

# PARENT UPDATE

## Reveal Youth Ministry

Hey Parents!

Please take a few moments and check out this newsletter. It's got some information about upcoming dates and some helpful information about parenting and teen culture.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Super Bowl Party

February 1st, 2015—5:00pm

What better way to watch the Super Bowl than with your church family??

Come to watch the game or the commercials. We don't care which! If you don't like football, come anyway! There will be games, food, and more. Hope to see you there!

### Reveal Meeting

Sunday, January 18th, 4:00–6:00pm

### Student Leadership Team Meeting

Sunday, January 25th, 4:00–6:00pm

January 2015

# Shaping Spiritual Change in Your Teenager

By Jim Burns

One of the main reasons I remain focused on young people as my life work is because it is such an important time for developing a relationship with God. It's exciting to see teens explore their spirituality, but it's also a bit scary for us parents. As they move from a concrete faith to a more abstract way of thinking, they just may say and do some things that go against their parents' views. While in college, our daughter Christy felt she had to disown our faith to eventually claim her own faith. Interestingly enough, her faith still looks quite similar to ours.

This is the stage in their faith development where teens may not want to go to church, or they might say things about God just to get you upset. It is a time of passionate belief and passionate doubt. One morning they may sincerely feel called to be a missionary, and later in the day they will tell you they don't believe in God anymore and they want nothing to do with church. Both feelings are real, for the time being, both feelings are a normal part of their faith development. The worst things parents can do is freak out, panic or put down their child during this time of searching. Young people are on a spiritual quest, and we can't mistake skepticism or doubt as a sign that they are not interested.

Parents must also avoid smothering their kids with their own faith. Sure you can set expectations (like church attendance,) but don't spend much time preaching at them. Allow and even affirm the difficult questions. A healthy faith has room for questions. And whenever possible, empower them to put their faith in action. During a tenuous time in the faith development of one of my own daughters, we went on a foreign mission trip together. The experience of putting her faith in action caused her to do some very important thinking, and after college graduation, she moved to Ecuador to invest a year of her life working with kids.

Teens today are very experiential. They need opportunities to put their faith in action. Obviously, we can't all go with our kids to a foreign country to do mission work, but we can help them find the time to give them the opportunity to do hands-on ministry and learn that the call to Christ is the call to serve.

# More Structure for Kids Stunts Their Development

By HomeWord.com

From planned play dates to sporting teams, from supervised homework to music lessons, the almost constant supervision of kids by parents and adults is a common theme in raising today's children. But new research indicates that adults' constant hovering over kids actually serves to stunt the development they need to one-day function as independent adults.

The study by the University of Colorado in Boulder found that children who spend more time in less structured activities exhibited greater "self-directed executive function" – a measure of the ability to set and reach goals independently – than kids who spend more time in structured activities.

Those kids who spent more time in less structured activities were better able to set their own goals and take actions to meet those goals without prodding from adults.

"Executive function is extremely important for children," said Yuko Munakata, senior author of the study. "It helps them in all kinds of ways throughout their daily lives, from flexibly switching between different activities rather than getting stuck on one thing, to stopping themselves from yelling when angry, to delaying gratification. Executive function during childhood also predicts important outcomes, like academic performance, health, wealth and criminality, years and even decades later."

## Now What?

- Parents should find ways to increase opportunities for their kids to experience more time in unstructured activities.
- Over time, parents should expand kids' freedoms and responsibilities in age-appropriate ways that allow them to increasingly make their own decisions.
- Parents appropriately place a priority on child safety. But they should strive to live out a realistic view of safety issues that allows for kids to engage in unstructured activities. It might not be a common perception in our culture, but (in the U.S.) today's world is actually safer for children and teens than it was 20 years ago. (The Crimes Against Children Research Center has found that crimes against children and teens have decreased dramatically over the past 20 years.)