

LIKE YOUR FATHER

Icebreaker Activity

In honor of Father's Day, share your favorite dad jokes.

Examples: "Where do fruits go on vacation?" "Pear-is!" / "How do you make a tissue dance? You put a little boogie in it."

Review Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:14-17

Paul wrote a corrective letter to the church in Corinth out of concern, care, and love for the people whom he described as "*his dear children*." He likens his unique relationship to them as that of a *father*. Interestingly, the father-child image functions for Paul in two ways: giving life and providing an example to imitate. An earthly father is to be highly respected because of his role in giving life; he is also to be a pattern of life for his children. The Corinthians had spiritual guardians (teachers, supervisors), but only Paul is their spiritual father. Therefore they are to imitate him. Timothy illustrates the father-child dynamic. Timothy is just like his father in Christ, Paul, whom he imitated.

If you are a father, you are unquestionably an example, a model, and a leader. You will either lead effectively or lead poorly, but you will lead. One of the primary responsibilities is to lead your children into an understanding of God. The role of a father is extremely important because it can positively or negatively affect one's view of God as a Heavenly Father. As earthly fathers, we are called to imitate our Heavenly Father. Our example is Jesus who was the exact representation of our heavenly Father on earth (Heb 1:3). If you see Jesus then you've seen the Father (John 14:9). Though we may not imitate Him perfectly, we should reflect Him accurately.

There are six important things a father can provide to his children that not only imitate our Heavenly Father but also build our children's concept of Him: protection, provision, affirmation, affection, training, and guidance.

"Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me." (1 Corinthians 4:15-16, NIV)

Discussion

1. How did your relationship with your earthly father prepare you for a relationship with your heavenly Father?
2. A father can be anyone who has intentionally mentored you or provided you with an example to follow. The father role is not limited to biological fathers. Who in your life has been a father to you? Share examples when they taught, corrected, or loved on you.
3. Whatever you do not get in a natural family, God will either substitute or supplement within a spiritual family (church). In what ways have you experienced that?
4. Read Matthew 7:9-11. What does this tell you about earthly fathers in comparison to God?
5. *Protection* | Read Psalm 46:1-7. What does this tell you about your heavenly Father? In what ways did or does your earthly father bring a sense of security?
6. *Provision* | Read Matthew 6:31-33. In what ways has your heavenly Father provided for you? How about your earthly father?
7. *Affirmation* | Read Matthew 3:16-17. Every child desires to be affirmed by their father. What was the most heartfelt affirmation you've received from your father?
8. *Affection* | Share a moment when a hug, touch, or kiss made you feel loved and accepted.
9. *Training* | Read Ephesians 6:1-4. Why is it sometimes difficult for people to show honor to their fathers? What does it look like to still show honor to a father who doesn't seem to deserve it? How can fathers train their children to honor his/her parents?
10. *Guidance* | What are some ways a father can guide his children into fulfilling God's purpose for their life?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we want to honor You today. Thank You for loving us and calling us Your children. Thank You for protecting, providing, affirming, loving, training, and guiding us. Thank You for giving us earthly fathers who are you image bearers. Help us to honor You by showing honor to them. In Jesus' name, Amen.