think of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joy/Serving</td>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>Psalm 100:1-5</td>
<td>As your children play with toys, ask them if they are having fun and enjoying their toys. When they answer “yes,” tell them that, while playing with toys brings us a lot of joy and happiness, the greatest joy we can have is in serving others. Have the children think of a way they could serve someone else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judging</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>Luke 6:37-42; Matthew 7:1-5</td>
<td>Sit down with your children and look at some pictures together. Point out the old clothes or hairstyles and say, “there is a danger in looking at people sometimes.” This will most likely evoke a question from your child. When they ask why, tell them that when we view others a temptation to judge can be present. God does not want us to judge anyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life (God’s plan)</td>
<td>Legos</td>
<td>Jeremiah 29</td>
<td>Take some time with your child to build a Lego toy. Before you get started take the directions out and show them to your child. Directions are really important if we hope to end up with what we hope to build. The directions tell us what we need to do and when we need to do it; they are very helpful. If we obey the directions we will end up with what we hope for. God gave us instruction for living and the plan that He has for us is a good plan that will give us what is best for our life. God’s instructions for us are found in the Bible and if we will obey the instructions we will bring honor and glory to God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Matthew 9:10-13</td>
<td>When sitting at the dinner table, explain that one time people criticized Jesus for the table at which He sat. This should evoke a question from the children. Continue to say that Jesus sat at a table with a bunch of sinners—lowlifes with</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Mirror</td>
<td>Genesis 1:26</td>
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<td>When brushing your children’s teeth, talk about the reflection of the image and how they can view their own image in the glass. Explain that we can even see God in ourselves, because He made us in His image. While God does not possess physical features like us, we are made in the image of God in that we have life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, and justice.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Man</th>
<th>Mistakes</th>
<th>Romans 3:23; Ephesians 4:32</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>When either you or your children make a mistake, use the opportunity to explain that no one is perfect. We all make mistakes and sin against God. Sin separates us from God, but we can always ask for forgiveness and be reconciled back to Him.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Mercy</th>
<th>Laundry</th>
<th>Lamentations 3:21-23</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>While folding clothes with your children, tell them that God’s mercy is kind of like our clothes. Just as we wear our clothes and get them dirty, we can then wash them and they are like brand new. Each day, God makes His mercy new for us. This means He is willing to love us and offer forgiveness no matter how dirty we may get.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Bank</th>
<th>Haggai 2:8</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Take your children with you to the bank. Explain to them that the bank is a place where people go to deposit and withdraw money. Even though it may seem like the bank has all the money, really God is the owner of all the money, gold, and silver this world has to offer. Therefore, nothing that we really have is ours; everything belongs to God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money (and objects)</td>
<td>Anything</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 10:12-14</td>
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<td>Point out anything in your house or car to your children and explain that the Bible says that everything belongs to God. Ask them “if everything belongs to God, should you be willing to give to God whatever He asks?” Allow them to answer the question and discuss what it means to give to God. Ask them if they can think of anything they could give to bring honor and glory to God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Genesis 9:8-17</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>After a storm, look to find the rainbow present in the sky and point it out to your children. Tell them about the first rainbow and how God gave it as a promise to man that He would never again destroy the earth by a flood. While we enjoy the promise today, we should never forget it was man’s disobedience that caused the judgment of God. Additionally, this should help us to remember the judgment that comes upon the disobedient.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>Speed Limit Signs</td>
<td>Romans 13:1-7</td>
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<td>While driving, point out to your children the traffic signs and who institutes the rules of the road. Point out that, even though we may not agree with all the rules and laws, our responsibility is to pray for our government officials as God has allowed them to hold the positions of authority in which they are serving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>Speed Limit Signs</td>
<td>Luke 6:46-49</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>While in the car, point out some of the traffic signs or warning signs you see. Ask your children why it is important to obey the signs. Allow them to answer at length and ask you questions if necessary. Explain that God gives us warnings and directions in His word (the Bible). Following the signs on the road keeps us safe and helps us get to where we need to go. Following God’s Word will keep us safe and allow us to live a life that glorifies God. Ask your children if they know at least one thing that God has instructed people to do in the Bible. If they struggle, try to help them along with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Activity Description</td>
<td>Scripture References</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>Talk to your children about the grandparents and explain to them that their grandparents are you and your spouses’ moms and dads. Tell them about how important it was for you to obey them. Then teach your children that it is not just important to you that they obey you, but that it is important to God as well.</td>
<td>Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise/Worship</td>
<td>Make a list—whether it is a grocery list or household list—and display it in a place your child will see it (you may even request that they read or look for an item on the list). Tell them that making a list is really important, because you might forget something without it. Then, tell them that we can praise and worship God by making a list. We can list the blessings or those nice things God has done for us. We can remember those blessings and thank Him for each one. Have your child write down a couple of God’s blessings; then, lead your child in prayer to thank Him.</td>
<td>Ephesians 1:3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Ask your child to bring you the phone and declare that you need to make a call to someone. Tell your child that you are thankful for the phone, because it is really great to be able to talk to people who are miles away. Ask them what they like about calling people. Then, tell them that prayer is kind of like a phone. Prayer is the way people can communicate gratitude, praise, and requests to God. We can talk to God anytime we wish; we just simply need to speak to Him. Help your children pray by modeling for and leading them in prayer.</td>
<td>Philippians 4:5-6</td>
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<td>Priorities</td>
<td>Legos</td>
<td>Matthew 6:19-33, 10:34-39</td>
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<tr>
<td>While playing Legos with your child point out that each Lego brick has a limited number of snaps. Explain that it is very important that you use each snap wisely on the Lego brick. Then tell them that our life is like a Lego brick in that we only have a limited amount of time each day. In fact, we can think of ourselves as a Lego brick and the snaps on the Lego as our time. Therefore, it is really important that we use our time doing the things God would want us to do; because once you snap the Lego brick into place the same snap cannot be used somewhere else at the same time. That is why we must do first things first and God told us in the Bible what should always come first (Matthew 6:33).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salvation</th>
<th>Family Pictures</th>
<th>John 1:12; Romans 10:9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When looking over family albums, teach your children about their family (e.g. who is whose child). Then tell them that God has a family and wants them to be part of it. Read John 1:12 first; explain that we have the power to be in God’s family, because Jesus died on the cross for us. Complete the teaching by showing or quoting Romans 10:9 and asking them if they would like to receive Christ as Savior.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Salvation</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Luke 12:6-7 &amp; Romans 5:8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When purchasing something or rewarding the children after a job well done, use the opportunity to express God’s view of people. Tell your children that God values us so much that He paid the price for us; if we will believe in Him, we can receive the gift of eternal life.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salvation</th>
<th>Cleaning supplies</th>
<th>1 John 1:9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employ the services of your children while cleaning up after dinner. Make the comment as you use cleaner to wipe the table that Jesus and cleaning supplies have something in common. Cleaning supplies can cleanse our table of dirt and germs just like Jesus can forgive us our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness. Ask your child if they have ever asked Jesus to</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Door</td>
<td>John 10:7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>Revelation 1:5-Romans 10:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>John 6:35-40</td>
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</table>
| Salvation | Gift | Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9 | After a birthday, Christmas, or gift-giving event, talk to your children about receiving gifts. Ask them to tell you about their favorite gift. Then, ask them how much they had to pay for the gift. When
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Salvation</th>
<th>Wages</th>
<th>Romans 6:23; 10:9, 13</th>
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<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Wages</td>
<td>Romans 6:23; 10:9, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Wages</td>
<td>Romans 6:23; 10:9, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Serving Dinner</td>
<td>Joshua 24:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Gifts</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Romans 12:3-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

they tell you nothing, tell them that God has made a gift available to each and every one of us. God’s gift is the gift of eternal life. We need God’s gift, because we cannot earn and do not deserve eternal life. Ask your child if they would like to receive the gift of eternal life by asking Jesus to come into their heart and forgive them of their sins. Read Romans 10:9, and if your child is ready, lead them in a prayer to receive Christ.

Have your child perform a task with the understanding that they will receive a “wage” for doing the activity. After the child completes the activity, give them the money promised and explain that this was their wages for completing the task. Share with them Romans 6:23 and explain that our activity of sin is the reason why one day we will all die, but that God has given us a gift. This gift is something we cannot buy with our money; it is something from God. The gift God offers is eternal life. Ask your child if they would like to receive God’s gift of eternal life. If they answer “yes,” share Romans 10:9, 13 with them and lead them in a prayer to accept Christ as Savior.

Have your children set the table. Ask them if they had a choice to set the table. When they say “no,” affirm their answer, but tell them they acted well, because they were obedient. Then tell them that we have a choice every day of whether or not we will serve God, and that we have to make that choice every day with our actions. Have the children list one way they can serve God before the day is over.

While fixing something around the house or making a meal point out the tools you are using to complete the job. Ask your child what the tool your using is for (example: hammer); then ask them if
another tool would be helpful (example a whisk). Once they answer “no” explain that God has given each of us gifts that we can use to bring honor and glory to Him. These gifts are things that God has made us good at doing. Have the children think of something they are good at and how they could honor God with that gift.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thankfulness</th>
<th>Thanksgiving Day</th>
<th>Psalm 107:1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|              |                  | Before or after the crowds of family or friends take a quiet moment with your child to tell them some of the things you are thankful for. Have your child mention some of the things they are thankful for. Tell your child that we should be thankful for God because His love will never end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thankfulness</th>
<th>Thanksgiving Day</th>
<th>Luke 17:11-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|              |                  | When talking about giving thanks tell your children about Jesus healing the ten lepers. You can either focus on how to be thankful like the one leper or what kept the other nine from giving thanks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trinity</th>
<th>Egg</th>
<th>1 John 5:7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|         |     | When baking or cooking, involve your children to teach them this truth about God. Make something that requires an egg. Then, tell your children that an egg reminds you a little bit of God. Explain that one God exists, but He is three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; yet they are all one God. Just like an egg has three separate parts: egg shell, egg yolk, and egg white. All three of these parts of the egg are different; yet, all the components still are an egg. In the same way, God has three distinct personages, but is one God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Bad day</th>
<th>Genesis 50:20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|       |         | If either you or your child is having a bad day, use it as an opportunity to teach them how God may allow “bad” things to occur to fulfill a greater purpose. Review and share with them the story of Joseph, and show them how God allowed Joseph to have a lot of bad days and how God used
those bad days to save Joseph and his entire family. In the end, God used the bad days to fulfill His purpose for Joseph, and God received glory and honor through the difficult time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worship</th>
<th>Dinner Table</th>
<th>1 Corinthians 10:31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>While at the dinner table with your children, ask them if they knew that they could bring glory to God even while eating. The children will most likely answer “no.” Then ask if they know what it means to bring glory to God. Tell them that bringing glory to God is what we do when we thank Him; obey Him or anything else that He has commanded. Explain that we can bring glory to God in everything we do—whether it is eating with good manners, praying before we eat, or picking up our dishes when we are done eating. Have the kids list one way they can bring glory to God. Challenge your children to memorize 1 Corinthians 10:31 and recite it after asking God’s blessings on the meal. Occasionally follow up by asking them to tell you how they can bring glory to God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6
WEEKLY JOURNAL

Parents, please complete and submit the following journal each week.

Biblical truth:
________________________________________________________________________

Bible passage:
________________________________________________________________________

How do I plan to teach this truth to my child? ______________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What do I want my child to learn, begin doing, or stop doing because of this teaching?
________________________________________________________________________

Did you accomplish what you hoped to achieve in your teaching? (Yes or no, and please explain.)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Is there anything you would do differently if you were to repeat this activity? _______
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 7

PROJECT ADVERTISEMENT POSTERS

This poster’s size was 18”x 24” and displayed in multiple locations at The Ridge Baptist Church, Tate Springs Baptist Church, and Tate Springs Christian School.
APPENDIX 8

PROJECT ADVERTISEMENT BULLETIN INSERTS

This document was inserted into the bulletin distributed Sunday September 11\textsuperscript{th} to both Tate Springs Baptist Church and The Ridge Baptist Church.
APPENDIX 9

PROJECT ADVERTISEMENT FLYERS

This advertisement document was printed at 8½ by 11 inches on 28-pound premium color laser paper and distributed to all the classrooms in the Christian school, Tate Springs Sunday School classes and the congregation of The Ridge Baptist Church.
APPENDIX 10

LEADERSHIP EVALUATION

Respond to the statements below using the following scale:
1-Disagree, 2-Somewhat Disagree, 3-Agree, 4-Somewhat Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

1. The project leader clearly communicated the expectations of the project to the participants. ___
2. The project leader interacted well with the participants. ___
3. The project leader guided the participants in learning the biblical truths and how to share those truths with children. ___
4. The project leader provided adequate material to equip the participant in fulfilling the project objective of sharing biblical truths to children. ___
5. The project leader equipped the participant to fulfill God’s command in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. ___
BIBLIOGRAPHY


_________. “Ministry Area Profile Ethos.” 1990-2010.


