

PASSING THE BATON OF GODLY FAITHFULNESS TO YOUR CHILDREN IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK: THINK SMALL TO WIN BIG

By Dr. Jeff Myers

BUSTING THE “ALL OR NOTHING” MENTALITY

Educators tend to load people down with complex methodologies and procedures. People get intimidated and freeze. Fortunately, the task of passing the baton of godly faithfulness to the next generation isn't as complicated as it sometimes seems.

Don't let the fact that you can't do everything cause you to do nothing! Instead of looking for large experiences, start passing the “small baton” through lots of everyday experiences.



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FOCUS ON THE SMALL, NOT THE BIG

Obviously children need to understand the essential principles of the Christian faith as embodied in the Nicene Creed. But because this is complicated and takes a long time, many parents and teachers feel overwhelmed and end up doing nothing at all.

Remember that old speech-class dictum? “Tell them what you’re going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them.” It turns out you can pass the small baton through everyday experiences by remembering something very similar to this dictum: tell them, take them, and talk to them.

1. *Tell them—explain your convictions.*
2. *Take them—gain experience together.*
3. *Talk to them—debrief your experience.*

A PERSONAL EXAMPLE

One time, my young son and I arrived at the homeschool conference a day early to sightsee. Leaving the hotel that morning we encountered three women with a flat tire on their dilapidated car. The weather was sweltering. A small baby was inside the car, crying. The three women tried in vain to figure out how to retrieve the spare tire and replace the flat. I said, “Son, we know how to change a tire. Let’s do it for them.”

The three ladies seemed relieved when we asked permission to help. We jacked up the car, put on the spare, and helped them put away their tools. They thanked us profusely, hugged us and tried to give us money.

“We’d rather not take any money,” I said. “We just wanted to help you because we love Jesus. Maybe you can go to church on Sunday and give the money as an offering to thank the Lord for His goodness.”

They promised they would. As we went back into the hotel to wash up and change clothes, I asked my son:

“What was that experience like for you?”

“Hot! But it felt kind of good because the ladies appreciated what we did.”

“Why were the women so grateful?”

“Because they didn’t know how to fix the tire and they were glad someone knew what to do.”

“What would have been the right thing to do if they had NOT been grateful?”

“We were doing it for Jesus, so it would have been right to help whether they are thankful or not.”

“Where else do you think we could serve?”

“I bet there are a lot of people who are frustrated and afraid because they don’t know what to do. We should pay attention to that and be kind to them.”

I had to fight the impulse to moralize endlessly about it. The goal was to reflect together with my son about how we could better serve others. Always remember: simple is better, and small is big. Start multiplying godly faithfulness by passing the small baton.