

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

Faith Path - Free age-appropriate kits are available for parents to guide a child's spiritual journey one step at a time. Faith Path will begin in January 2015!

NextGen Resource Center - Free, easy ideas for faith conversations at mealtime, bedtime, family night, movie nights and more are available from the NextGen Resource Center or online (coming November 2014) at fbcsa.org/nextgen

First Touch - FBCSA wants to celebrate, partner, and pray with our expectant parents as they prepare for their new child. Our hope and goal is that this initial connection becomes the basis for a strong bond of friendship and fellowship as you bring your child to learn about Jesus. To learn more, visit fbcsa.org/firstkids

MOPS - MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) is for all moms of infants through kindergartners, providing an opportunity to meet other moms and make the journey of motherhood together. FBCSA MOPS exists to equip, encourage, develop, and bring moms what they want and need. For more info, visit fbcsa.org/mops

First Kids - FBCSA offers a variety of programs that come along side parents in their effort to instill faith in children including age-graded weekend classes, RAs, GAs, camps, and much more. To learn more, visit fbcsa.org/firstkids

PREPARING FOR BABY



Preparing for Baby's Arrival

*From Jimmy Gunn, Minister to Preschool and Children
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With Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families*

Congratulations on the exciting stage of life you've entered. Whether you've recently had a new baby or are counting down to your due date, you've likely noticed that parenthood is an entirely different world. In the midst of all the joy and anticipation comes a whole new level of stretching (not just your belly) and character development. You may be wondering if life will ever be the same. In many ways it won't. So, become intentional about this season by preparing yourself to take three important steps for the transition to parenthood.

STEP ONE: Buckle up

As new parents, you've strapped yourself into a roller coaster of adventure—with highs you could have never imagined and lows that can push you to discover abilities and courage you didn't know you had. Along with God's blessing of children comes His calling for you to lay your life down for your child (Philippians 2:3-11). Things you once took for granted—like sleep, eating a warm meal or a spontaneous get-away with your spouse—are now things you will often sacrifice. While your friends without children sleep in on Saturday morning or hang out at the local coffee shop, you will be taking on what one sociologist called the “bone-wearying” work of a parent.

STEP TWO: Give Up

When you give sacrificially as parents you probably won't get the same kudos you'd get in the workplace, or even the same recognition you would have given each other for similar efforts before the kids arrived. You're moving into a time of life where such sacrificial giving is just something you have to do often and without expecting much fanfare. But it's in this aspect of your new mission — losing your life — that you find your life (Matthew 16:24-25). It's here that you develop “servant muscles” through the ongoing exercise of selfless giving. You'll also find that parenting is an arena for Christian discipleship with a “dailyness” and intensity like none other.

STEP THREE: Team Up

A couple entering into the journey of parenthood usually discover a sense of purpose and shared accomplishment that can push their relationship into greater joy. But they can simultaneously drive each other crazy. Adjusting to less sleep, sex, money and time for each other can be a blow to marital satisfaction. Worse still, couples that need each other the most often find themselves taking their frustration out on the only other adult in the house. Your marriage can survive this adjustment and you can experience the joy of parenting if you choose to be a team—if you lay your lives down for each other (Ephesians 5:22-33) and give each other an extra measure of love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) and grace (2 Corinthians 9:8).

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

Your Marriage Can Survive a Newborn (by psychologist Glenn Williams and occupational therapist Natalie Williams)
This book helps couples thrive during the stress and strain of having a newborn. With chapters about anxiety, expectations, money, sex and fun, the Williams' speak from their own experience of having three children, as well as from the stories of other overextended parents, to show couples how to nurture their relationship even as they nurture their new baby.

The Best Advice I Ever Got on Parenting (by Jim Daly)
shares personal experiences and advice from well-known moms and dads in ways that all parents can relate.

What to Expect When You're Expecting: 4th Edition (by Heidi Murkoff) provides a plethora of information about what to expect during your pregnancy.

What to Expect the First Year: 3rd Edition (by Heidi Murkoff and Sharon Mazel) gives helpful information on what to expect from your new baby during their first year with you.