

IT'S JUST A PHASE
One Church – July 30, 2017

Preschool Phase Video

March 21, 2013, was one of the greatest experiences of my life. It was the day I became a dad. It was a totally crazy day. My mind was spinning with a myriad of emotions. I was excited, happy, thankful, but also terrified. A voice in my head was saying “don’t mess this up”

Do you remember the feeling the day you became a parent?

Influenced by Andy Stanley wisdom.. I realized something....my greatest accomplishment might not be something I do, but someone I raise.

That little girl was special. A different type of special. The word

“Special” isn’t special enough to describe this little girl. Special doesn’t even get close to describing just how...special she is.

It that day in the hospital, you realized the sanctity of life. I had always heard the term, **imago dei**, which is latin for image of God. But I never fully grasped the idea...that is until Adelaide was born.

Genesis 1:26-27 - God said “Let us create man in our image”

I began to realize, that little girl might have her father’s smile, but she has a Heavenly father’s fingerprint on her. God crafted her. Psalm writer said, “He knit her together in her mother’s womb” He crafted Adelaide, He knit her together, and he created her a whole new type of special.

But then we went home from the hospital....and life got hard. Those babies days are hard. I think my wife and I were walking zombies for a few months.

Anyone that's ever been through preschool phase, knows the days are long. But the years are short.

Babies are only babies for a moment...before long. You have a toddler on your hand..and unlike a baby that cries every time they need you, the toddler cries because they insist they can do it themselves. Diapers disappear....and all of a sudden, dolls and trucks litter your living room.

Time cannot be recovered, paused, stop, given back, passed forward, our rewind.

I love Orange curriculum, because it is constantly reminding me. I only have 936 weeks from the time my child is born, till the time they go off to college. My clock started in that delivery room.

“TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS, THAT WE MAY
GAIN A HEART OF

WISDOM” (PSALM 90:12)

I cannot miss this opportunity. This phase is mission critical, as a parent and as a church.

My wife, sent me... "A girls father is her first love, her evidence that there truly is a God and that he truly loves her"

What was so significant about the preschool phase, was this is the time that my child is going to receive their first introduction to God. Which means, nursery workers, preschool volunteers, aren't just Christian babysitters. The are the people are make the first introduction of Jesus to our children.

This phase is vital....it's mission critical.

It is a worthy thing to give your life to helping preschoolers find and follow Jesus. It's just a phase...don't miss it.

Elementary Phase Video

This video is a sucker punch of sentiment. The sweetness, innocence, and reality of a child in this video makes it seem like the context of a child is almost perfect. That sweet, innocent, reality...isn't the reality of our culture.

The reality of our culture is sad, sick, and cruel.

2 Corinthians 4:4 - The ruler of this world, is Satan.

The truth is...Satan has made war against children and family.

After reading a book, called Adopted for Life, I had a new understanding about just how cruel culture was toward children. For all time...Satan seeks to devalue, distract, and destroy children.

In the OT...

Moses (Exodus 2)

In the NT..

Herod is a Pharaoh copy cat. Under threat of a child that would be king. Creates a regional order. Slaughter all boys under the age of 2.

In Leviticus 20:2

Molech...a false God, demanding child sacrifice.

“When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it

is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” Exodus 1:16 ESV

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he

gave orders to kill all the boys... Matthew 2:16

“Say to the people of Israel, Any one of the people of Israel or of the strangers who

sojourn in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech shall surely be put to death.

The people of the land shall stone him with stones.”

Leviticus 20:2 ESV

Child sacrifice, and government mandated slaughter of children isn't a cultural norm today. The spirit of Herod, Pharaoh, and Molech is active in a new way in 2017.

As often as the church preaches on the family, the world is preaching another contrary message, that trains the masses to think and act in such a way that it devalues, diminishes, and destroys the potential of a child.AND Satan smiles.

Under functioning..

The parent that doesn't do much parenting, because there is an obsession with self. Their god is their job, is a career, is

the american dream, is nice stuff. Slave to self image which drives to to perform and perfect life. Which means, late night at the offices, choose to get ahead and not get home. Creating another generation of latch key kids and digital zombies being raised by iPhones.

Over functioning...

In some homes, it's not absenteeism that the problems. It's child worship. It's the type of parenting that gets rewarded on Facebook. The child that has more extracurricular activities than any reasonable schedule can keep up with. It's the glamor shot kid. Running from one event, one tournament, on practice. Trying to make superstars of our children, and not a deny yourself Gospel in your home.

The Spirit of Molech, Herod, and Pharaoh might not be spilling blood, but there is still a slaughtering of the spiritual lives God wants for his children.

The Gospel spirit, is that both parents and child learn absolute dependence on the Father of father.

I hope the alarm bell is sounding....

I'm thankful to be a part of a church that is committed to our children and family. I'm thankful for a kids ministry that insists on creating safe space for our children, with irresistible environments, partnership with parents and staffing it with consistent volunteers that show up in a culture of inconsistency.

We need more people to say yes to working with the family. It's a worthy thing to give your life to helping kids find and follow Jesus.

It's Just a Phase, Don't miss it!

In order to ensure that we make disciples of the next generation, means that this

generation hold an unshakable commitment to the children in families and our church.

Middle School Phase

Any middle school parents in the room? Where you at? God bless you.

Every parent of a middle schooler, and every small group leader for MS, knows it's a scary time. I'm not exaggerating...there is nothing scarier than a middle school girl.

It is the most awkward, messy, and straight up smelly time in the life of a child. Parents are having to navigate netflix, snap chat, instagram, the first crushes.

My heart goes out to the middle school parent, because parents don't get a break in this phase. It's a phase with it's own unique challenges and opportunities.

In Genesis 4:7...It's very apparent, sin is hungry.

It's during this phase...

The average MS is having regular exposure to pornography
The average MS is asking questions about their identity and sexuality.

The average MS is learning about the world by watching an iPhone, computer, or television screen for 5-7 hours a day.

Guess what? You only have 364 or your 936 marbles left.

There is so many challenges, but there is some many opportunities.

The word that sums up the physiological and spiritual need of a middle schooler is affirmation. A middle schooler needs to know they are okay. They need a sense of confidence that comes from a parent or spiritual influence letting know it's okay to not be okay. It's okay that things are awkward. It's okay that things seem to be in transition physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

TRANSTION:

Luke I get it...make disciples in our home. I get it...follow Jesus

What about the broken and blended family?

ILL: I only have half the time every other family has. My kids share weeks with another family.

Not to trivialize your situation...

In the garden of God's grace, even broken trees produce fruit. - Rick Warren

Broken and fractured families can produce godly children. Step parents and single parents...your journey it might be harder than most, but it's hopeless. "Doing things yourself, doesn't mean you have to do it alone" God's grace is great, and that means redemption is real.

We partner with parents. We as a church are going to provide another voice, and another influence, we want to to help your child find and follow Jesus.

Traditional families, blended family, people without a family...let's do whatever it takes to make disciples of the next generation and expanded the Kingdom of God.

Let's demolish every hinderance in a child's life. The Kingdom of God belongs to them. The next generation teaches the older generation, what it's like to have a child like faith.

Tim Keller says - Only a child wakes up a King at 3 am.

It's a worth thing to give your life to helping students and families, find and follow Jesus

It's just a phase, don't miss it.

HIGH SCHOOL PHASE (15-18)

*I hate when I hear parents complaining about the teenage years. These years are crucial years for the kids, and they desperately NEED our encouragement and support.

KEY NEEDS:

*Learning INDEPENDENCE [Pulling away from you and taking risks.]

*Seeking their PURPOSE [Why am I here?]

*Resisting UNSOUGHT counsel, but open to WISDOM in a RELATIONAL context!

They can be some of God's MIGHTIEST WARRIORS! Don't underestimate them.

Do YOU recognize any of these names: Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, or Daniel? They were all teens from the class of 605 BC. Jeremiah was another mighty young teen from an earlier graduating class in Judah. They were all teenagers that stood up against kings, fires, and lions, and that counseled kings and changed the world. They still inspire lives today!

God called Jeremiah when he was just a young man of about 16. Here is Jeremiah's account of that calling: **Jeremiah 1:4-8 NLT**

4 The LORD gave me this message: 5 "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations." 6 "O Sovereign LORD," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" 7 The LORD replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. 8 And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

I LOVE that! God told him not to say that his age was a hindrance because God KNEW him, God CHOSE him, and God would put his words in his mouth. He told Jeremiah that he would SHAKE NATIONS. And he did.

But Jeremiah was greatly influenced by another young man from a graduating class that was just a few years ahead of him. His name was JOSIAH. He became a king at age 8 after his father was murdered. But he had perhaps the greatest impact on the young men I mentioned before by his character and actions. He was first to stand.

2 Chronicles 34:1-3 NLT

1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. 2 He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight and followed the example of his ancestor David. He did not turn away from doing what was right. 3 During the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, Josiah began to seek the God of his ancestor David. Then in the twelfth year he began to purify Judah and Jerusalem, destroying all the pagan shrines, the Asherah poles, and the carved idols and cast images.

This young man started deeply seeking (**treading a path to!**) the Lord at age 16! And by the time he turned 20, he was turning the hypocritical religious world on its ear. He waged war against all that was ungodly in his kingdom, and he brought about a reform that brought salvation and peace to his generation! Jeremiah wrote songs of lament when Josiah was killed in battle at age 39. His passing opened the door for Jerusalem's destruction. But it did not happen under his watch! His High School Phase helped change the world!

So, it's JUST a PHASE? When you are in the MIDDLE of one of those phases, you feel like it will NEVER end. BUT DON'T BLINK! [\[Picture of TONI as a baby and Wedding photo from July 29!\]](#)

Lisa and I are in a very interesting and new place because we just PHASED OUT! (Our son Abe turns 20 in September, so we are FREE!) So, you guys are all on your own. We are 6 and OUT! Just kidding. We are still very much "in the game" with our own kids and with kids who do not have our last name.

The truth is, we know that our children are not amazing because WE raised them. There has been so much more going on than any one person would ever know.

*They were made in God's image.

*Many others shared and showed Christ's love to them and they said YES to

Jesus!

*Many of YOU played a KEY ROLE in their lives, and we THANK YOU.

*Now, they are helping to change the world for Jesus.

Every teenager IS changing his or her world in one way or another. Yours will too. Together, we get to help encourage, support, and influence their entrance into this world. If you are a SINGLE man or woman, or a grandmother or grandfather, or a parent whose children are grown and gone, YOUR WORK IS NOT DONE! As a CHURCH, we get to influence the young people growing up and going out into the world all around us. We MUST NOT miss this opportunity.

It's just a phase, and CHC is NOT going to miss it!

Let's pray.