

What Do Doctrinally Well-fed Teens Look Like?

One of the main objectives for churches is to raise a generation of young people who know what they believe, why they believe it and lives that correspond to that belief. No one will deny that Christian teens should know the basic doctrines of Scripture. However, do they only know the facts? Have they applied those facts to their lives? This article will identify some basic elements for raising up a generation of Christian teens that are not only know about their faith, but are committed to it.

Doctrinally Sound Teens Are Able to Correlate Truth. Rote memorization of Bible verses, alone is not enough. Memorization is simply the first step in the learning process. There are many other necessary steps involved in learning. They need to be able to correlate the memorized passages. This correlation comes in a manner of different ways: First, correlating involves learning the truth from a clear exposition of Scripture. If teens are given passages of Scripture to see the application by simply stating and teaching the truth. Give them story problems or illustrations that show them how the truth applies.

Doctrinally Sound Teens Are Discerning. When you teach teens doctrine, you are supplying them with a grid by which they can sift everything they hear, read or watch. Preaching and teaching are critical for teaching teens. However, the goal is to get teens to become self-feeders. When teens learn to feed themselves, they will become committed to doctrine. How then can you teach teens to feed themselves? Having a personal time of study (devotions) is not properly accomplished by reading a page out of a brief devotional. Teach them principles of interpretation and have them study a portion of Scripture. Make them write when they study. Over time, with consistent Make them want to feed themselves.

Doctrinally Sound Teens Are Well-fed. As church leaders, we have an obligation to proclaim everything they know about God. We are even obligated to teach even those things we don't yet know. So we must constantly learn for ourselves! If you expect your teens to be well-fed, you need to teach them everything. That means we need to teach those doctrines which which are difficult understand or have controversial histories. Many churches do a great job teaching about salvation and eternal security. But what about the doctrines of progressive sanctification (salvation as it manifests itself in life) and perseverance of the saints (the other side of eternal security). Teens are able to comprehend these truths. When you expose them to those truths, you will be surprised to see that they will have a renewed interest in learning.

A doctrinally sound program offers variety to teens. When one thinks of doctrine, he often thinks of doctrinal subjects like, Soteriology, Anthropology, Eschatology. But, the word, "doctrine" encompasses much more than these subjects. Theologians often divide doctrines into four areas – Systematic, Biblical (Exegetical), Historical and Practical. Therefore, a doctrinally sound program will focus on these four areas.

Building a solid, doctrinal program for teens requires preparation. Any subject can be uninteresting or confusing. If doctrine has been uninteresting or confusing in the past, the problem is not with the subject itself, but with the presentation. For example, the youngest teen can understand the doctrine of Imputation. The youngest teen must understand the doctrine of Imputation. The problem is not the complexity of the doctrine of Imputation itself, but it's presentation.

Since the goal of a solid youth program is to raise up a generation of teens that are committed to the Lord, it is imperative that time and energy are spent on the discipleship end of youth ministry. A doctrinally, well-fed teen will be a strong adult and provide great leadership for the churches of our future.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

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