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## BRING IT HOME A FAMILY-BUILDING RETREAT

**Overview** – Bring it home – A family-building retreat focuses on equipping and encouraging families to bring the faith beyond the walls of the church and into their daily lives. It provides a place to ask questions, attend sessions, worship together, and create memories as a family that will last forever.

### **Scripture** –

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9* - “Israel, listen to me. The Lord is our God. The Lord is the one and only God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength. The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. Make sure your children learn them. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up. Write them down and tie them on your hands as a reminder. Also tie them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses. Also write them on your gates.”

**Goals** – The goal of this retreat is to act as a catalyst for change in the lives of families so that down the road families will: together influence the spiritual development of one another laying a foundation of faith for children and teens for the rest of their lives.

**Objectives** – At the end of this retreat families will have the tools necessary to be able to grow in their faith as a unit. They will be set up with another family so that they can be accountable to one another and will have further training to meet the long term goal.

**Materials List** – For this retreat the pastoral staff will need to come together to determine: location and time. Based on those decisions they will then make a “materials list.” Some items that may be needed are:

- Binders for the families
- Food
- Supplies for activities – basketballs, frisbees, soccer balls, etc
- Books to be given to the families
- Flyers
- Name tags
- Crafts for kids – crayons, paper, glue, scissors, etc
- Handouts for parents and teens
- T-shirts?

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## FAMILY-BUILDING RETREAT OUTLINE

### Pre-retreat

- Gathering a Team
- Creating a Schedule
- Creating a Budget
- Promoting
- Large Group Info Meeting
- Packing List

### Retreat

- Sessions
- Activities
- Meals
- Chapel

### Post – Retreat

- Follow-up
- Faith at Home
- Create a Blog
- One Year Faith Plan
- Accountability
- Devotions and Prayer
- Intentional Conversations
- Activities
- A Final word

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## Pre-Retreat

### Gathering a Team

Don't try and plan an event yourself. These things are easier to do in a planning committee. Plus, a committee is less likely to make mistakes. Make sure that the team you gather is on board with what you want to do. Different opinions can be helpful in planning a retreat, but if someone is opposed to the entire idea, take their complaints into consideration and pick someone else for the committee. The committee will be responsible for planning the retreat making sure everything runs smoothly. The committee should also take time to pray over the event. Everything stand or falls based on the leadership you choose, so pick people wisely that you can trust to get things done.

### Creating a Schedule

Though you can be sure that the schedule will not flow exactly as planned, be sure to have a plan anyways. For the weekend make sure that your schedule includes a pretty early "lights out" time so that the young children get to sleep at a decent hour.

Example:

Friday Evening

6:00 – Arrive at Retreat Center

6:00 – 6:30 – Unpack and get settled into rooms

6:30 – 7:30 – First Chapel – Opening

7:30 – 8:30 – Activity

8:30 – 9:00 – Snack

9:15 – Lights out

Saturday

7:30–8:30 – Breakfast

8:30 – 9:30 – Morning Chapel

9:30 – 10:30 – Family Game/Team Building Activity

10:30 – 11:30 – First Session

11:30–12:30 – Lunch

12:30 –1:30 – Second Session

1:30–2:30 – Free time – rest, activities, family time

2:30 – 3:30 – Snack

3:30 – 4:30 – Third Session

4:30 – 5:30 – Family Game

5:30 – 6:30 – Dinner

6:30 – 7:30 – Night Chapel

7:30 – 9:30 – Campfire  
9:30 – Lights out

Sunday

7:30 – 8:30 – Breakfast  
8:30 – 9:30 – Morning Chapel  
9:30 – 10:30 – Planning for home  
10:30 – 11:30 – Packing up  
11:30 – 12:30 – Lunch  
12:30 – 1:30 – Goodbye Session/Chapel  
1:30 – Leave for Church

### Creating a Budget

A budget will save you a lot of time and trouble when presenting your plan. It will show the church leadership that you have taken time to plan and know everything that is going on. Be sure when planning a budget to have support for the different things you want to spend money on. Some people may question whether or not certain things are necessary and you must be able to defend the reason certain activities are in your retreat plan.

Some Tips and Questions for creating a budget:

1. Make a list of all the things that you will need: Food, craft supplies, game equipment, etc.
2. Check the prices of retreat centers around you.
3. Decide how much the church will cover and how much the individual family will cover
4. Decide whether or not you are buying t-shirts and/or books – check the prices.
5. Look at gas prices. How much will it cost to get there...are you renting a van?
6. Do you need to do fundraising? How much can you raise through that?
7. Are you bringing in a guest speaker? How much will that cost you?
8. After you have answered these questions and made your list stick to your budget.

*At the end of this section there is form to help you formulate your own budget.*

### Promoting

Promoting your event is an essential part of pre-retreat planning. Promotion does two key things: creates momentum and enthusiasm and lets people know it's happening. Bulletins are a good way for a church to promote a family retreat as most churches already use bulletins. Put up posters create awareness and a positive atmosphere showing that this retreat matters and is a big deal. Have people sign up to come. When people sign up they feel more committed and

allows you to have a firm grasp of the magnitude of the event. If your church has a website or facebook/twitter page, post it there. Most people need constant reminders of what is going on in the church. Finally, send out reminder emails a week prior to the retreat to allow for any last minute sign ups.

### Large group info meeting

Getting out information ahead of time can't be stressed enough. Information is organization and organization is key for any event to run smoothly. Having a meeting of all attendee's gets everyone on the same page so they know what is going on and can ask questions about the retreat. Some elements to include in an information meeting are insurance waivers, health forms, and a details sheet of the who, what, when, where, and why's of the trip. Insurance waivers ensure the church is not liable for accidents and also give a final count on who is coming.

*At the end of this section there is a sample of a release form.*

### Packing list

For leaders and family:

If you do not tell people what to bring, they will not bring it. Even though you will be giving out all the information, not everyone will read it or know what to pack for each activity. Make sure to include things appropriate to the activities you are going to be doing. If swimming will be involved, be sure to include a bathing suit on your packing list. It would also be a good idea to ask the place you are having your retreat if there are any special items to include that you might not think of. For example, if you are horseback riding, a pair of jeans would be an item to add to the packing list (even if it is summer). Be sure to include the reasons for which special items are on the list as to bring attention to the activities you are going to be doing and to make sure no one leaves anything behind. If people are not prepared they will not be able to enjoy the experience as much.

Some items to be sure to include:

- Sleeping bag
- T-shirts
- Shorts
- Jeans
- A Sweatshirt
- Rain gear
- Bible
- Notebook
- Pen

PJ's  
Flashlight  
Hygiene Products  
Gym Shoes  
Shower Shoes  
Swimsuit (if swimming is an option)  
Towels  
Medicine (if needed and must be included on release form)

### **For Leaders Only**

There are certain items that leaders may want to bring that you would not include on your family list. If leaders are going to be in charge of certain activities or seminars, they may need to bring papers or proof of certification. For example, if you bring a lifeguard he or she should be carrying their credentials on them. Other items you may want to consider are a first aid kit, water filter (if you are going hiking), sports equipment for down time, or items for anything that you have programmed for. It is best to be prepared when leading an event.

# BUDGET FORM

Event title

Event date

Formula: All expenses divided by the least number of participating students = the break even point

●Description

Total

Number of staff=

Food=

Housing=

Transportation=

Misc. staff expenses

**A: Sub total**

Programming=

Promotional materials=

Transportation=

Speaker=

Teaching materials=

Sports and activities=

Rental equipment=

**B: Sub total**

Food=

Housing=

Other misc. per-person expenses:

**C: Sub total**

●

**D: Total event cost**

**E: Student per-person cost**

Total cost divided by number of students

(Round number up to nearest even number or go back and cut expenses.)

[Church Name]

[Contact Name and Phone #]





●For your information, we expect each student to conform to these rules of conduct

- No possession or use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco
- No students can drive
- No fighting, weapons, fireworks, lighters, or explosives
- No offensive or immodest clothing
- No boys in girls' sleeping quarters and no girls in boys' sleeping quarters
- Participation with the group is expected
- Respect property
- Respect one another, staff, and adult leaders
- Respect and comply with event schedules

Students who fail to comply with these expectations may be sent home at their parents' expense.

I, the student, have read the rules of conduct, the above evaluation of my health, and permission to participate in youth group activities. I agree to abide by the stated personal limitations and code of conduct.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities may include, but are not limited to: cookouts, boating, water skiing, swimming, basketball, rollerskating, rollerblading, games in the park, soccer, broomball, ice skating, volleyball, softball, baseball, camping, downhill skiing, snowboarding, hiking, biking, concerts, Bible studies, golfing, miniature golf, hayrides. *Note: If you desire to limit your child's participation in any event, please submit your wishes in writing to the church youth pastor prior to that event.*

\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to attend all youth activities  
NAME OF STUDENT

sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter  
the \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF ORGANIZATION

"Church") from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.  
DATE DATE

This consent form gives permission to seek whatever medical attention is deemed necessary, and releases the Church and its staff of any liability against personal losses of named child.

I/We the undersigned have legal custody of the student named above, a minor, and have given our consent for him/her to attend events being organized by the Church. I/We understand that there are inherent risks involved in any ministry or athletic event, and I/we hereby release the Church, its pastors, employees, agents, and volunteer workers from any and all liability for any injury, loss, or damage to person or property that may occur during the course of my/our child's involvement. In the event that he/she is injured and requires the attention of a doctor, I/we consent to any reasonable medical treatment as deemed necessary by a licensed physician. In the event treatment is required from a physician and/or hospital personnel designated by the Church, I/we agree to hold such person free and harmless of any claims, demands, or suits for damages arising from the giving of such consent. I/We also acknowledge that we will be ultimately responsible for the cost of any medical care should the cost of that medical care not be reimbursed by the health insurance provider. Further, I/we affirm that the health insurance information provided above is accurate at this date and will, to the best of my/our knowledge, still be in force for the student named above. I/we also agree to bring my/our child home at my/our own expense should they become ill or if deemed necessary by the student ministries staff member.

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[Church Name]  
[Contact Name and Phone #]

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## Retreat

**Sessions** – Sessions provide a perfect opportunity to teach the families about different topics that are most pertinent to one of the family members. It gives the families time to split up for a while and learn about a topic that is most relevant to their age group. For these sessions have volunteers lead the youth and kids sessions and have the pastors teach to the parents. For children under the elementary age provide a volunteers who are willing to watch and play with the kids (be sure to do background checks for all of your volunteers).

### Adults

Adult Session 1– Teaching Purity– Here is a session on teaching parents how to teach their kids about purity. <http://crossroadsbaptist.org/resources/Pure-Parenting-Session1.pdf>

Adult Session 2– Disciplining your children in a godly way. This will be a time for parents to vent on some of their struggles with disciplining their children. For an online Christian perspective visit <http://www.allaboutparenting.org/how-should-a-christian-discipline-children-faq.htm>

Adult Session 3– Marriage, for holiness or for happiness. Gary Thomas’ bestseller Sacred Marriage talks about how God uses marriage as a means to make us Holy. He goes into more detail on how marriage teaches men to love, while helping women learn to respect. Since a strong marriage founded on Christ is the foundation for a strong family, one session at least should be devoted to this. For more information on Sacred Marriage read this sample chapter. <http://assets1.mytrainsite.com/501122/sacredmarriage-sampletext.pdf>

Adult Session 4– “Unfriended! Parenting in a Social Media World” This would be a great session to do for some of the less technical adults. The article is found at <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/teens/unfriended-parenting-kids-and-teens-in-a-social-media-world.html>

### Youth

Youth Session 1– Why your family needs you. Youth tend to struggle with feelings of worthlessness. They need to realize the one place that they will always belong to is their family. There are important roles that teens play. First of all setting an example for any other siblings they may have. They are tied to their parents in so much that the actions they perform are a reflection of who their parents are.

Youth Session 2– Honoring Others– Like everyone else, teens struggle with an inward focus. They do not really know how to show honor to people. It would be great to start this lesson by do something just to honor the youth and the role that they have in their families. When you honor your youth, they will be enabled to honor others.

Youth Session 3– Respectful Relationships– In this session it will be important to talk about what a healthy dating relationship looks like, as well as the different boundaries that need to be set.

### **Kids**

Kids Session 1– Who’s Your Hero? Kid’s love to hear stories of brave men and woman doing the unthinkable for the good of others. Pick several heroes from the Bible and tell their story in a way that the kids will truly see some of the Bible characters for the hero’s that they are.

Kids Session 2– Nature Walk– Take all of the kids on a nature walk. Do a little research on some of the plants and trees that may be around your retreat area. As you are walking with the kids describe to them that God is the originator of everything they see. End your walk by telling the creation story, and how on the last day of creating God made people. People are God’s highlight of all of creation. Spend extra time telling the kids that he is the creator of all of them.

Kids Session 3– God’s Love– In this lesson you will need to teach the basics of God’s love. Describe how the love that their parents have for them is a picture of the love that God has for them.

**Activities** – Splitting up teams in a specific way will help to create some family bonding. All the moms and daughter in a group or maybe you will do one of these games with the kids against the parents. Here is a list of different group combinations.

- Dad/Daughter
- Mother/Son
- Dad/Son
- Mother/Daughter
- Kids
- Parents

### **Team Building with your Family**

Family Tug of War– This fairly self explanatory for a complete explanation go to <http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/MultiWayTugOfWar.html>.

Helium Stick– Each group of six to eight people lower a broom stick (no broom on the end) with only using one finger for each hand. It sounds easy, but this game takes a surprising amount of teamwork. For complete directions go to <http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/HeliumStick.html>.

Egg Drop– Find a place 15 to 30 feet high from where you can drop an egg. Each team has to design a contraption to protect the egg from breaking using only straws and 15 feet of masking tape. Plus they can use any nature materials they find. (leaves sticks, etc....) Complete directions at <http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/GreatEggDrop.html>

### **As a Large Group**

Toilet Paper Pull– Have one of your enthusiastic leaders inform the group that there is a shortage of toilet paper. Have the leaders start passing around the paper telling people to take however much they will need for the weekend. After everyone has their fair share of toilet paper, now inform them that for every sheet of T.P they took they have to tell one fact about their self to the group. Read [http://www.discovery-place.org/pdfs/Retreat\\_Resources\\_packet.pdf](http://www.discovery-place.org/pdfs/Retreat_Resources_packet.pdf) )

Womp– This is a great game to play when everyone is tired. First you need to make your womp stick. All you have to do is roll up some old newspaper and wrap a layer of duck tape around it. Have everyone sit in a circle telling him or her to pick an animal name that has the same first letter as his or her first name. The youngest person starts off as the womper standing in the middle of the circle. Now have the oldest person begin the game by saying someone else's animal. The object of the game is for the womper to hit the person (not hard) who just had their animal name called. If the womper womps this person before they call out another animal name then they are now the new womper, and the old womper starts the next round by calling out someone's animal name. In order to avoid getting womped when your animal name is called you need to call out someone's animal name that is different from the person that called your name. Also if you call the wompers name then you are automatically the new womper. Once people start learning each other's names then you will have the womper running all over the place.

Quick Change Artist– For this game partners start off facing each other observing their partners appearance. Then they face away from each other and make two or more changes in their appearance. Once they face each other then they have to guess what changes were made in their partners appearance. Find more details at [http://www.discovery-place.org/pdfs/Retreat\\_Resources\\_packet.pdf](http://www.discovery-place.org/pdfs/Retreat_Resources_packet.pdf)

## Meals

Ideally mealtime is the centerpiece to familial interaction. Since some of the families that will be on the retreat most likely do not have the habit of eating together, mealtime will be used to give a model that the families will be able to continue using once the retreat is over.

**Meal Preparation**– You will need to figure out the amount of food to buy depending on the amount of people. It is too burdensome to try to prepare the food if you are also leading the group. This is a great way to get some of the good cooks in your church involved. There are probably several retired men or woman at your church who would love to cook for your group. Not only will you have better cooking, but also another way to get more people from your congregation involved.

**Why Pray**– The majority of Christians may not really know why they pray before they eat. “When we thank God for providing our daily bread, we are acknowledging that all things come from Him ([Ephesians 5:20](#); [Romans 11:36](#) ). He is the source of everything we have, and praying before meals as a habit helps to remind us of that truth. Praying before we eat with a thankful heart brings glory to God and centers our minds on His great love for His children and the blessings He bestows on those who belong to Him.” To find this quote and more information on why we should pray, visit <http://www.gotquestions.org/prayer-before-meals.html>

**Praying together**– Everybody knows that as Christians we need to say a prayer before you eat. When you have a large group that includes younger children it is a great idea to have several prayers where motions are required to help get their minds off of their hungry little stomachs. Here is a webpage with all different types of prayers, especially ones for children. <http://home.pcisys.net/~tbc/mealpryr.htm#children>

**Eating together**– As stated before one of the aims of this retreat is to help the family’s develop other oriented thinking. One way of doing this is at every meal having a rule that you are not allowed to ask for food or put food on your own plate. This means that everybody will have to watch out for another person and ask them what they want to eat, and also how much. After a day of doing this, you will notice that even the kids are watching each others plates, ready to ask each other if they want another helping.

**Intentional Conversations**– Sometimes it can be hard to have good dinner conversation. Here is a list of about 500 hundred starter questions to get the ball rolling at the dinner table <http://jimhough.com/cf/ibquestions.html> .

## Chapel

On the sample schedule there are four chapels and a “going home” chapel. Though you do not have to follow this schedule, this is what we will be going by. Be sure that the chapel time is friendly for all age groups.

**Worship** – Though you can “hire” a band to come in play, it would probably be more fun to utilize the different people of your congregation and give them a chance to lead. If you can find a family that is very musical invite them to be the worship leaders for the retreat. If not, then ask a group of about 4–6 people of various ages to lead. To help all generations to connect to the music make sure that you pick songs that are not too rock n’roll, but also songs that the younger crowd can feel like they belong. Kids typically connect best when the songs are a little more energetic and if you include some choreography.

**Speaker** – Again, you can “hire” someone to speak for the retreat, but typically the congregation wants to hear from the people that know their family the best. I would encourage you and the rest of the pastoral staff to be the “speakers” for the weekend. Take turns talking at the chapels and share your heart for what faith at home looks like from your perspective.

## Chapel Example

Friday

Night Chapel – This is your first chapel so have it be a welcoming one. Welcome the families and invite them into a time of worship.

6:30–7:30 pm

6:30–6:40– Welcome and Housekeeping – give announcements about the weekend

6:40 –7:00 – Worship Band plays 2/3 songs

7:00 – 7:20 – A word from the family life pastor (if there is not a singular pastor who oversees the “family life” then have the senior pastor speak here)  
Have this be a time to cast the vision. What do you hope that the outcome of this weekend is? Bring hope to the families.

7:20–7:30 – Sing a final song together.

Saturday

Morning Chapel – This morning chapel will set the mood for the rest of the day. Try to maintain that this is of high importance, but also have a little fun with it. Be sure to be highly organized and relaxed so that the families can understand the value of the weekend.

8:30 –9:30 am

8:30 – 8:45 – Play an icebreaker game

<http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/upfront.asp>

or play a minute-to-win-it game

(<http://www.nbc.com/minute-to-win-it/how-to/>)

8:45 – 8:50 – Announcements/Welcome/Prayer

8:50–10:10 – Worship (2/3 songs)

10:10 – 10:30 – A word from the Children’s Pastor

Night Chapel –

6:30 –7:30 pm

6:30 – 6:45 – Play an icebreaker or minute-to-win-it game

6:45 – 6:50 – Announcements/Welcome/Prayer

6:50 – 7:10 – Worship Band plays 2/3 songs

7:10 – 7:30 – A word from the Youth Pastor

Sunday

Morning Chapel –

8:30–9:30 am

8:30 – 8:45 – Play an icebreaker or a minute-to-win-it game

8:45 – 8:50 – Announcements/Welcome/Prayer

8:50–10:10 – Worship (2/3 songs)

10:10 – 10:30 – A word from the Worship Pastor

Going Home Gathering – This is the final rally. Take the time to debrief with the families. Allow them to worship, reflect, and move towards “bringing their faith home.”

12:30 – 1:30 pm

12:30 –12:45 Play an icebreaker or a minute-to-win-it game

12:45 – 12:50 – Announcements about leaving and explain what is going to happen in the final chapel.

12:50 – 1:20 – Give a chance for the families to break up and meet with their accountability family and set times and dates for when they will meet next. Also during this time, have them pray together and make a “goal” cheat for how they want to live this out once they are home.

1:20–1:30 – A final word from the family life pastor (or senior pastor) – This last message should be very short and very encouraging; it is a sending out, a benediction, to go and live out the principles taught while on the retreat.

## Post-Retreat

### Follow-up

After the retreat it is important to follow up with the families. While some of these “follow-up” activities need to be set into place while on the retreat, they are all a part of a larger picture of bringing the faith home.

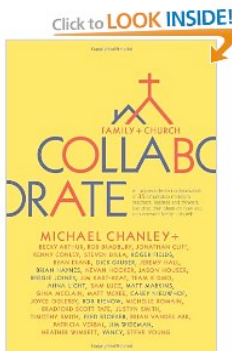
### Faith at Home

Bringing the faith home is by no means a new idea, but it is definitely a good one. One group called Orange is raising the bar for family based ministry. It would be beneficial to either model your children’s ministry and youth ministry curriculum after this, or to go ahead and use the Orange curriculum. It offers a comprehensive understanding for teaching through all age groups.

*“From preschool to college, Orange draws on the elements of wonder, discovery and passion, infusing them into children, students and young adults. Why? To see God for who he is, to help young people see themselves the way God sees them, so that they can love others the way God does.”*

Check Orange out at: <http://whatisorange.org/orange-strategy/>

Here is a list of books that you should think about reading through:



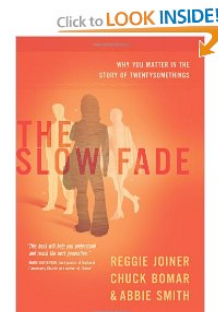
### Collaborate: Family + Church –

*“An unprecedented collaboration of 35 remarkable ministers, teachers, leaders and thinkers, blending their ideas on how you can connect FAMILY + CHURCH. “*

Check it out: [http://www.amazon.com/Collaborate-Family-Church-Michael-Chanley/dp/0692004394/ref=sr\\_1\\_15?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1267402362&sr=8-15](http://www.amazon.com/Collaborate-Family-Church-Michael-Chanley/dp/0692004394/ref=sr_1_15?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1267402362&sr=8-15)

### The Slow Fade: Why You Matter in the Story of Twentysomethings:

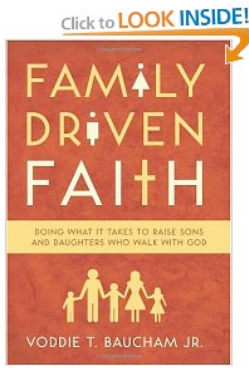
*“A discussion of the most overlooked and underdeveloped facet of the modern church—how to keep college-aged people engaged in faith. Many churches and families have programmed a youth ministry finish line at twelfth grade. They walk their seniors out the door, breathe a sigh of relief, and let them disappear for a few years...”*





Check it out: [http://www.amazon.com/Slow-Fade-Matter-Twenty-somethings-Orange/dp/1434764796/ref=pd\\_sim\\_b\\_21](http://www.amazon.com/Slow-Fade-Matter-Twenty-somethings-Orange/dp/1434764796/ref=pd_sim_b_21)

## Family Drive Faith: Doing what it Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters who Walk with God



*“Urgently calling parents to return to biblical discipleship at home, a distinct guide equips parents with the tools they need to raise children biblically in a post-Christian, anti-family society, showing them that God has not left them alone in raising godly children. Original.”*

Check it out: [http://www.amazon.com/Family-Driven-Faith-Doing-Daughters/dp/1581349297/ref=pd\\_sim\\_b\\_11](http://www.amazon.com/Family-Driven-Faith-Doing-Daughters/dp/1581349297/ref=pd_sim_b_11)

## Create a Blog



After the retreat create a blog (or have someone on the staff create it) for the families to access devotionals, family activities, a discussion board, and information regarding further training days or retreats.

There are many different ways that you can go about creating a blog. You can create one from one for free on a website like wordpress or blogspot or you can purchase a website url. One way that seems to be fairly easy to make, yet very simple for users is through the apple MobileMe membership. This costs \$100 a year and there are many other benefits for paying the yearly fee. Whichever way you decide be sure to make it simple for your users and include the below information:



## Monthly Devotion Posts

We will discuss this below, but post 4 devotionals each month for the family to do together each week of that month. It would be a good idea for these devotions to be related to the lesson that the kids and youth are learning about in their Sunday morning lessons.

## Training Sessions

Every six months it would be a great idea to have another “training session” with the parents. Maybe the church could do a series on families on Sunday mornings and then have an adult Sunday school class to “train” the parents. Or

maybe this could be a family night where the families come together to play games, eat food, and have a talk back session with the pastors of the church.

### **Discussion Board**

On the blog-site include a discussion board for parents to be able to ask questions to each other and to the pastors. Be sure to keep up with this part of the site so that the parents do not feel like you left them out to drown.

### **One Year Faith Plan**

Though accountability may best fit under post-retreat follow-up, it must start while on the retreat. The family has hopefully grown closer, learned about bringing the faith home, and experienced intimate time with God and each other. Now that the weekend is coming to a close it is pertinent to their growth for them to continue in the practices we discussed above when they go home. To help foster this growth assign each family another family to be accountable to. While on the retreat carve out some time in one of the adult sessions for them to create a one year faith plan. This plan should include everything from the family that they will be accountable to, their individual plan for family devotions, a plan for the family nights that they will be doing (the when and where), and a signed commitment form by both parents.

### **Accountability**

Once each family has been assigned an accountability family, give them some time to get together and set a solid time to meet once a month. Encourage them to be in contact, either by phone, email, or meeting, once a week so that they can keep on track with family devotions, activities, intentional conversations, and prayer.

### **Devotions and Prayer**

On the retreat encourage and empower families to do daily devotions together. Prayer together is a great way to end your day. It sends the message to the entire family that it is time to go to sleep and it gives opportunity to talk about the different joys and struggles that may have happened that day. Have each family take a turn praying throughout the week.

Each month on the website (discussed in more detail below) post a weekly devotional for the family to go through. Encourage the family to keep up with these weekly devotionals and to pray daily together.

### **Intentional Conversations**

Intentional conversations do not need to happen at a set apart time (although this is good) they can happen in the car, on a walk, while making dinner, etc. Parents can create time to talk with their kids about spiritual things and about

different issues that come up throughout the week. Encourage the parents to take the time everyday to take advantage of the time they do spend with their kids. The more that they bring these conversations up, the more natural it will come.

### Activities

Each month post on the blog four different examples of family activities for the family to do throughout those four weeks. They can do these activities as individual families or with their accountability family. These activities are a great way for the family to get together and just have some fun. This can be formational for the family dynamic.

examples of these activities include:

- Family game night
- Cookout
- Swim Party (for just the family)
- Movie night
- Putt-putt night
- Picnic in the Park
- Going on a scavenger hunt
- Building a fort
- Fly Kites
- Play in the snow
- Campout in the backyard
- Bike ride
- Go to a skate rink
- Homemade ice cream party
- Go to a museum
- Go to the zoo or an aquarium
- Go fishing

### A Final Word

Though church is only on a Sunday morning...for some also on Wednesday nights...this does not mean that the faith should stop once church is not in session. On the contrary, church provides an opportunity for believers to come together to fellowship and worship God while the rest of the week gives is for living out the faith. The rest of the week is for us to go out unto the world living for Christ, with Christ in us. This retreat is to help families to do just that. It is to help them to live out their faith within their homes and then go out and share it with the rest of the world. Bring the faith home, and share it with others.