

We believe that *the Holy Spirit is God's chosen teacher*; it is He who causes spiritual growth and formation when and as He chooses. As such, we have articulated 10 distinct environments that our curriculum will help create in the church and at home. We desire to create spiritual space, which we refer to as an environment, in which God's Spirit can move freely. Following is a brief explanation of these 10 environments:

# THE TEN ENVIRONMENTS

## 1. STORYTELLING

*"God has a big story and I can be a part of it!"* The power of The Big God Story impacts our lives by giving us an accurate and awe-inspiring perspective into how God has been moving throughout history. It is the story of redemption, salvation, and hope and tells how I have been grafted into it by grace. It further compels us to see how God is using every person's life and is creating a unique story that deserves to be told for God's glory.

## 2. IDENTITY

*"I belong to God and He loves me!"* This environment highlights who we are in Christ. According to Ephesians 1, we have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, sealed, and given an inheritance in Christ ... all of which we did nothing to earn. This conviction allows children to stand firm against the destructive counter identities the world will offer.

## 3. FAITH COMMUNITY

*"God's family cares for each other and worships God together."* God designed us to live in community and to experience Him in ways that can only happen in proximity to one another. The faith community serves to create an environment to equip and disciple parents, to celebrate God's faithfulness, and to bring a richness of worship through tradition and rituals, which offer children an identity. Our love for each other reflects the love we have received from God.

## 4. SERVING

*"Asks the question, What needs to be done?"* This posture of the heart asks the question, "What needs to be done?" It allows the Holy Spirit to cultivate a sensitivity to others and focuses on a cause bigger than one individual life. It helps fulfill the mandate that as Christ-followers we are to view our lives as living sacrifices that we generously give away!

## 5. OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

*"God transforms me when I step out in faith."* As children are challenged to step out of their comfort zone from an early age, they learn to experience a dependence on the Holy Spirit to equip and strengthen them beyond their natural abilities and desires. We believe this environment will cultivate a generation that, instead of seeking comfort, seeks a radical life of faith in Christ.

It is our prayer that the home and the church would create these environments for kids to live in so their faith will grow in a community of consistency and common language and practice.

# THE TEN ENVIRONMENTS

## 6. RESPONSIBILITY

*"God has entrusted me with the things and people He created around me."* This environment captures the ability to take ownership for one's life, gifts, and resources before God. A child must be challenged to take responsibility for his or her brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as for those who are spiritually lost. Our hope is that the Holy Spirit will use this environment to allow each child to understand that God has entrusted His world to us.

## 7. COURSE CORRECTION

*"When I get off track, God offers me a path of healing."* This environment flows out of Hebrews 12:11–13 and is the direct opposite of punishment. Instead, biblical discipline for a child encompasses: a season of pain, the building up in love, and a vision of a corrected path for the individual with the purpose of healing at its core.

## 8. LOVE & RESPECT

*"God fills me with His love so I can give it away."* Without love, our faith becomes futile. Children need to experience love and respect in order to receive and give God's grace. Innate in this environment is the value that children are respected because they embody the image of God. We must speak *to* them not *at* them, and we must commit to an environment where love and acceptance are never withheld due to one's behavior.

## 9. KNOWING

*"God knows me and I can know Him."* Nothing could be more important than knowing and being known by God. We live in a world that denies absolute Truth and yet God's Word offers just that. As we create an environment that upholds and displays God's Truth, we give children a foundation based on knowing God, His Word, and a relationship with Him through Christ. God is holy, mighty, and awesome, yet He has chosen to make Himself known to us!

## 10. MODELING

*"I see Christ in others and they can see Him in me."*

Biblical content needs a practical living expression in order for it to be spiritually impacting. This environment serves as a hands-on example of what it means for children to put their faith into action. Modeling puts flesh on faith and reminds us that others are watching to see if we live what we believe.