

THE NEST

A CCS Resource for Faith Formation @ Home

What's Your Game Plan?

"What are you building?"

"We don't plan to fail so much as we fail to plan . . ."

It's common to hear a phrases like these, whether it's something like home renovations, planning a vacation, or developing a business strategy. What about in parenting?

Some of you have heard me give my marbles talk. 936 weeks is what we get from the time a child is born to a time a child graduates high school. I know these numbers can be shocking but they help us put things into perspective. 936 weeks. That's 18 years. 18 summer holidays. 18 Christmas breaks, winter breaks, and May long weekends. 18. I'm sure like me, you've discovered they fly!

Whether you have a game plan or not, it's happening. A favourite author said, "It's not a matter of if your calendar will be full. It's a matter of what will fill your calendar." It starts right away - volleyball, musical, youth, dance, gymnastics . . . not to mention social media, Netflix and the like - these captivate our time and attention.

So to kick off the year, I simply want to ask: "What's the game plan?" Andy Stanley says it this way in his book *The Principle of the Path*: "It is your direction, not your intention, that determines your destination."



Key Thoughts:

Andy Stanley writes, "It's your direction, not your intention that determines your destination."

Also, John Maxwell says, "It's not a question of IF your calendar will be full, but what will fill your calendar?"

Without a game plan, or vision of what we're attempting to do in parenting, we run the risk of drift.

Take time to start the year and envision your preferred future together.

You can't change destinations overnight, but you can change direction.

"Will this move me closer to or further from my desired destination?"

A unique finding in Canadian faith research conducted by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada discovered the higher drop in church and faith engagement was between middle school and high school, as opposed to high school and post-secondary. Research indicates this is the season most impacted by weekend jobs, more demanding extra-curricular involvement, and prioritizing friend connections over faith and church participation.

Important to highlight is that none of those things are inherently negative! In fact, we want our students to grow in responsibility, expand their experiences, and have meaningful relationships. However, I believe we'd also want them to engage consistently in their faith and work out their salvation with fear and trembling . . . as Paul writes in Philippians. Often in life, the competition in our decisions isn't between positive and negative activities. Far more frequently we're stuck deciding between two or more good things: bank some money, or go to summer camp? Add to the resumé or prioritize youth group? Compete in dance competitions or get away as a family?

Without a vision, or a game plan, it's more likely that we will react to decisions in front of us instead of respond in light of the destination we desire. A powerful question that my mentor often challenges me with is: "Will this move me closer to or further from my desired destination?" We can only give that question honest evaluation if we've envisioned where we want to go.

Our teachers right now are working toward this. We have a 40 week game plan for your student. There are clear outcomes and benchmarks that we're looking to hit. Some of those we'll hit by November . . . some of those we'll build on all year so that we can help move your student from where they are to a place of readiness for what's next. But we know that student formation isn't just academic . . . so what's the game plan?

Now for those of us later in the journey . . . be encouraged . . . one of my favorite authors reminds me, "While you can't change your destination overnight, you can change your direction." I love that because it gives me hope. Even though I might look around me today and think, "Gosh - this isn't how I envisioned this stage of our family . . ." there is an opportunity to take a step in a new direction, starting right now. We can't re-write what's been done but we can, with humility and courage, say small things like, "I'd like us to try to speak to one another more softly . . ."; "You know, I'm going to show up to more games this year . . ."; "let's just make sure we're eating together as a family."

Take time this week, before the crazy begins, and build a game plan for your family. What's the vision you have for how you want this year to go and how you want to see you and your child(ren) grow? Once we get clear on that destination, then we can ask that question about direction: Is what I'm about to do going to bring closer to or further from my desired destination?"

Hey friends? . . . Thank you for letting us be a part of your game plan this year. We're here to help and to journey with - so don't hesitate to reach out. We're in this together.

Resource for the shelf:

