

NextGen BBQ Notes

Two big ideas that shape and guide an intentional partnership between Gateway and Parents:

- No one has more influence over the life of a child than a parent
- Parents can't do it alone

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Two things we ask of every parent:

- **Develop a personal authentic faith**

The best thing you could ever give your kids is a front row seat of what life-change, transformation, and forgiveness is supposed to look like because they're seeing what faith lived out looks like. Simply invite them into your own spiritual growth and show them what it looks like.

- **Leverage your influence**

Every parent has two types of influence

- *Positional Influence (that diminishes over time)*
- *Relational Influence (that potentially grows over time)*

Think about it. You have significant influence in the life of your preschooler because you're their mom/dad. You have significantly less influence in the life of your high schooler, because you're their mom/dad

As a parent, you have to leverage your influence. In the early years, invest in them heavily and develop the kind of relationships with them where they still seek you out when they have more options when they're older.

Every day, you're losing POSITIONAL INFLUENCE. Are you keeping an eye on your time and making intentional RELATIONAL investments in your kids?

Parents Can't Do it Alone

As kids get older, they look for people other than mom and dad for input. Parents, although you are losing POSITIONAL INFLUENCE, you have an opportunity to do something we like to call, "widen the circle." It's the practice of putting other influences in the lives of your kids.

Studies show that the kids who are most likely to take their faith with them after graduating from High School are the the kids who have had at least five intergenerational influences in their formative years.

We have over 80 Small Group Leaders who show up week after week to invest in your kids. Our Small Group Leaders LOVE your kids and they want to partner with you.

- This is why we're going to encourage you to come to church every week. I get it, no one comes to church every week anymore. It's easy to catch the podcast or watch online - but when you're not here, your kids miss their opportunity to connect with their small group.
- This is why we're going to encourage you to come to the same service every week. Yes, John is going to teach the exact same message at 11:00 as he is at 9:30, but your student's small group leader doesn't serve at every service.

Practical Stuff

Gateway wants to resource you as the parent:

(click the linked titles for more information or next steps)

Child Dedication: If you've had a child in the last 2-4 years, we offer child dedication. Yes, it's a service where we gather with you, your friends and your family to dedicate your child to Christ, it comes with a Child Dedication class meant to equip, challenge and encourage parents for the journey ahead.

Parent Cue: If you have preschool or elementary kids, we have an incredible resource through the Parent Cue app. It's a \$1.99 app for iphone and android phones, but it connects everything we teach on Sundays to your phone so that you can know what your kids are learning and it gives tons of suggested activities and conversations that you can do with your kids during the week.

Baptism: If your kids (elementary and above) have made a personal decision to follow Christ or they're starting to ask a lot of questions about faith, we offer an engaging and interactive baptism class for parents and kids to attend where we equip parents to help their kids make faith decisions.

NextGen Family Resource List: Some of you might want to know, "what's the best Bible for my child right now?" Maybe you're interested in knowing what supplemental resources we recommend for specific issues concerning your child's faith. We've recently put together the NextGen Family Resource List to help you provide the resources your kids need at each phase.

Weekly Serving: Studies about faith development say this: *“The more students serve and build relationships with younger children, the more likely it is that their faith will stick.”* Nearly half of our middle school and high school students serve in NextGen each and every week. Actually a third of all our NextGen volunteers are under the age of 18. Older elementary students can also serve under certain circumstances or alongside their parents.

GO! Teams: Every summer, we take hundreds of kids, students and leaders to cities around Texas, the United States and Haiti to put their faith in action for a week of serving the physical, relational and spiritual needs of people less fortunate than them. Learning about faith is one thing, but giving your kids the opportunity to do something can do more for your child’s faith in one week than years of simply attending church. GO! Teams is for 3rd-12th graders.

Winter Camp: Winter Camp is a highly strategic weekend every January where kids (3rd-12th grade) go away to grow relational and spiritually at a highly accelerated pace. Nearly every one of our Small Group leaders attend Winter Camp, which is what makes it so strategic. Remember how Small Group Leaders only get about 40 hours a year with your kids. When they come to Winter Camp, we double that time. Many kids form significant relationships with their peers. Most have powerful encounters with God through worship, teaching and conversations. It’s a game-changing weekend that you do not want your child to miss. They won’t want to miss it either.