

Because Man in the Mirror is committed to providing Men's Leaders with high caliber Small Group Curriculum, we are pleased to offer you the following resource specials to help you reach and disciple the men.

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ORDER NOW

Call (800) 929-2536 or go to <http://mgrsti5486i.seamlesstech.biz>

AN ACTION PLAN

STEP 1: Read and discuss this article with your wife and decide what you want to do.

STEP 2: Ask your children for their input about how to make this idea work for them.

STEP 3: Set your first daily devotion. Consider 15 minutes as a guideline.

STEP 4: Follow or adapt this format....

- **START ON TIME:** it sends a good message for all of life.
- **TONE:** upbeat, positive attitude.
- **HOOK:** a story, quote, or question related to their world and interests.
- **BOOK:** relate the hook to a Bible verse.
- **PRINCIPLE:** relate the biblical principle back to their world (take about 8 to 10 minutes on this point).
- **QUESTION OR COMMENT:** involve them with a question, or by inviting a comment.
- **PRAYER:** involve your children in praying for the fate of the world and specific people in the world.
- **END ON TIME:** to keep them from getting flustered.

Pat Morley is the Founder and CEO of Man in the Mirror.

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If you got this article from a friend, you can receive three sample monthly issues of this complimentary newsletter by calling 1-800-929-2536. We would also be glad to provide information about our resources that can help you in your efforts to reach other men.

A Look in the Mirror™ is distributed at no charge to our ministry partners. Additional copies are 25¢ each, with bulk pricing for large orders.

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THE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER For Men's Evangelism & Discipleship

The National Training Center for Men's Evangelism and Discipleship at Man in the Mirror ("NTC") is what we call an "open" facility, in that we believe it exists for the benefit and use of all ministries dedicated to reaching men. NTC is moving towards offering a full schedule of courses in every aspect of men's evangelism and discipleship. Currently, Man in the Mirror is offering 3 courses through the National Training Center:

Course One: *Building A Sustainable Men's Ministry*

We'll show you the principles, practices, and components of a men's ministry "perfectly designed" to produce changed lives, families, churches, and communities over the long haul -- not just short term excitement, but real long term change. And isn't that long term success what you're really looking for?

September 23-25, 2004 Orlando, FL
November 4-6, 2004 Orlando, FL

Discipling Men's Hearts

Building disciples is not about behavior modification. It's about changing the core affections of their hearts. It's about heart transformation. Effective men's ministry is about discipling men's hearts. This 8-hour course has a great deal of discussion and interaction, as well as an opportunity to formulate plans and objectives specifically tailored to your own church.

September 10-11, 2004 Monroe, MI
September 24-25, 2004 Chesterfield, VA
October 1-2, 2004 Wooster, OH

Full Engagement: *Leading a Men's Small Group*

Most substantial spiritual development happens with the regular study of God's Word in the context of relationships. But many men have struggled with making small groups work well. Whether you have never led a small group before, or you're a veteran of several, this 8-hour course will give you a whole new perspective on leading a small group ministry.

September 17-18, 2004 Grand Rapids, MI
October, 8-9, 2004 Allentown, PA

A LOOK IN THE
MIRROR™

EQUIPPING LEADERS IN THE BATTLE FOR MEN'S SOULS

Number
117

How to Lead a Family Devotion

By Pat Morley

In 30 years of working with men, no pain men face seems to hurt as much as "child pain." On the other hand, if your children are doing well, all of your other problems will fit into a thimble.

Now that I have two grown, happily married children who are walking with the Lord, I can look back and see what set the stage for their spiritual walks. One VERY important activity was to set aside a time for a brief family devotion at the beginning of most days during the school year. It was not so much the activity itself as the "message" about how important Patsy and I deemed devotions, the discussions that it got our family into, and the spirit of prayer it fostered both then and now.

I wrote up how we did our family devotions for the book, *Devotions For Couples*, Zondervan). Here is an edited version of that chapter....

As my personal ministry I teach a large Bible study on Friday mornings. No small commitment, I usually spend fifteen hours a week on this ministry, most of which is preparing the message.

One day it fell on me like a heavy boulder. *You are giving your very best thinking to these men, most of whom will not be in your life more than a few years. Meanwhile, you are doing nothing for your very own children -- the ones you love the most and who most need you.*

I reasoned that if I was going to share biblical truths with others that I should also share them with my family. So we began holding a fifteen minute family devotion just before the kids left for school.

We did not even begin to attempt this every day. I have a standing Friday morning commitment, and the kids from time to time needed to leave early or were running especially late (I say "especially" because they were always at least a little late!). So we usually made it

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ALM - 2

three or four mornings a week.

We only did devotions during the school year. During the summer we took a break. It's good for kids (and dads) to have a break. Besides, they got up at different times during summers.

How did we do it? On a typical morning, we would start at 7:00 a.m. and end at 7:15 a.m. Do I need to mention that many times the kids were not ready at 7:00? It didn't matter. Instead of delaying the devotion, we had them stop what they were doing for 15 minutes. We put the dog in her bed and didn't answer the phone (yes, it would ring from time to time).

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From the start I tried to set an upbeat, enthusiastic tone, although sometimes I didn't feel that way myself. I tried to hook them with a story, quote, or question that related to their world and interests. Some were better than others. Next, I related the point of the opening hook to the Bible. Next, I pointed out the spiritual principle and how it could apply to us that day. Finally, I closed off with a question or asked if they have a comment. I allowed about ten minutes for all of this. It would have been just as effective to simply read from a youth devotional like "Youth Walk" (check with a Christian book store).

After the Bible portion of the devotion we closed in prayer. In the early days it became clear that the prayers were shallow and self-centered: "Lord, let us have a good day and bless our family." So we changed formats and began to pray for one needy or hurting person each day in addition to personal and family needs. This request could be suggested by any of us—the kids, Patsy, or me. They could be a youth, an adult, or a family. The problems were usually related to health, finance, or broken relationships. It was not necessary that everyone in the family knew the person we prayed for personally.

We got off to a rocky start. I didn't pay close enough attention to the time, and made them run late on several occasions (they received detentions if they were late for school). Several sessions ended with a stormy conclusion! Finally, my wife had the idea for me to keep a travel clock in the top drawer of the end table next to

ALM - 3

where I would sit. I would watch the time and, just before we prayed, I would tell the kids exactly what time it was so they could relax. This was a small, but very practical consideration.

From time to time our daughter, who is older, would read something that touched her and ask if she could do the devotion. Usually that was at the last minute after I had already prepared something, but I always eagerly said yes to her initiative. (We could always do mine the next day!)

Patsy and I had a desire to disciple our children so that they can disciple others. Letting them lead helped train them. When I was away on a trip I had one of the kids take over for me. This was helpful. Today, both of our grown children lead Bible studies.

Most mornings they didn't start out looking very interested. This was hard to get used to. If the hook was moving or especially relevant they got into it, but not always. Many mornings their eyes look glazed over and I wondered if it was worth all the effort.

My daughter attended a small discipleship group of teenaged girls led by a woman in our church. She told my wife one day, "I don't know what you do in those family devotions, but often when I ask a question, Jen says, 'Well, my dad says this,' or 'My dad says that.' She makes great contributions to our group. That must be a special time!"

Establish them in this habit when they are young, and they will mostly likely stick with it when they grow up.

After hearing that, I stopped wondering if it was worth the effort! Why not give it a try! "Routinize" daily devotions into your family life. Set realistic expectations. If you have a couple of false starts, don't abandon the idea. Is it too bold to suggest that the spiritual health of your children may be at stake?

Establish them in this habit when they are young, and they will mostly likely stick with it when they grow up. The Bible puts it this way: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

If not this method, then find something else you can do to "routinize" daily devotions into the lives of your children. If you do, all of your other problems will fit into a thimble.