

I've got to admit, I've had some reservations about the color orange. I used to have no problem with orange at all. It was beautiful in a rainbow and one of my favorite shirts was an orange Pigeon brand. When my granddaddy Moore passed away I was blessed to get his boat, so I fixed it up and painted it orange and blue. I loved the color until someone said, "So, you must be a Florida Gator Fan." That was like a dagger in my Georgia Bulldog heart! So, I sold the boat to go to college and my love for UGA football increased as did my distain for the Florida Gators and with that, unjustified, the color orange.

But once Erlene Rowland joined our staff in 2004 she taught me to love orange again. Not so much because of the color orange itself, but the vision for Children's Ministry expressed in Orange.

### **What We Know About Families with Children**

We realized early on that 70% of the people in Statesboro, and across America, are families with children. If we didn't minister to the families with children in this church and reach out to the families with children in our community, we were ignoring 70% of the people that we were trying to reach for Jesus.

We also realized that parenting, raising children, is challenging and we all need support and encouragement when doing so.

Spiritually we believe that parents really do want to teach their children biblical values and we have a desire to help them do exactly that, raise Godly Children.

### **What We Know About Jesus' View of Children**

**Matthew 18:1-5** At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **2** He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. **3** And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4** Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. That's a sermon within itself, but then Jesus drops this profound truth on us. **5** And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

- Welcoming a child in Jesus' name is welcoming Jesus.
- Ministering / Loving / Taking time for children is taking time for Jesus.
- Using your resources for children is using your resources for Jesus.

Upon this exhortation, we put high value on our ministry to children here at Believers Church, because to minister to children is to minister to Jesus.

### **How Do We Minister to Children?**

Ministry to Children is usually built on one of Three Mindsets:

#### **Mindset #1: The church must become a substitute for the family!**

The Church needs to do what parents are supposed to do because they are not going to do it.

- Therefore, what happens at church is more important than what happens at home.
- In this ministry model programming tends to compete with the family.

Ok, let's be honest... not all parents are doing what they are supposed to do, but we believe that the majority of them want to. Barna research indicates:

- 96% of parents say that they have the primary responsibility to teach values to their children.
- 85% of all parents say that they have the primary responsibility for the faith of their child.
- Two thirds of all parents with children under age 12 go to church at least once per month.

## **Mindset #2: The church needs to be a supplement to the family!**

The Church believes parents really want to do what they should do, and you need to help them be better parents, but at the same time somehow help their kids.

- Therefore, what happens at home and what happens at church are both very important.
- This approach establishes a ministry model that tends to segregate programming for those in the family. Let's have something for every age group and work with them separately.

*(This model has been my default due to my background, so I had to stretch my way of thinking.)*

## **Mindset #3: The church should synchronize with the family!**

The church genuinely believes that parents have more potential to impact the faith of their children than anyone else, even the church.

- God reveals Himself to us as a Father. He knew the power of a Father in the family.
- Therefore, what happens at home, in some ways, is more important than what happens at church. The most important times in a family may not be when they are driving into church but when they are driving home.

This approach establishes a ministry model where the Church 'Partners with Parents' through programming that involves and enlists the family. We work together as **Power Partners**.

### **Power Partners**

**Our Core Belief:** Nothing is more important than a child's relationship with Jesus. Therefore, the most powerful thing we can do for our children is for parents and the Church to partner together to raise Godly children.

### **Partnering Together with Parents to Raise Godly Children.**

This is where the color orange comes back into play. You take the church as yellow, representing the light of Jesus, and the Home as red, representing a heart of love, and you mix them together and you get orange! And we believe together we can have a greater impact for Jesus on our children's lives.

When we "Partner Together", we are establishing strategy based on the following beliefs about any child's relationship with his/her parents.

- a) The relationship with parents will happen more often.
  - The average family will spend more time together in a car during one month than they will spend attending programs in the church for an entire year. Teachable Moments.
- b) The relationship with parents will last longer.
  - Who will be with them when they graduate from High School?
  - Who is going to be there to help pay for their college education?
  - Who will be there when they graduate from college?
  - Wedding day? First child is born?
  - The parents are the ones who will be with the child for the long haul.
- c) The relationship with their parents will go deeper.
  - A child's view of God will come from his/her relationship with their parents.
  - How a child practices their faith will probably be the same as the way their parents practice their faith.

**Therefore, the best way to maximize our potential to reach the heart of children or students is to help them grow in their relationship with their parents.**

In the church's partnership with parents, we want to:

- a) Teach the same principles – synchronize teachings.
- b) Model the same priorities – we are all leaders of our children.
- c) Value the same relationships – they love God the way we love God.

**A Family Ministry Mindset dictates how we do Children's Ministry at Believers.**

<b>Children's Church Ministry Mindset Only</b>	<b>A Family Ministry Mindset</b>
We, as a church, invest most of our time and resources creating programs for kids.	We invest quality time and resources creating programs for parents and kids together.
We are consumed with answering the question, "What are we going to teach kids?"	We are consumed with answering the question, "How can we get parents to parent or model what we are teaching their kids?"
We tend to promote what we want parents to know about our programs.	We tend to focus on what we want parents to do and teach at home. *See Examples of Teaching Helps
We think what happens at church is more important than what happens at home.	We think what happens at home is more important than what happens at church.

\*Examples of Teaching Helps:

- Monthly: Current monthly verse on a window cling, and a monthly overview of what your children are learning. This includes ideas of ways to further the message at home from **Parent Cue**.
- Weekly: A weekly devotional. Also, weekly videos are posted in BC Chat and Facebook.
- Downloadable Parent Cue App on devices or cell phones.

**Family Worship Experiences**

- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Family Worship: Families Worshiping Together in an Adult Setting / "BIG Church"
- FX Family Experience: Families Worshiping Together in a Children's Environment
- Family Vacation Bible School
- Family Ministry Opportunities

**Why is it worth the time, energy, and financial investment for the church to synchronize with the family?**

When a church creates a consistent, shared experience for the family it:

- provides a platform to equip parents.
- stimulates spiritual discussion between parents and kids. (Lion King)
- establishes an easy entry point for non-Christian parents. (FVBS)
- challenges parents to assume spiritual responsibility. (Bedtime stories, Praying with your Children, Imparting the Blessing, Family Devotions, Teachable Moments)
- increases the potential to impact the heart of a child to love and serve Jesus.

Jesus said, "**And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.**" **Matthew 18:5**

**Bold Next Step: As a member of Believers Church, I will synchronize with families to raise Godly children.**

**Bold Next Step: I will volunteer to "First Serve" in Student Ministries today.**

"Knock Knock." "Whose there?" "Orange" "Orange who?" "Orange you glad you came today?"