

Q&A with Reggie Joiner, author of *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide*

Q: Why do you mean by thinking Orange?

A: Orange is what red (representing the warm heart of the family) and yellow (representing the light of the church) can do when they combine efforts. Orange is our strategically combined influence on the spiritual direction of the next generation. If you paint only with red, you will get what only red can do. If you paint only with yellow, you will get what only yellow can do. But when you paint with red and yellow, you'll get new possibilities, fresh solutions, and vibrant outcomes.

I am not suggesting that the church and home merely need to work concurrently and effectively in order to accomplish more. Both groups are already hard at work to build faith in children, but they are not working in sync. Thinking Orange is working on the same thing at the same time *with the same strategy*.

Q: What if I don't agree with everything you write about Orange thinking?

A: First of all, it's okay to disagree with me. I even disagree with myself quite often. I hear myself say something and think, "I'm not sure that's right ... I'll have to come back to that later and examine it more closely." I have been tentative about writing this book because I am sure I will pick it up as soon as it is released and disagree with parts of it. But that's okay. If I am personally a work in progress, then my personal work is progressing. I just hope to continue a conversation that I believe is worth a thoughtful dialogue. If some guy holds this book up and suggest that it is the solution for the complexity of issues facing this generation, *please hit him with it*.

Q: What is your philosophy of family ministry?

A: I define family ministry as "an effort to synchronize church leaders and parents around a master plan to build faith and character in their sons and daughters." A family ministry should develop the process that drives how both the church and the home combine their efforts to influence the next generation.

But since you asked, here are three ideas that I believe are vital for successful family ministry:

- Kids need parents who will help them advance in their relationships with God. (No one has more potential to influence and monitor a child's relationship with God than parents!)
- Parents need churches that will help them know how to be spiritual leaders. (Maybe the greatest gift a church can give parents is the confidence and courage to do what God has wired them to do!)
- Churches need leaders to do less for kids and more for families. (Church leaders have a limited amount of influence on children. Parents have lifelong influence!)

Q: What about curriculum? Do we have to buy products from your organization (rethink Group) in order to create an Orange ministry?

A: Sure, we've created some curriculum options from an Orange perspective that you are welcome to try on for size. But there is no single cookie cutter plan that works for every church and every style. If any partnership is going to work effectively between a church and a parent, there needs to be a degree of customization; it should fit your culture and your community. The one thing I believe you need is a cohesive plan that everyone can understand and embrace.

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Q: How can we (the church and the family) help young people carry their faith into adulthood?

A: I think a big part of the answer lies in offering our students a bigger story to live in. Everyone needs to experience something bigger than themselves. The question is not whether they will find these elements in the story they choose. The question is whether the story they choose will be God's story.

One of the reasons some students are walking away from the church is that they have found something more exciting. When there is nothing dangerous or adventurous about your style of faith, you begin to drift toward other things that seem more interesting and meaningful. Students should get the chance to realize what they are capable of doing when God is moving in them. If they experience God at work in them, they'll have a hard time getting over it.

Q: Our family ministry team is so excited about “thinking Orange”! Do you suggest we all wear orange to our team meetings—and maybe on Sunday mornings?

A: You don't have to purchase, subscribe, download, log in, or wear anything specific to be an Orange leader. (You can even be an Orange leader and not know it.) If you just don't look good in orange, that's okay. You don't have to cover yourself in orange to make an orange statement. But then again . . . if you feel really passionate about it, why not?

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Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide

By Reggie Joiner

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Author interviews, review copies and excerpt permission are available upon request:

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