

Parenting Talk #3: It's a Partnership

Script

Hi parents! My name is Sue Miller, and I want to talk to you as a children's ministry leader who has also been a parent. My husband Rick and I have two grown children, our daughter Holly and a son named Ryan. After all our years of parenting, both of us can identify with the professor who once said: "Before I had children, I had six parenting theories. Now I have six children, and no theories!" While parenting has provided us with moments of GREAT joy, it has also been the source of some of our most frustrating moments as well. So many times we felt alone as parents. We wondered whether we were doing the right thing. We longed to talk to someone, but didn't know who would understand or even care about what we were going through. That's why I am excited to tell you the good news I have for you today. Are you ready for it, parents? Okay, here it is. YOU do not have to parent alone!

It's true. Starting right now, you have a church full of leaders and volunteers that want to come alongside and support you as parents. You will meet them as you bring your child to our environments over the next 18 years. Their goal is to partner with you in helping your child develop a relationship with Jesus. They are there to back you up, pray for you and even serve your child as he/she grows up. Sound too good to be true? Well, it isn't. Let me give you three things that you can count on as you begin this partnership with your church.

First, there are volunteers who want to partner with you by building a trusting relationship with you and your child. We know that in order to influence a child spiritually, trust must be built. I remember when our daughter Holly was entering the toddler room each week, she would look around to find Miss Carol before she would even go in. If Miss Carol was there, all was well. If Miss Carol was not there, well, let's just say, we knew we were going to miss opening worship in the auditorium that morning. Thank goodness, Miss Carol knew how important it was for her to show up each week. She knew that kids and parents were counting on her!

As your child grows, these volunteers want to listen, guide, pray and encourage them during their small group time each week. Small group leaders help children learn how to apply God's Word in their real lives. They get excited when your child makes a wise choice or learns something new. It really pumps them up! These same volunteers look forward to connecting with you as you drop off and pick up your child each week. Get to know who these volunteers are! Let them know how they can pray for you during the week. They are behind you 100%. They are one of your partners in your parenting journey.

Secondly, these volunteers want to partner with you in building a strong spiritual foundation for your child. In order to do that, we teach the Bible in a strategic, age-appropriate way. For instance, it makes total sense to teach the story of David and Bathsheba to high-schoolers, but that story just doesn't fly with three-year-olds.

It's important for you to know that the Bible truths taught over the years have a scope and sequence to them. They are meant to build on each other. We are committed to giving kids information from the Bible; we realize that's important, but please remember, our highest goal is to partner with you to turn out kids who have a passionate, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ. We consider it a privilege to be able to work together with you to make that goal a reality. Just think of the celebration we can have together when that day happens!

Okay, let's pause and review for a second. We've talked about two ways volunteers want to partner with you as parents. First, they want to build a trusting relationship with you and your child. Second, they want to help you build a strong spiritual foundation with your child—one that leads to a relationship with Jesus. The third thing I want to tell you about answers the BIG parenting question we all have: what should I be doing at home during these early years when it comes to spiritually influencing my child?

As your partner, we will give you ideas and suggestions that you can do at home during the week with your child. We will start small. We will keep things simple and doable. I promise. Having had newborns ourselves, we know that you will have your hands full during these early years. But, we can help you be intentional while you are doing things like bath time, play time and drive time. We want to help you maximize the moments that you already have by giving you ways to talk about God during your everyday life. Our goal is to partner with you to give your child what matters most!

Well parents, that's it. Those are the three things I wanted to tell you about today. Your mission now, your next step, is to sign up for the Parent Orientation at your church. There you will sit down with your ministry leader and get all of the details about the Baby Dedication Celebration. You will be able to ask any questions you might have as you think about bringing your child into the infant area for the first time. This is a don't-miss gathering for all of the parents who are getting ready for this major event. So, get your calendars out, find out where and when this meeting is taking place, and RSVP YES to being there.

Okay, that's it. You've completed all of your assignments and you are off to a great start! Thank you so much for listening and doing your homework. You guys have been amazing! Your decision to be intentional from the beginning is to be commended. Now, if you will allow me, please let me be the first to welcome you to the parenting adventure! Buckle up your seat belts mom and dad, because you are in for an amazing ride!