

Pedagogy, Educational Theory and Theological Reflections

When crafting an educational experience for children, one is immediately faced with a delicate balancing act. We need to create an environment that is fun, engaging and compelling for the children while faithfully communicating the Gospel message in a way that draws them into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Over many years, Kanata Baptist Church has sought excellence in its ministry to children, and this has borne much fruit. We are excited to continue developing and refining the best possible children's ministry environment. Because children are precious to us and even more precious to God, we want them to benefit from a dynamic, informative and life-changing experience each time they attend Faithwalk.

Different Intelligences and Learning Styles

Faithwalk is multi-faceted. This is by design. Not only does it keep the children from losing focus or becoming distracted, it also weaves together different learning styles in order to connect with children regardless of their primary 'intelligence'. Traditionally, we have measured intelligence according to classroom achievement (ie. marks in school). This singular intelligence has come under scrutiny in the educational community in recent decades and it is being replaced with an educational model that embraces multiple intelligences. These include;

1. *Linguistic intelligence: our capacity as humans to speak, understand, read, and use words effectively, whether orally or in writing.*
2. *Logical-mathematical intelligence: draws attention to our capacity to know and figure out patterns of cause and effect and to reason well.*
3. *Spatial intelligence: the capacity to see and know visual and spatial patterns, shades, colors, and connections.*
4. *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: the ability to understand and perform meaningful and functional movements with our bodies is the mark of the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.*
5. *Musical intelligence: reveals our capacity to perceive, discriminate, transform, and express musical forms.*
6. *Interpersonal intelligence: draws attention to our capacity to perceive and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, intentions, motivations, feelings and desires of other people.*
7. *Intrapersonal intelligence: according to Gardner, we each have an intelligence about what is going on in our own psyche and spirit, and this is called intrapersonal intelligence.*

(from Bracke, John M. And Karen B. Tye
Teaching the Bible in the Church. Chalice Press. 2003)

In addition to different intelligences, we also recognize that children also have different learning styles. Some learn best through visual observation; others through forms of print (reading and writing) – others learn orally; some learn best when they can interact with the material and with others; and others learn through touch, taste or physical activity.

Christian Education

A Seminary professor used to say; “The problem with much Christian Education today is that it is neither.”

Much could be said about different styles of education, discipleship and other relevant issues, but we will express only a few of the foundational ideas that shape and guide our efforts.

The first guiding principle is that the Christian faith is about a relationship with God. Though it is important to have a good working knowledge of the scriptures, it is also possible to become 'experts in the law' and lose sight of the love and mercy of God. Our aim is to learn and apply the Word of God.

We believe that, as with adults, the best place for applied learning takes place in a small group. It provides a place for nurturing, challenging, learning and discussing; for the purpose of encouraging application.

We also differentiate between the 'good to know' and the 'need to know' of the Scriptures. Though it is interesting to understand the genealogy of Jesus and its relevance, it is far more important to know the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as applied in daily living.

Putting it all Together

With such a complex mix of needs, a varied and multifaceted response is necessary. Deep within the DNA of our Faithwalk ministry is a commitment to provide a learning environment which reaches all children with foundational truths of God's Word. The Faithwalk experience, therefore, is rich and varied in its approach to learning. There are times of play and of small group discussion; times to listen and watch; there are times to put a pen to paper and read. All of these experiences, plus many others, are all part of a unified effort by our team of leaders to create a rich educational experience that goes beyond knowledge and celebrates application.

At some point in the morning, your child will encounter his/her primary learning style and have that main avenue of learning reinforced by many other complimentary experiences. The result is a well rounded educational environment where your child can be nurtured and encouraged to grow in faith.