

## Training Introduction

### **Objective:**

- Give an overview of the training and what to expect
- Establish community rules for the training
- Identify the way parents and leaders work together in discipling children

**Teaching Time:** 15 minutes, 20 minutes with translation

### **Materials:**

- White board or poster paper
- Large markers
- 10-15 balloons
- A sheet, large bin or large trash bag to put blown up balloons in
- Long string with 168 knots
- A post-it note cut in 3 pieces or 3 small strips of paper (about 1-2 cm in width)

### **Getting Ready:**

1. Decide where to hold the Balloon Activity. **Option 1:** a large open space outdoors; **Option 2:** a large open area in the room.
2. Blow up and tie the balloons the day before the training beginnings or an hour before you begin.
3. Set balloons aside, either under a large sheet, in a bin, or large trash bag. This keeps them from drifting away.

## Introduction to BST

Welcome everyone to the BIG Story Training. We are so glad you are here.

(Introduce yourself and your role with the training. You can also use this time to introduce the other trainers, or to let the group know that the other trainers with you will introduce themselves when they teach.)

The BIG Story Training is a unique training that will equip you, as parents, to disciple your children in living out their role in God's purposes. We will explore what God's big story is, how your family is a part of it, and the ways you can weave God's purposes into the fabric of your everyday life.

There are ten sessions that we will cover \_\_\_\_ [insert time period of training. For example, both today and tomorrow]. These sessions will be very interactive and, we hope, fun.

There will be no power points. Instead we will use object lessons, activities, and group discussions to enhance our learning experience.

Throughout the training, you will have many opportunities to discuss questions and concepts together in pairs, as well as give ideas and feedback to the group at large.

As we share our individual thoughts and experiences, we help the group collectively to learn and discover new concepts. Your answers and feedback benefit the whole.

It will be an important part of the training, so we encourage you to participate and share your thoughts with the group. It will enrich our learning experience as we glean from one another's experiences.

Turn to a neighbor and tell them "I want to learn with you, and I want to learn from you."

Before we begin, there are two important things we would like to do that will prepare us well for what we are about to learn.

## Community Rules

Every community - be it a family, a church, a workplace, even a city - is governed by rules. These rules exist to serve the whole, helping to establish expectations and guidelines for how that community lives and works together for everyone's benefit.

Over the next \_\_ [insert number of days], we will be a small community. Together we will embark on the same journey of learning and discovery in regards to our children and families.

Let us establish some community rules that can guide our time together. (Write at the top of the white board or poster paper "Community Rules".)

Here is one to get us started.

As I just mentioned, there will be many opportunities in this training to discuss and share opinions. We each come from different backgrounds and experiences. In order to create an atmosphere where everyone is comfortable to share, it is important that we agree as a community to respect and honor each other's' opinions.

(Under the Community Rules title, write "Show respect while others are sharing".)

What other rules should we have for our community during our time together?

(Encourage participants to share their ideas and add them to the community rules list. If participants are struggling to think of ideas, give them some hints or suggestions. Examples of good community rules include: Participating in activities, keeping your cell phone on silent so it is not distraction, being present, being on time, limiting the number of times you leave during a training session, etc. Once you have a few good community rules, end the discussion. This activity should only take 3-5 minutes.)

These are great community rules for our time together. Can we all agree to commit to these during the course of this training? (Allow participants to respond.)

(Keep the rules visible throughout the training. If needed, gently remind participants of your agreed upon rules. These community rules should act as guidelines to encourage greater participation in the training.)

## The Roles of Church and Home

Next, I would like us to think about who is here today during this training.

Who is here because you are a parent of children still living in your home? (Allow participants to raise their hands.)

Who here is a pastor, leader, or teacher who has influence among families in your community? (Allow participants to raise their hands.)

Some of you may be both - a parent raising your own family and a leader who has influence over other parents.

Either way, it is important that all of you are here. Let us do this activity to help us think about why.

Here is your first chance to participate in one of the many activities in this training. I need five or six volunteers.

(Have the volunteers stand in a large, open area, forming a circle.)

(Pick up a balloon.) I have a balloon in my hand. When I say go, you must work as a group to keep all the balloons up in the air. Keep going until I signal you to stop.

If a balloon hits the ground, you may pick it up and continue.

(Address the large group.) The rest of you are not allowed to help. You are observers. Watch what happens and be ready to share what you noticed.

(Turn back to your volunteers.) Are you ready? Go!

(Throw two or three balloons into the center of the group. After about 10 seconds, begin adding all the remaining balloons. After two to three minutes, signal the volunteers to stop. Have them return to their seats.)

### Discussion

What did it take to keep all the balloons in the air? (Possible answers: pay attention, everyone involved, looking up, moving and reaching from original position, teamwork, cannot stop, some had to "rescue" fallen balloons)

This activity reminds us of the process of discipling children to become lifelong disciples who embrace the person and purposes of Christ and step into their role in God's story.

It is different than a short event or special ministry project. It is not the same as a weekly Sunday school class or a family devotion time at home.

It is an ongoing process that requires lots of time, focus, and energy.

It requires attention, from many people, who work together, to do their part.

It is a big job for parents to do alone. Parents need the church to encourage and support them in their God-given assignment.

It is also not a job that one teacher, one church, or one organization can do alone. Leaders and teachers need to think strategically about how that can equip parents and help them embrace this vision at home.

## The Influence of the Family

(Ask for two volunteers. Instruct them to each take an end of the string with 168 knots and hold it up for the group.)

We all know the valuable role of the church in a child's life.

The church puts a lot of energy into reaching and discipling children.

The knots on this string represent the 168 hours in a child's week.

About how many hours a week are children in church? (Allow answers.)

At most, a church has one to three hours a week with a child. (Place three sticky notes/3 small piece of folded paper over three knots on the strings to mark the hours spent in church.)

Do you think this is enough time over the course of a child's life to fully disciple and equip them?

No, it is not.

The rest of these hours are spent at school or at home. (Allow volunteers to return to their seats.)

Although the role of the church is crucial in the life of a child, parents, who see their children every day, have the most time to invest in children.

Because of this, parents have the greatest access to their children's spiritual formation.

Churches and families need to work as partners to disciple children. That is why it is important that both are represented here for this training.

Each session will help parents think about their family, their role as parents, and practical ways they can implement what they learn here at home.

Throughout the training, we will also talk about how leaders can take what they learn and pass it on to other parents in their church or community.

If you are a leader, it will be important for you to learn the practical, everyday things parents can do with their children so you can go beyond casting vision to offering parents practical ideas and tools for living the vision out. There will also be many ideas that you can easily incorporate into your church or classroom.

## Conclusion

We do not believe anyone is here by accident, but that God wants to do a deep work in our hearts concerning this generation of children and the world.

It is our hope that this information will not only inspire but will move your heart to disciple lifelong, world changers for Christ.

Let's get started with Session 1.

(If you are teaching Session 1, have the handout distributed if it has not already been and immediately transition into teaching. If you are not teaching Session 1, introduce the next trainer and invite him to come up and begin.)