

Session One

Ourselves, Our Children

ACTIVITY C: Getting and Staying Organized

Objectives: Parents will –

- Create a personal and family daily and weekly calendar.
- Identify and practice three organizational strategies to promote their children’s school success.

Materials needed:

- Scissors
- Three adhesive red dots for each parent (see office supply store)
- Lined tablet paper (one per participant)
- Prewritten flipchart – Organizational Tips (facilitator prepares prior to session)
- Handouts (pink section)
 - Weekly calendar
 - Monthly calendar
 - Affirmations (duplicate and cut apart prior to session)

OVERVIEW

In this activity parents will do a number of tasks to help them in time management. They will first identify their daily habits and develop a daily calendar based on these habits. They will examine what “extras” they’d like in their current lifestyle and determine how to fit those into their lives. From here, parents will create a weekly and a monthly calendar for their families. Finally, using a series of “Tips to Organize Your Life,” parents will develop a plan with specific strategies to help their families become and stay more organized.

INTRODUCTION

All of us can benefit from being more organized. Being organized helps us personally, and it also helps our kids. By modeling and reinforcing organizational skills, we can build good habits in our children and set them on the path to school success.

The way we organize is an expression of our personal style. Some of us pile- others file. Some make lists- others lose their lists. Some color code- others like black and white. Some like categories- others are topic specific. The key is to develop strategies that fit your style.

ACTION ONE: *Making More Time*

- Distribute a sheet of lined tablet paper.
Fold paper in half lengthwise.

On one half of paper, make a list of all of your personal daily habits – from the time you get up in the morning until the time you go to bed. Include meals, work, church, TV time, pick up and delivery of kids to school or activities, free time, etc. Indicate the time you usually do these habits and how much time they take.

- Allow time for parents to make list.
On the other half of the paper, indicate those things you'd like to do if you had more time. Compare the two lists. Can you fit any of those "additional" things into your daily life without too much work?
What if you had more time?
How can you get more time?
- Ask for volunteers to share how they might change their daily calendars as a result of this activity.

ACTION TWO: *Calendar*

- Circulate the affirmations and copies of the blank weekly calendar in the handout section (pink).
Now that you've identified the things that are important in your life, create a sample weekly calendar for your family. Place an affirmation for yourself at the top. Include your family's commitments as well as its daily habits. Take a few minutes now to start that weekly family calendar. If your family is committed to certain activities like eating the evening meal together, going to church together, write that in. Make a special time for homework and reading. Remember each week only holds 168 hours. When it's gone, it's gone. You'll never get it back, so spend it wisely.

These activities tell us a little about our *lifestyle*. The way we carry out our daily lives helps us understand what is

important to us and what we spend the most time doing. What do you spend most of your time doing? (Pause for silent reflection.) Is this what is really important to you?

Place a star beside those things that are most important.

When you get home, provide each family member with a different color pen and ask him/her to add to the calendar. Review it with each other on a regular basis. Or you might want to make a family monthly calendar.

- A blank monthly calendar is included for distribution if appropriate.

ACTION THREE: *Organizational Tips*

- Divide into groups: Everyone with birthdays January – June, July – December. (Range of months depends upon how many parents you have, 4-5 in each group.)
- Provide each group with flip chart paper and marker.

Based on your experience in this activity, see how many tips you can generate for the rest of us about how to get and stay organized. For example:

- Refer to the flip chart you prepared prior to the session as a way to get started.

| Organizational Tips |
|---|
| Before going to sleep each night – • • |
| Establish family routines and times for – • • |

- Ask each group to record responses on flip chart paper.
- Bring people back together. Hang flip chart results on the wall.
- Ask participants to walk around the room, adding anything that strikes them as important to personal lists or calendars.
- Distribute three red dots to each person (or put in their session folders in advance). As they walk around, ask parents to put dots next to the three things that strike them as the most important habits to instill in their families.

- Read the list of the three most important organizational habits or skills identified by the group.
- Suggest parents make long-term goals to integrate these habits into the daily life of their families.

REVIEW

- Summarize what was done. Allow for reflection –
How can you apply what you have discovered to help your kids?

How can your being more organized help your kids in school?

How can it help you at home and on the job?

Which of these ideas can be turned into a short-term goal for you? What strategies (actions) will you take between now and our next session to make your goal come true?