

# LIFEGROUP LESSON



"Family Life 2013"  
(Part 3 of 4)

## The Point of Parenting



### TIPS FOR DISCUSSION FACILITATOR

Ensure that the aim is first to understand the text and then to make it meaningful and relevant. The discussion questions provided are intended to bring out the relevance for today.

Begin with a prayer for the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.

Begin the discussion by reading the sermon passage (where applicable), and discuss about its overall meaning by asking what could be the key focuses/emphases in that particular passage.

Spend appropriate amount of time on each question with as many members as possible making a contribution. At the end of each discussion the leader should summarise the main points that have arisen and direct the group towards making them applicable in their individual lives.

A balance must be kept between ascertaining what the Bible teaches and what are the opinions of participants. So the facilitator should make sure that there is an understanding of the passage before questions are raised.

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

What do we need to do as parents in this work of pointing kids to where they should go?

1. Commit to being a Pointer
2. Commit to Pointing Our Children to God's Word
3. Commit to Pointing Our Children to God's Purpose

### Understanding of the Point of Parenting

*Start children off on the way they should go,  
and even when they are old they will not turn from it*  
**Proverbs 22:6**

Proverbs 22:6 suggest us to work towards leaving a lasting legacy for our children, one that stays with them for the rest of their lives. Starting them off towards something that will stay with them for the rest of their lives is a major point of our parenting. If we are not careful, our parenting can become for moral abiding in series of fire fighting campaigns. If it works, it will at best give us good kids. But to raise a generation of kids who love God, to follow Him and to be involved in the Great Commission, we should point them where God wants them to go.

'Where they should go' is both fixed and dynamic in nature; it is also general and specific. It is fixed in that we are to train them the whole counsel of God's written Word so they will be thoroughly equipped by it for life. It is also dynamic in that God's Spirit will lead them into their destiny or a specific work meant for them to do in their lifetime. Generally it is to abide in God's word but specifically it is to fulfil his/her unique calling in life.

The following are what we need to commit to do as parents in this work of pointing kids towards where they should go.

- **Commit to being a Pointer**  
Being a parent or a disciple of kids requires us to first become true followers who walk with God closely so that we are able to know and 'point' them to the right way. We have the responsibility to hear, discern and follow the direction God has for our children to go in their lives. Otherwise it will be guided by the human ambition of merely fulfilling our child's potential or a parent using their child to fulfil their unfulfilled dreams.
- **Commit to Pointing Our Children to God's Word**  
Passing down Godly values in Word of God is the key to shape the worldview of our children. Our contemporary lifestyle in an urban setup does not support this activity very well. In our hectic and busy life, our children's church comes in as committed partners.
- **Commit to Pointing Our Children to God's Purpose**  
The adventure in our parenting also includes pointing them to recognize their God-given gifts and to use them to serve others. The starting point is for every family member to know and accept the gifts God has given to them, thus learning to accept what has been given to others and to celebrate strengths in others. Appreciating how one is wired up ripples out harmoniously to appreciating others in the community.

### Discussion for Point 1: Commit to being a Pointer.

- Why do you think it is important to start training our children from young? Read Proverbs 22:6. What does "the way they should go" refer to? Proverbs 22:6 thus exhort us to work towards leaving a lasting legacy in our children, i.e. one that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. What is this legacy that you wish to leave for your children? Why is it important that parents spend time to discern God's direction for their children, i.e. what can happen if we merely lead our children towards what we desire for them? What are some challenges parents may face when trying to train our children in "the way they should go"? Encourage parents in the LG to refer to **Appendix A**, and be intentional in "**Being Open about Your Dependency on God**" with their children.

### Discussion for Point 2: Commit to Pointing Our Children to God's Word.

- Why is it important for parents to point our children to God's Word when teaching them about godly values they should have, i.e. what can happen if we merely teach them godly values without at the same time telling them the source of these values is the Bible? What do you think are some right attitudes our children should have towards the Bible? On a scale of 1 to 10, do you think you are modelling these right attitudes towards God's Word for your children? Explain your answer. What are some practical ways you can model the importance of having reverence for God's Word to your children? Encourage parents in the LG to refer to **Appendix A**, and find out practical steps for "**Partnering the Children Church**" in discipling our children in God's Word.

### Discussion for Point 3: Commit to Pointing Our Children to God's Purpose.

- Why is it important for parents to constantly remind themselves that their child is unique, especially in their talents and their personalities, i.e. what can happen if we simply try to fit our children into the moulds society has for them? How should parents balance between training their child in their life-skills and releasing them to develop in their passions and talents? What can happen if parents over-stress one without the balance of the other? What are some practical things you can do to inculcate the value of pursuing God's purposes in our children (Matthew 6:32-33)? Encourage parents in the LG to refer to **Appendix A**, and learn tips on "**Finding Out Our Child's Strengths**".

*These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.  
You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them  
when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way  
and when you lie down and when you rise up.*

~ **Deuteronomy 6:6-7** ~

## Appendix A (For general reading and discussion as parents)

### Tips to Being a Pointer for Our Children

By Pastor Hiew Hong Teck, Family Life Ministry

*(Note to Discussion Facilitators: This appendix can be printed for the parents in your group for them to practice the tips in their family times)*

We are entrusted with God's Kingdom in a little package (Matthew 19:14). We ought to be honoured to have a part to play in their development. Pointing our child to the ways of God is not an event; it is a lifestyle that requires maximum dedication and visibility (Deuteronomy 6). We are called not to exasperate our child (Ephesians 6:4) but yet time and time again, we become angry with them because we do not know what to do with them. We are called to go beyond managing them.

God has given us a great plan in kids' discipleship. We can do it if we trust God's way of pointing children to where they should go. It is possible not because of who we are but because of who we know, because it is in Him as our source of strength that we are able to disciple them.

#### Being a Pointer - Being Open about Your Dependency on God

One of the key starting points to help point our children to Christ is to show them our own trust in God. It requires a demonstration of our real dependency on God. Our humility and transparency is crucial because it is not about how together we have it.

Set a time with your child during which you can play the game called "**Priority**" with him/her. Have some empty cards and take turns to draw things that are special to you. You can include items such as "Leisure", "Work", "Mum", "School", "Games", "Music", "Brother/Sister", "Money", "Ministry", "Home", "God", etc. *(Note: These can be in the form of words or pictures.)*

After a "show-and-tell" style of sharing, ask your child to arrange the cards on the table according to his or her priority, i.e. the most special one at the top while the least important one at the bottom. Concurrently, set yours in the same way as well.

Share about the order of your cards with each other and explain the reason for the order. Be open to your child even if God is not at the top of your list. You can share about how it should be even though it is not at the moment, and how as an adult or parent we need to learn to be dependent on God. Conclude with Matthew 6:32-33 to communicate that we should seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness.

*(Note: This exercise will be harder for those with a younger child. For a toddler, you can play the game with just three cards "Play", "Family", "God" and order them so that "God" is number 1.)*

This activity is intended to show your child your trust in God and that you allow God's Word to determine your values. Doing so eventually opens up your communication with your child about God and puts both you as the parent and child on the journey of trusting God together. This exercise thus becomes foundational for you to point your child to the fact that in many things you do, you do so because you trust in God.

The success of our parenting depends on whether we just talk the talk or we walk the talk as well. Being an effective pointer means being someone who guides our child, not just with moral obligations but with our life that genuinely trust God.

## Pointing Our Children to God’s Word – Partnering the Children Church

Our children church team kick-starts the discipleship process by teaching your child what we are learning together as a church. Our church’s sermons are all aligned to impart the same thing for the kids (from three years old onwards) to adults. This is a great starting point for parents to partner with the church to point their children to God’s Word on a regular basis. These are some practical steps you can do for this:

### 1) Download What Has Been Taught

Begin by asking for the kids’ handout from your child’s life group leaders or get it from the church website at [www.hopesingapore.org.sg/hoekids](http://www.hopesingapore.org.sg/hoekids).

### 2) Start the Spiritual Talk

During the week (or on your way home from the weekend service), ask a question to initiate the spiritual talk of the week. For example, what did you learn this week in church? Do you remember the week’s Memory Verse? Who taught you this week and what did he (or she) share?

### 3) Do A Challenge Together

Get some “How can we practice what we learned this week?” activity going. During the spiritual talk, we can intentionally post a follow-up question where you and the child can set off to discover the answers from the Bible. For example about giving, we can post the question, “What if we don’t have enough? What does the Bible say about our giving when we do not have enough to give?”

## Pointing Our Children to God’s Purposes – Finding Out Our Child’s Strengths

When gifts are bestowed onto a child, it is evident in his or her strengths. Sometimes strengths may be well hidden and thus will take time to unearth. But be encouraged that if we pay attention to their inclinations and provide opportunities for them to develop, our child’s strengths will become more and more evident.

Discuss with your family members or your child’s life group leader about your child’s strengths. Describe incidents that form the basis of your evaluation. Find a list of areas which everyone can agree are the child’s strengths (or at least the child’s potential strengths). Do a list of their weaknesses as well so that we can have a balanced evaluation of them.

Strengths: \_\_\_\_\_

Weaknesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Ensure that you make affirmation of your child’s strengths a regular affair, so that we give faith to what is good and godly in them. After your child feels affirmed, set them out by encouraging them to use their gifts for others. Get little pastors to care, little creators to create, encouragers to encourage, and prophets to share a word from God. Create opportunities for them at home or in partnership with your child’s LGL in church.

While it may be early to know God’s specific calling for your child in the world, it is important to navigate them to serve at home. If they use whatever they have to serve at home, they will use whatever God will bless them with for God’s calling for them in the world.