

Top 5 Ways to Serve Families in your RE Program

Hebrew 10:25 Presentation.

1. Treat others the same way you would treat Jesus. Be Humble. Try to have the perspective that you are truly in your role to serve others.

Be honest, and honestly this is much easier said than done!

What does this really look like...

- a. Looks for every opportunity to have a positive interaction with families. YOU WILL NEED TO INITIATE THIS OVER AND OVER. When communicating something basic (i.e. Reminder No RE classes because everyone is expected to attending the Living Stations) add: "Again, I would like to personally thank each of you for taking the time to make your child's faith a priority in this crazy, busy life. "
- b. Step out of your office and talk to families during drop off or leaving. Truly ask them how they are, if you can add a personal comment about their child-it will be worth your thought and time. (i.e. when talking to a family before our Living Stations...I heard that someone did pretty good at state wrestling...thank you for coming tonight)
- c. Angry/Upset Parent Example: Too much is required pertaining to everything RE related, especially Confirmation. "First, off I am sorry for any confusion, please know I am not trying to add any extra stress...your concern is valid, and then good explanation of why it is WHAT IT IS!

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Matthew 25:40

2. Meet families where they are at-realizing this isn't typically where we would like them to be! Hold families accountable but having them invested a little bit at time is better than turning them away all together.

What does this look like...

1. Unfortunately, our RE program is not in a place where our parish makes going to Sunday Mass a RE requirement. The general consensus is this would actually turn families away from going to mass.
The Goal: RE students and their families attend Sunday Mass
Shaping Behavior by using Positive Reinforcement
 - a. Pray for Holy Spirit to guide the hearts of your Re students/families
 - b. Talk about Sunday Mass, promote the Gospel, tell stories about the Eucharist, talk through barriers
 - c. Incentivize going to Mass (current incentive for all K-6 graders) the main point of Step 2 is to give attention to the positive (going to mass) and not to the negative (those not going to mass)
 - d. Make sure to handout incentive (KING SIZE CANDY BAR-"YOU MADE JESUS SMILE BY GOING TO MASS, HOPE THIS CANDY MAKES YOU SMILE) in front of RE community/ gathering.
 - e. Monitor process, modify as needed (i.e changing Mass reflection sheet requirement)
 - f. After desired Behavior is maintained (4-6 weeks) fade reinforcement (King size candy bar-small bag of chips...)
 - g. Change incentive to capture entire RE program (class incentive, collective goal for party)
The goal of step 7 is to delay the reinforcement and make the reward contingent on others
 - h. Moving forward only entire RE program incentives (after 25 students go to mass = ice cream/ RE jeopardy game)

- i. Increase the requirement for the incentive (after 50 students...after 100 students...)
- j. Can completely fade incentive and now make going to mass a requirement. 😊
- 2. Know when to bend without breaking. Additional requirement to make up missing too many classes, after meeting with the family we compromised- did not agree to less but was flexible, Confirmation example (Marinette vs Cathedral—it's a win, win)
- 3. Ask others to help provide support to those that need extra support (donating old 1st communion gown)

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mark 2:17

- 3. **Constantly look for ways to "Feed" Families. Take the perspective of a parent on a busy Wednesday night, with one too many things to do and then multiple it by the number of kids they have-what do they need?**
 - a. Providing a meal (big or small) to our students and catechist. We start off with a meal, during this time (Mass incentive, Coordinator Mini Lesson/Reflection, Questions/Concerns, Updates and Reminders) or have the meal available 20 minutes prior to the start of class.
 - Where does the funding for this come from? Great question?
 - I. Knights of Columbus
 - II. Greater GB Association
 - III. Generous parishioners
 - IV. RE families donate meal/ or even cook meal for entire program
 - V. Grants
 - b. Put the kids "on center stage" as much as possible. This can be done on a big scale: Christmas Concert, Living Stations or a smaller scale: monthly kids choir, RE prayer service at the end of class with class petitions.
 - c. Ask for their feedback on what is working; could be better, how? Make communication as easy as possible (i.e. parents are invited to gathering at the end of class to hear announcements, website, email/text). Offer parent classes during RE class time.

"...but each must give what he can, in proportion to the blessing which Yahweh your God has bestowed on you." Deuteronomy 16:17

- 4. **Give them value by looking for ways to make them feel important. If parents and RE programs are on the same page it will be the best environment for spiritual growth of all those involved.**
 - a. Address questions and concerns promptly. If you say you are going to do it, do it! If something comes up (as it always will) be a good communicator and let them know you didn't forget you just need a little more time. (i.e. Living Stations of the Cross, parent concern with kindergartner)
 - b. When asking for feedback, or you are given feedback without even asking for it, try to honestly use it, or at least a part of it and make a point to let the individual know you appreciated the feedback and tell how you are applying it.

- c. Directly ask families/parent to help and get involved. Many times, the reason we don't do something is simply because no one asked us. Make it easy to be involved, rotating schedule (1x per year and have clear expectations)

"..and to love Him with all your heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." Mark 12:33

5. **Include the entire family as part of RE program. Many times, families are involved with many, many different activities, if quality family time can be a part of RE it will be golden!**
 - a. Instead of RE classes 1X per month/quarter, family night with pot luck. Make the most of the shared time, movie/movie clip, family style jeopardy, prayer intentions/reflection. Don't overdo it by putting families on the spot too much and making them feel uncomfortable-at first play it safe and address the students more than the parents.
 - b. Class service projects with family involvement. (i.e raking leaves in the community, making bird feeders, volunteering at Humane Society, helping at K of C/Lions fish fry, visiting elderly in nursing home...)
 - c. Look for parents to help promote your RE program goals to other parents. If you can get a few parents on board it is amazing how they can help get the ball rolling by getting others involved.
 - d. During RE class, have parents attend ALPHA session
 - e. Have fun, show the joy God has given to each of us!

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them..." Psalm 127:3-5

God Bless,

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