

## **“No Messing With The Blessing” \* April 29, 2007**

### **The Importance Of A Rite Of Passage**

I. What has been a burden on our church for a number of years?  
**To pass on our faith to the next generation.**

What do current statistics reveal about faith in America?

**60%** of the Builder generation attends church  
**40%** of the Boomer generation stays spiritually connected  
**5%** of the youngest generation will follow Jesus when grown

II. Four Things We Need To Give Our Children To Keep Our Children (According to Rev. Chuck Stecker):

A. The **Blessing** Of Their Parents And Other Significant Adults In Their Lives

B. **Discipleship** - the Knowledge of the Faith

C. **Mentoring** - How To Use This Knowledge

Who sets the agenda in discipling relationships?  
**The old, strong and wise. We say to them,  
“This is what you need to learn.”**

Who sets the agenda in mentoring relationships?  
**The young, weak and unlearned. They say to us,  
“This is what we need to learn.”**

D. **Apprenticeship** - Training to become Spiritually Reproducing Leaders

III. A Rite Of Passage

A. What is it?

It's a **ceremony** in which we **affirm** that a young person of the age of 13 or in the 7th grade is turning from a boy into a **man** or a girl into a **woman**.

B. Modern examples:

**Bar Mitzvah, Bah Mitzvah, Quincinerras, Confirmation, Indian rituals**

IV. Why Is The Absence Of A Rite Of Passage A Problem?

A. Without some sort of a rite of passage, we leave our young people **guess** when they become adults.

1. Some thoughts about adolescence:

**Adolescence is neither biblical nor biological – it is strictly a cultural concept. Because it varies from culture to culture. In America, it has somehow become culturally accepted that if you're in your 20s, even your 30s, and you're still living at home, floating from job to job, being largely or partially supported by your parents, that that's okay. There are other cultures where if that happened, they'd take you and shoot you to put you out of your misery. Because in those cultures, the idea is that you are out there on your own, being productive, supporting yourself and a family while you're still in your teens. By not laying down clear markers for our young as to when you become a man or woman, we just leave them to flounder, floating in herds down at the mall, hanging in packs down in front of the movie theaters, guessing when you become an adult.**

“If we do not initiate our children into adulthood, then they'll do it by themselves.” ~ Donald Joy

B. Without a rite of passage, it keeps us guessing **how** and **when** we should teach our young.

V. When Should We Give Our Children A Rite Of Passage?

A. God has given the marker: when their bodies change and become capable of **reproducing** life.

B. “But that's nuts! Saying a 13-year old is an adult!”  
If you feel this way, what are you confusing?

You're confusing adulthood with **maturity**.

*VI. It's At This Critical Juncture That A Child Needs Something Absolutely Essential From Their Parents & Other Adults. What? Their **Blessing**.*

*A. What is this "blessing"?*

It's the assurance in a child's heart that they have the **approval** and **acceptance** of the adults around them, especially their parents.

*B. Why is it important for a child to receive this?*

**When a child knows the acceptance and approval of their parents, an empty place inside their souls is filled, and they become free and empowered to grow, and explore, to move mountains and slay dragons.**

**When a child does not receive this blessing, when that empty place inside their souls is not filled by the acceptance and approval of their father and mother, that child is set up for a desperate search and struggle to find something or someone to speak those words to them, to fill that hole in their heart.**

*VII. What Difference Will I Make In Shaping The Next Generation?*