

The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

Brought to you this month
by Steve Cothran



Equipping parents to be Christian educators

I'm a youth guy. Can't help it. That's just the way God made me. And for far too long I thought my ministry was about focusing only on a group of people ages 12-21. How wrong I have been.

Statistics show that no matter how much time teenagers spend at school with teachers or hanging out with their peer group or even doing Bible study with their youth minister, their greatest influence is their parent(s).

We who lead children and youth are sometimes hesitant to take advantage of this God-given connection, and yet our ministries could be more fruitful if we would tap into this abundant resource.

In the *Shema*, God told Israel: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you

walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates" (Deut. 6:4-9, NIV).

I don't know about you, but I find it much easier to drag my children to church (isn't that where they are supposed to get religion?) than to try to have meaningful conversations in between *Seinfeld* episodes and dinner. But that is just what God says we are supposed to be doing. We who lead young people should help equip parents to be religious educators at home.

This became clear to me recently at a conference for parents and teenagers. Several churches in Greensboro gathered to bring in a guru of youth ministry, Richard Ross, who has been working with and teaching and writing about ministry with teenagers for almost 40 years. It was not a "youth rally" or a "parent seminar." (If only it had been one or the other, my own teenagers would not have whined and rolled their eyes at the prospect of having to sit for several hours in a place that was obviously going to be unimaginably boring because someone was un-cool enough to invite their parents.) The Turning Hearts Tour (www.Lifeway.com) event was unique.

The program emphasized family time. The first experience was an interactive, joint worship

Resources

DeVries, Mark. *Family-Based Youth Ministry: Reaching the Been-There, Done-That Generation*. InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Garland, Diana R. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*. InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Madden, Myron C. *Blessing: Giving the Gift of Power*. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1988.

Olson, Richard P. and Joe H. Leonard Jr. *A New Day for Family Ministry*. The Alban Institute, 1996.

Ross, Richard and Ken Hemphill. *Parenting with Kingdom Purpose*. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005.

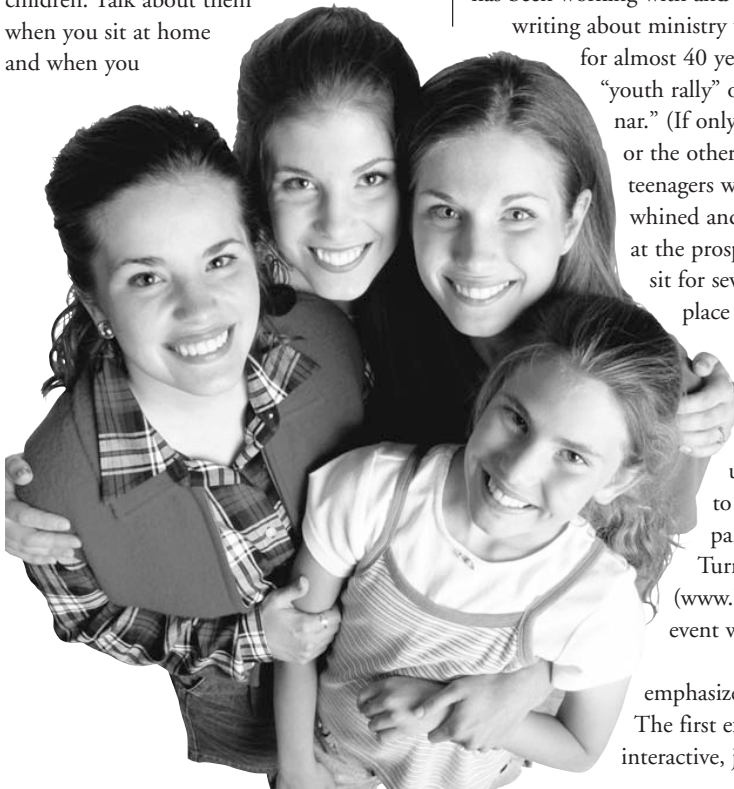
Ross, Richard and Gus Reyes. *30 Days: Turning the Hearts of Parents and Teenagers Toward Each Other*. Josiah Press, 2001.

Heart Connex Family eDevotionals
www.lifeway.com

Learning Matters Newsletter
www.helwys.com

Youth Specialties
www.youthspecialties.com

service for parents and their adolescents. Families sat together and worshipped together — although not in a typical Sunday worship style. While parents praying for their children was hardly a surprise for those of us in attendance, when children were directed to place their hands on their parents and ask God to give their parents wisdom and purity and love and compassion, we sensed a power and unity present that most of us had never experienced. **BT**



THE RESOURCE PAGE is provided by the Congregational Life office of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in partnership with *Baptists Today* and for those dedicated lay leaders working in the educational ministries of local churches. This month's page was written by Steve Cothran, associate pastor for youth and family life at First Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C.