

SLIDE 1: INTRO

Good Morning. I am a strong believer in Cross+Generational Ministry. And the reason for this is because I have seen the fruits of this ministry.

In one of my previous congregation in Story City, Iowa, we began our Cross+Generational journey in 2011. And so, I am here to share with you the how we went about ending age-segregated Sunday school, Confirmation and Vacation Bible School and made the move to a more holistic Cross+Generational model of ministry as a way to truly connect the generations in our care.

While that journey wasn't easy, through its process we experienced grace and beauty, wonder and awe, and our trust in the transformative power of the generations sharing in faith together had been renewed.

Before I begin though, I'd like us to do an activity:

SLIDE 2: SHARE

I want you to turn to at least two people around you and share your name and a high and low from the past 24 hrs. Ready set GO.

Thanks for sharing. Hopefully you got to know someone new or got to know something new about someone who already knew.

SLIDE 3: READ

We are going to read a Bible verse, but we're not just going to read it, we're going to SIGN it as well.

Acts 1:8

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to all the ends of the earth.

SLIDE 4: TALK

When you think about the Holy Spirit, what comes to mind?

- We believe that through the Holy Spirit we are called into faith through the Gospel.
- We are enlightened with its gifts and we are sanctified and kept in the faith.
- As Romans 8:26 says "The Holy Spirit also helps us in our weaknesses and "when we do not know what we ought to pray the spirit intercedes for us."

So, we are going to do an activity to help remind us of this.

SLIDE 5: Beach Ball Prayer

Each of you had been given a beach ball and a pen. I want you to blow the ball up. Then:

- In the **red** section I want you to write the name of a family member who is in need of prayer

Hit Return for each color:

- In the **blue** section I want you to write the name of a **child in your congregation that needs prayer**
- In the **white** section I want you to write the **name of an adult in your congregation that needs prayer.**

NOW – On my GO, I want you to throw or hit that ball as far as you can. And then I want you to grab a new one. **Read, set, GO.**

Hit Return for each color:

- In the **orange** section I want you to write **the name of someone you just met.**
- In the **yellow** section I want you to write the **name of a friend in need of prayer.**
- And in the **green** section I want you to **write your own name.**

NOW – On my GO, I want you to throw or hit that ball as far as you can and then grab a new one. This will be the one you keep and take with you, to pray over for the next few days while you are here, or for however long as you'd like. **Ready, set, GO.**

SLIDE 6-9: Prayer

Let us spend some time in prayer. But, when you read your part, I'd like you to sign it as well.

SLIDE 10: Blessing

Please turn to at least 2 other people and while making the sign of the cross on their forehead, read the following blessing. *(Read the slide)*

SLIDE 11: BLANK SLIDE

So, what we just did is an example of what we did each Sunday in our GIFT Ministry (Growing In Faith Together). And it really was as simple as that.

SLIDE 12: What is Cross+Generational Ministry?

- *Intentional emphasis on encouraging interaction and ministry WITH and BETWEEN people of all generations.*

SLIDE 13: What is (not) Cross+Generational Ministry

Is Not...

But

Is...

A program or curriculum

A way of doing ministry (new mindset)

A new phase **of** or name **for** children's ministry

A shift away from silos

Silos in ministry are where we have little groups here and there, segregated out either by gender or age. Cross+Gen ministry is now a shift to bring these groups back together, to learn alongside one another.

Related ONLY to faith formation

A holistic way of reclaiming the early church

Because the early church was naturally Cross+Generational; it began in the homes of its followers. Everyone was together, all ages, learning and growing together. And this is a way of reclaiming that way of doing ministry again.

Teaching knowledge

Changing hearts & building faith

Once a week

Everywhere, all the time

SLIDE 14: Why Cross+Generational Ministry?

1. It is an expression and vision of the Kingdom of God that is both already here now and not yet fully realized. It is a reclaiming of the unified family that often no longer exists in today's society.

CLICK - "...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."- Galatians 3:26-28

- Looking through the eyes of cross+generational ministry then, you could read that verse to be: "There is no longer 1st grade or 12th grade, there's no longer adult or child, there is no longer elderly or spring chicken, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"
- When you think about it, congregations have a vast, untapped potential for bringing the generations together to accompany one another through life's milestones,

challenges and celebrations, and in the mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

CLICK - In fact, a faith community **often** is the **ONLY** institution in our society that has the opportunity to consistently gather all 7 generations into one space and time.

But the moment the elder and child enter most churches they are whisked away...to different rooms. Isn't it a shame that these marvelous gifts are often segregated from each other?

Schools, sporting events, the office, even the gym, are all working with a particular generation. But the church, the church has everyone together. So why not embrace it and celebrate it?

Every age has gifts we need and every age has needs we can gift.

SLIDE 15:

2. It provides an opportunity for adults to relearn the traits of creativity and wonder exemplified by the “magical thinking” of children, and to be reminded of the creative nature of God.

CLICK - “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.” - Pablo Picasso

CLICK - Generally, what works for kid's works for adults! Adults can hear and learn the Word of God through interactive, engaging, story-centric, and experiential methods.

CLICK - Too many of our kids today do not have enough caring adults in their lives. And our adults do not have enough kids in their lives.

CLICK - Sticky Faith by Fuller Youth Institute has done some research on the faith of youth once they enter into college. And they found that that involvement with people who are older and younger than one's self is transformational whether it be through work or in play.

They also found that if youth had **at least 5 adults**, other than parents, that they could point to that had an impact in their faith, they were more likely to remain in the faith through adulthood.

SLIDE 16:

3. It empowers the family (and the church family) to take faith formation into the home.

CLICK - We can no longer assume that parents grew up in the church and know the Biblical stories.

- When my husband and I met with several of our families to talk about our GIFT (Growing In Faith Together) one thing they shared with us is that they were learning

the stories along with their children because they hadn't learned them when they were young.

CLICK - It helps adults and children to engage in the story together, to learn and wonder alongside one another.

CLICK - We can also teach the value of questioning. "I don't know" is sometimes the best answer. We learn how to question together.

CLICK - Like in the story of Wizard of Oz—we are simply better when we journey together, than we are when we journey apart.

SLIDE 17: What did Cross+Gen look like at St. Petri

*In seminary I was told that in ministry it's important to learn the art of **gleaning and adapting**. So, when you see or hear about an idea that you love and you think "this could work in my setting" then by all means take it and adapt it.*

So, while not everything we did at St. Petri may work in your setting, maybe something will. And you are more than welcome to take it and adapt it to your setting.

Hit Return:

- Faith5
- GIFT (Growing In Faith Together)
- VBS
- Confirmation
- And some things we've done to our Worship time

SLIDE 18: FAITH5

Share, Read, Talk, Pray, Bless

SLIDE 19: GIFT - SHARE

SLIDE 20: READ

- We used sign language to help us remember the verses better, something camps have been doing for years.
- Sign language is all about patterns. It creates motion with meaning and connects multiple areas of the brain and body all at once.
- Like learning to ride a bicycle, once sign language is mastered, it is rarely forgotten.

SLIDE 21: TALK

- We then *talk* about the scripture through either a skit using puppets or we do table skits where everyone must act out a part.

Hit Return for Pictures:

- We also incorporate a craft or other project related to the Bible story

Hit Return for Pictures:

- We also do group projects to help engage more ages and stages of life.

SLIDE 22: PRAYER

Hit Return for Pictures:

- Here are a couple of the prayers written by the tables.

SLIDE 23: BLESS

Hit Return for Picture:

- Here is a picture of then Bishop Ullestad being blessed by a 3 yr old. He had come to check out the GIFT ministry. Was his profile pic for YRS on Facebook.
- You might also notice that there are 4 generations blessing one another in this picture.

SLIDE 24: Cross+Gen VBS

The next Cross+Generational ministry offered was Cross+Gen VBS.

When people started asking if we could begin doing our own program, we pulled together a team and dared to ask; if we made the move towards Cross+Generational ministry, what would a Cross+Gen VBS look like?

Silence fell in the room.

- Was this too risky?
- Would parents come?
- Would other adults from the church come?

Through discussion and prayer, we decided to give it a shot.

We decided the best option for us would be a weekend VBS. If we wanted parents and other adults to come we needed to make it during a time in which they could.

And they did.

Hit Return for Pictures:

- The first year we had 20 kids and adults people participate, next 40.

- The next year it grew to 80 people participating. We even had 3 other congregations involved – Lutheran, Catholics and Methodists.
- **CLICK** - We ate food, we sang and danced to silly songs, played field games and did some projects to help those in need.

SLIDE 25: Confirmation

You might wonder how we get parents to sign on to this? Well, simply put, we shared with them that Confirmation is a voluntary program.

- The Lutheran understanding of confirmation is that it is not a sacrament nor commandment and is simply available for those who wish to learn more about their faith and their church.
- We encourage them to take this important step in the lives of their youth, their faith journey and in their own journey as well.
- ***CLICK through for two additional pictures***

SLIDE 26: Cross+Gen Worship

- Cross+Gen Advent Service
- For Joyful Noise
- For the Creation Station

SLIDE 27: 5 Steps to Changing a Culture

Amy Kippen who had been doing this ministry for 15 yrs, shared with me 5 steps for changing a culture:

CLICK - Validate: *Whatever people bring to you, whether it is anger, frustration, or fear, you must validate what they are saying before they ever hear another word you speak. Although I may not agree with their assessment of the situation, I could accept that this IS their experience*

CLICK - Cast a New Vision: *Once you have validated their reality, you need to cast the new vision for what you believe will be. Speak from your heart, soft and strong.*

CLICK - Challenge: *It's time to be bold and ask them for what you want. Don't beat around the bush. If you do step 1 and 2, but not step 3, you will have missed the greatest opportunity to lead your church.*

CLICK - Encourage: *It's fine to make general group announcements and encouragements, but it is much more powerful to take people aside and thank them specifically.*

CLICK - Rinse and Repeat

SLIDE 28: Putting It Together

So my question for you as you look at your own context now is:

- **CLICK** - Where in your congregations are 3 or more generations together? How can this experience improve?
- **CLICK** - Where are 3 or more generations NOT together, but they can or should be? What would have to change?
- **CLICK** - Where can you imagine a new Cross+Generational experience? Dream Big.

SLIDE 29: Resources

Cross+Generational ministry is a shared journey and I am truly blessed to be in it together with you all!



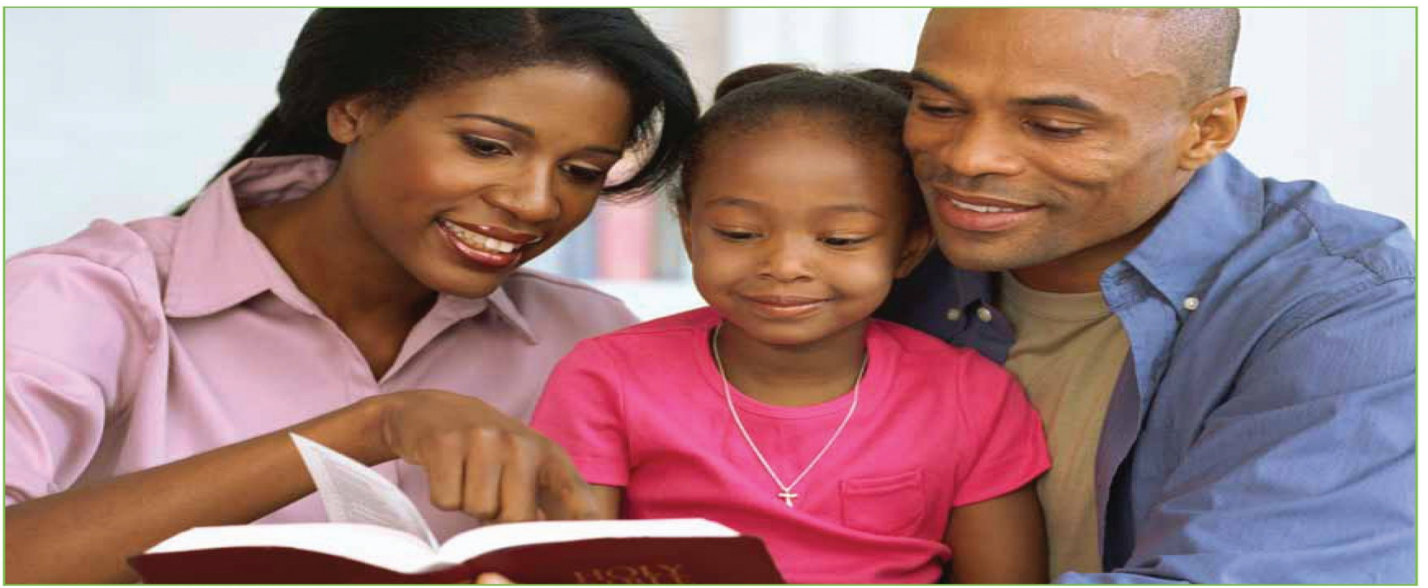
SHARE

your highs and lows

“What was your high of the day?” “What was your low of the day?”

Sharing your highs and lows with a loved one has a very important and healthy psychological effect. Doing this provides a safe place for us to identify, name, and work through our emotions. Individuals will learn that “I am not alone.” Incredible empathy will develop as children and parents learn that when you hurt, I hurt. Sharing highs doubles our highs and sharing our lows reduces that burden as we carry it together.

Sharing highs and lows is an invaluable gift because it helps us all to hear and listen to one another, to learn what is important in each other’s lives, and it builds self-esteem. Kids learn that parents actually want to know what their greatest joys are—and parents get to do the same.



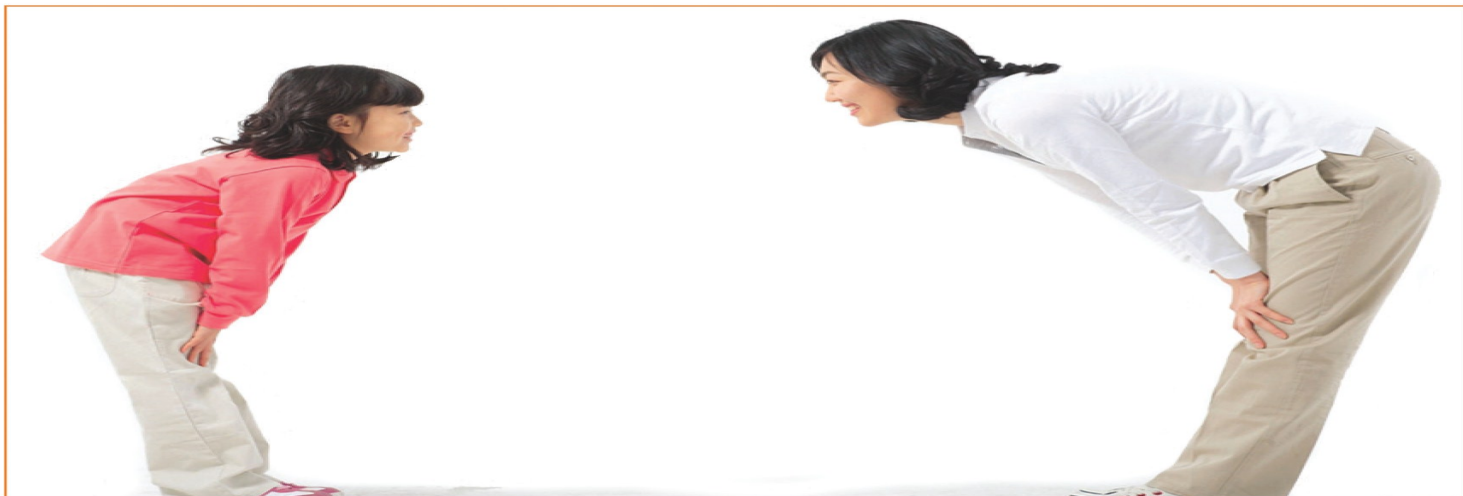
READ

a Bible verse or story

The power of God's word is not realized if it is just a leather bound book that collects dust on the shelf. The inspired Word of God has power and strength only when we open it.

One way to help with finding scripture to read is by using "Drops from the Well". With your cell, text the word "Drops" to 614-328-5636. You will then receive, every Sunday afternoon at 4:14 (for John 4:14) a text to your phone with a scripture verse from the Gospel text from that Sunday's lesson. You can then use that "drop" of scripture throughout the week for your Faith5.

As we create and become families who live in God's Word we are strengthened, renewed, enriched, balanced, grounded, and refreshed.



TALK

about how the Bible reading
might relate to your highs and lows

In Advent we hear the name of God—Emmanuel. The literal meaning is “God with us.” As we share our highs and our lows, read a bible verse, and then talk about how they connect. God is incarnational—He comes to us and lives with us. Talking about the verse and our day is a way for all of us to begin to look for God in everyday. God becomes real and these bible verses begin to apply to my life—not just some people who lived 2,000 years ago. Connecting the text of scripture to the context of our lives is a constant reminder that God values us. We see that we are loved by God and by our family. With practice this can become the most significant time.

Sometimes there is no connection between the verse that we read and the context of our lives—that may be the norm. It is okay! In fact, that might be the most honest. You have permission to say to your children that you don’t see a connection between the scripture and the day. The important thing is that we don’t stop looking. We don’t stop opening the bible to see what and where God is taking us tonight.



PRAY

for one another's highs and lows

Prayer is the glue that holds it all together! Prayer—bringing our hearts before the throne of God's grace—is the catalyst for God's activity. It is here, as we pray for one another, that God's presence is evident. As we listen to one another—as we have heard the sharing of our days, our being informed by the scriptures and seeing the connections—we have the privilege and the opportunity to place our hearts before God. And, more importantly, place our siblings' hearts, our children's hearts, and our parents' hearts before the Lord.

Prayer makes it all stick! This is the fabric of family—not that we live under the same roof—but that we enter into one another's lives and hold their concerns, their joys, their successes, their failures—their very lives—in the cup of our hands as we present them to our living God.



BLESS

one another

Blessing one another as families is a kiss from God as we turn out the lights. It helps us to recognize that God is in the midst of our everyday lives. It will not take away our pain. It won't pay the bills. Blessings don't heal wounds or cure cancer. But blessings do inform those pains. Blessings shape families and people. They shape our attitude and shift our perspective. In a world that is tearing families apart and destroying relationships at every turn—why would we not invoke the Holy Spirit to come and dwell with us?

You can make up your own blessing, or use one of the following: As you make the sign of the cross on their forehead say 'Remember you are a baptized child of God'. Or "May the Lord bless you and keep you". Or "Remember God loves you and so do I". And then have your child do the same to you while making the cross upon your forehead.

Bless one another every night this week--and see what happens. See where God works. And then, don't stop!

Generations Descriptions

We are called to rebuild, raise-up and repair that which divides us and separates us by age and to accompany one another in the journey of faith. (Isaiah 58:12)

Builders/Civic/G.I. Generation (1901-1927): They “saved the world” and then built a nation. They are the assertive and energetic do’ers. Excellent team players. Community-minded. Strongly interested in personal morality and near-absolute standards of right and wrong. Strong sense of personal civic duty, which means they vote. Faith based on knowledge and experience. Have heroes. Strong loyalty to jobs, groups, schools, etc. The labor-union-spawning generation. “Use it up, fix it up, make it do, or do without.” Avoid debt...save and buy with cash. Age of radio and air flight; they were the generation that remembers life without airplanes, radio, and TV. Most of them grew up without modern conveniences like refrigerators, electricity and air conditioning. Sometimes called The Greatest Generation. Live a life of sacrifice for the good of others.

Boosters/Silent/Adaptive Generation (1928-1945): Went through their formative years during an era of suffocating conformity, but also during the postwar happiness: Peace! Jobs! Suburbs! Television! Rock ‘n Roll! Cars! Korean and Vietnam War generation. Knows hymns by heart. Rooted in tradition, loyalty, and conservation of resources. Grew up listening to radio, comfortable with sermons and traditional music. Trust institutions, leaders. May care for elderly parents, children and grandchildren. Represent 39% of charitable giving. They are avid readers, especially newspapers. Strong sense of trans-generational common values and near-absolute truths. Disciplined, self-sacrificing, & cautious.

Boomers/Idealist Generation (1946-1964): Post WWII. The “me” generation. “Rock and Roll” music generation. An era when institutional organized church took over role of teaching and passing on the faith. Buy now, pay later. First TV generation. Shaped by incredible social--political change. Experienced assassinations of religious and political leaders, space exploration, civil rights, Viet Nam, women's movement, Watergate. Tend to be more positive about authority, hierarchal structure and tradition. Live to work and play. Creative, high standards. First generation to leave hometown for career. 80+ million preparing to retire.

Gen X/Busters/Survivors Generation (1965-1980): Latchkey kids. Individualistic. Self--reliant. Introduced to computers in mid--school. Searching for meaning and spiritual connection rather than a church connection. No loyalty to a denomination. Reached by non--denominational churches. Lives in the shadows of 3 generations. No Fear -- Just Do It! Concerned about making ends meet. Shaped by computers, collapse of Berlin Wall, AIDS crisis, divorce. Accepts diversity. Environmentally conscious. Visual & entertainment oriented. Close relationships with a few important. Gives online.

Millennials/Gen Y Generation (1981-1997): New civic generation. Community minded, public servants. They are significantly less religious but are still as spiritual as previous generations. Enormous academic pressure. Experience a frantic pace of life. They are nurtured by omnipresent parents, optimistic, and focused. Formative years spent in childcare, short attention spans. Want flexible work schedules. Prefer teamwork. Internet always apart of life. They schedule everything. Capable of networking and mass collaboration using technology. Desire bonds with caring adults for balance in an insecure world. Give online. Want to be directly involved.

Gen Z/Boomlets/Homeland Generation (1998-2010): Will become the largest generation. Communicate in real-time across the world. Grown up in a world that is connected through technology; they have never known a world without computers and cell phones. World is marketed directly to them. Live with ‘helicopter’ parents. First generation to have never not known the existence of school/mass shootings. They want to change the world. They are cause-oriented and interested in tackling a myriad of problems and crises. They have huge, even apocalyptic fears about the future. Ability to process massive amounts of information, addiction to electronic devices, environmentally conscious, entrepreneurial, have some entitlement issues, tend to be morally conservative, are resourceful, self-directed, are socially empowered, and focused on social justice.

Alpha/Touch Generation (2011-2024): They are the first generation entirely born within the 21st century. So far, they are defined by the era of technological discovery they've been born into. All technology uses touch screens and interfaces. They'll be the wealthiest and most formally educated of all generations. They will live in the most diverse population of any generation before them. Going to the planet Mars and commercial spacecrafts will likely be a reality. They are the most tech-savvy. ... A.I. is their reality, their learning is highly personalized, social media will be their dominant mode of interaction. They don't play by the rules and religion/faith is mostly not a part of their upbringing.

Beta Generation (2025-2039): Many within this generation will live to the 22nd century. Generation Beta will live in an era where AI and automation are fully embedded in everyday life—from education and workplaces to healthcare and entertainment. They will come of age during a time of significant upheaval in governance, media, business, and global geopolitics. Generation Beta will also inherit a world grappling with major societal challenges. With climate change, global population shifts, and rapid urbanization at the forefront, sustainability will not just be a preference but an expectation. They will be more globally minded, community-focused, and collaborative than ever before. Their upbringing will emphasize the importance of innovation not just for convenience, but for solving the pressing challenges of their time. This generation will embody the balance between hyper-connectivity and personal expression. They'll redefine what it means to belong, blending in-person relationships with global digital communities. Faith will most likely not be a part of their upbringing. But for those looking to the church, they will likely expect integration of more digital elements into their worship and community activities. Virtual Bible studies, interactive online sermons, and faith-based apps will be powerful ways to connect with them where they are.

By Deacon Kristin Johnson

*Generation descriptions mostly compiled by Linda Staats Home Grown Faith
www.homegrownfaith.net*

Four Steps for Changing a Culture

Amy Kippen

Through much trial and error and hundreds of conversations with parents and church leaders around the country, four concrete yet doable steps emerged for changing a culture.

Step 1: Validate

Whatever people bring to you, whether it is anger, frustration, or fear, you must validate what they are saying before they ever hear another word you speak. Here are a few examples of validating fear, frustration, and even anger.

- “I know this seems like a crazy change to make.”
- “I validate that we are asking a lot of parents.”
- “I know your schedule is already about as full as it can get.”
- “I hear your frustration that you have to work on weekends.”

Step 2: Cast a New Vision

Once you have validated their reality, you need to cast the new vision for what you believe will be. Speak from your heart, soft and strong.

- “We seriously believe this is going to bless your family in a huge way.”
- “I feel to the core of my being that this is really the right move for our families and our church.”
- “What if this new thing could be better than you can know right now?”
- “The time we are asking you to invest will bring benefits beyond what you can imagine.”
- “We believe God is calling us to this new way of being church.”
- “If you jump into this with your best self, you will end up with a teenager who actually talks to you! Really!”

Step 3: Challenge

It's time to be bold and ask them for what you want. Don't beat around the bush. If you do step 1 and 2, but not step 3, you will have missed the greatest opportunity to lead your church.

- “So, I am asking you to trust me. Will you?”
- “Will you commit to coming for 12 weeks?”
- “Will you decide to have an open heart and mind about this change?”
- “We just really need your grace as we throw our hearts into this new way.”
- “In three months can I meet you for coffee to discuss your family's experience?”
- “Will you commit to 6 weeks of Nightly Home Huddles?”
- “Would you be willing to be a part of a focus group next spring to help us evaluate?”

Step 4: Encourage

Every week, find a way to encourage parents. Make an occasional heart-felt thank you to the whole group.

- “Parents, I just want to say thank you for trusting me and walking this fun and crazy road with me. You are literally changing who your kids will become by showing up with them every week.”
- “Hey, can I just acknowledge that you could have dropped your child off at the church down the street this morning and you could be getting your grocery shopping done right now. Wow. Thank you for being here.”

- “Hey kids, will you give your parents a big huge hug and say thanks for teaching me about Jesus? Go ahead.”
- “Parents, I just want to take this opportunity to say good job! Seriously. You made promises at your child’s baptism, and you are keeping them in a big way by doing those Home Huddles every night. Pat yourselves on the back!”

Step 5: One More Step

Oops! I guess there are actually 5 steps. Step 5 is to repeat Steps 1-4 as many times as is needed. Think of these steps like therapy (just stick with me here!). In therapy, you go until... until you are well. To change a culture, you repeat these steps over and over until you no longer need to.