

3 Reminders to Reach Travel-Ball Families

Fall is the time of year when the days grow shorter and the fireflies glow softer. The season when the amber aura of Friday night stadium lights illuminate the welcome relief of cooling dusk hours.

As sunburns fade and school assignments increase, many families make their annual migration back to church from weekends at the lake or ball field.

In these Fall Sundays, church leaders have an unnervingly short window to reintegrate these passive parents into active biblical community and reinvigorate in them blessing of body-life. Instead of finger wagging at their summer delinquency, the grace-full leader will leverage this opportunity to welcome families back home.

You do not have to affirm seasonal church attendance to reconnect with a seasonal church attender. If you hope to engage prodigal families this fall, keep these thoughts in mind:

Do not ask for more time... cast vision of great impact.

Paint a picture of the value to personal and family growth by connecting in a group or in a volunteer role. Remember, these families have demonstrated a willingness to prioritize their finances and calendar to the things they *perceive* will matter. Instead of giving them another event to put on their already-too-busy calendar, build deep wells of engagement by speaking of the impact missional involvement has on their family.

Do not ask for more money... give opportunity for investment.

Use vision language to speak to the real and immediate consequences of a mission activity, season of ministry impact, or facility need. The average family in our culture spends the fall paying down their "perfect summer" of credit card expenses, just in time to run them up again in the name of perfect Christmas memories. Remember, parents will invest resources where they *sense* a real and personal return. Today is the best time to help them see beyond the rusting, moth-ridden pleasures of now to the eternally stored treasures of heaven.

Do not ask for more guilt... share an abundance of grace.

It may be convicting to realize that our generic "life together" descriptors and ineffective development strategies are the reason families disconnect so easily. Many parents in your congregation see very little difference in spending time with travel ball parents criticizing coaching or referees, than they do circled around God's Word with youth group parents. Many of these fathers and mothers have not been discipled or taught to see the value of Biblical community over sporting competition. Encourage parents to engage each week with meaningful bible studies or teaching points, supported by intentional next-step discussions beyond the Sunday morning pulpit.

When it comes to engaging families this fall, remember:

Giving Value > Getting Time

Helping Invest > Raising Money

Abundant Grace > Heaping Guilt

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