

Dear Parents,

We are excited to start this next chapter with you as we begin to partner better together. We have been praying, learning, and discussing how we can be better at supporting and encouraging you all as parents. Together we believe we can create a lasting faith that sticks well beyond the years in the youth ministry.

The parents role is more important than you may think. According to many different studies, parents are the number one faith influencer in a child's life. That means more than pastors, youth leaders, coaches, teachers, and any other adult, parents have the greatest impact on their kid's faith. Mike McGarry wrote this about youth leaders partnering with parents:

"When parents view their spiritual duty fulfilled by bringing their children to church, Christian formation simply will not happen at home. We should not be surprised when lukewarm parents produce lukewarm kids. Faithful reflection of the Gospel will only happen when parents themselves have been transformed by the grace of God. The formation of a christian worldview in the home requires both formal and informal instruction, which many well intentioned parent feel unprepared and inadequate to provide. This reflects the importance of the church's calling to disciple parents in order that they may disciple their families. Although youth workers may not lead the adult discipleship ministries, they provide key support and encouragement to the parents."

We want to take this seriously. We view our role as exactly this, to help support and encourage you as your student's "first pastor." We believe it is the parents role to be the main spiritual guide for their kids. This means you are to teach, disciple, and discipline your children. The Bible is explicit in this. In Deuteronomy 6:5-9 we read:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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.
8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between
your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates”*

As a follower of Jesus we are all called to love God with all our heart, soul, and might. But as a parent, you are to now teach your children how to do these things as well. And this is through formal and informal training throughout each day. Deuteronomy 6:7 says “You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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.” This is from sun up to sun down, as you have a moment with your kids, and when you make intentional time. Talking about who Jesus is and what he has done for you should be woven into your everyday conversations with your kids.

So, we want to help support and encourage you in that. And we have three main ways we are going to do that here at Sharon Church:

1. Communication with one another.
2. More resources available to you.
3. Having many ways to get involved in the local church here at Sharon Church.

First, we want to be better at communicating with you. This means we need to have information on you. Every year we NEED you to fill out a Middle/High School registration form. This gives us all the information we need in order to keep your kid safe, like allergies, but also to have ways to communicate with you. We want to be able to encourage you if your child is doing great, partner with you if your child is misbehaving, and also to let you know of any information your child tells us that we need to tell you. We will never promise your student to keep any secret between us.

Second we are planning to have better and more resources available to you. Each week in our weekly mail chimp newsletter we will be putting our Wednesday night

small group questions. These questions will be available to you so that you may continue in teaching and discussing what they are learning each week. We are also going to have a monthly newsletter sent out with resources that we are reading that we believe will help you. These may include books to purchase, podcasts, and articles we are reading as we are studying and learning ourselves. And lastly we plan to have parent meetings every quarter to allow us to get together and have open conversations about what is happening in the Youth Ministries. So be aware of the next meeting on October 15th!

The third way we are going to be supporting and encouraging you is through all the ways we have for you to get plugged in and invoked here at Sharon Church. The simplest thing we ask is you show up on a Sunday morning regularly. You need to be getting fed yourself in order to teach your kids. We also have small groups and training classes available for you! These are great ways to get with other believers and have a community to support you as well! And if you really want to go deep, we have Discipleship groups that you can join.

Again we are here to love, support, and encourage you. But we need your help as well. We have many resources available that will help you with the formal training of your students (teaching them with your words). But what is even more important at times is the informal training (teaching them through actions). So please be aware of what you say, what you watch, and what you spend your time doing gives permission to your children. They pick up on more than you think.

We have heard language and jokes that are not appropriate at any age, or children who watch shows and movies that we wouldn't even watch as adults, and we cannot tell you how many times we have heard "I can't make it to church because (insert sport) or parents don't want to bring me." Be wary what you talk about, it shouldn't be politics all the time. Be wary of what you watch, it can put images and ideas into your students they shouldn't have. And be wary of what you make time for, if

you make sports or sleeping in a priority over church, your kids will pick up that habit too.

So again, we are here for you, and to echo what you are teaching at home. It is never too late to begin discipling your children if you haven't already. And know we are always praying for you. Pray and ask God for the wisdom, knowledge, power, grace patience, and discernment it takes to be a parent. If you ever need anything you can always reach out to us. Thank you for what you do, and we are encouraged by what God is doing here.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Micah Godsey", written in a cursive style.

Micah Godsey

Codi Schutz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Codi Schutz", written in a cursive style.