Sermon outline: Inspiring faith that lasts.

Aim:

To explore:

- What it looks like to be marinated in the word of God
- How we can pass on faith to the next generation, particularly encouraging parents to become more intentional in this
- Some of the reasons why we need to pass on our faith to the next generation

Each section has a brief overview in blue and a number of illustrations and practical discussions in red.

Scripture reference:

Deuteronomy 11:2-7 – this could be read in its entirety during the introduction or pick out verses as they are appropriate.

Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to:

- Provide an understanding of the context of Deuteronomy
- Highlight the final words Moses spoke to the Israelites, as they were about to step into the Promised Land
- Discuss the changes that the Israelites would encounter in the Promised Land
- Draw attention to the issue of how the Israelites would pass on their knowledge and experience of God's faithfulness and provision to the next generation

Highlight that research shows that at present, only around 50% of children brought up in Christian homes still follow the faith as adults.

And we want to change that.

But this is not just for parents – it takes the whole body of the church to play a part.

Point 1: The Marination

Notes: The aim of this point is to help people to think about how in order to pass faith on it is important that we marinate (soak) our self in scripture. Deuteronomy 11:8 talks about the importance of meditating on scriptures and setting up practical, visible reminders, which will show the next generation how important scripture is.

Illustration: Discuss how delicious food can be when marinated in the correct herbs and spices. It soaks in and becomes the flavor.

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads" Deuteronomy 11:18.

Look at:

- **What are '<u>these w</u>ords'?**
  "Love the Lord your God and keep his requirement, his decrees, his laws and his commands always" Deuteronomy 11:1.
  Illustration: You might like to give a personal example here and how it has impacted the way you live.

a) **Being practical.**
   "'Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads" Deuteronomy 11:18.
   Illustration: Billy Graham wrote, "Wherever I am in the world, whether it be here or at home or in a hotel or at someone's house, I place my open Bible where I will see it frequently. Whenever I notice it, I stop and read a verse or two or a chapter or two or even for an hour or two. This is not for sermon preparation or study. This is just for my spiritual nourishment - my food."

<u>Point 2: The 'everyday'</u>

Notes: The second point, drawing upon vs 19-20, is that Moses does not direct the teaching of children to specialists but encourages us all to share about God in the day to day.

Illustration: Talk about the mannerisms children pick up - a turn of phrase, an expression, how they mimic being on the phone like daddy etc. What are some of the mannerisms that we pick up from our parents? Think about the phrase "I have become just like my mother/ father"!

"Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates…"Deuteronomy 11:19.

a) **Who is Moses asking to teach the children?**
b) **When shall we teach our children?**
c) **How shall we teach our children?**

Illustration: To show that faith is often communicated best, when we do things together in life, rather than just hearing what is taught in a classroom. Use two volunteers. Ask one of them to lie on the floor on their back. The other person has to instruct them to stand on their feet, using step by step instructions e.g. put your right hand forward, bring your left knee up. The person lying down can only do what they are told.

This is really difficult. Then, ask the person giving directions to do it again, but this time they must lie on the floor next to them and talk through what they are doing as they stand to their feet. This tends to be much simpler!

A really practical idea is to give the congregation some examples of the ways they can include God in each of the 4 different scenerios Moses talks about. You may even want to give people the oppportunity to talk in small groups for a few minutes and think about some ideas they would use.

- **Sit at Home**
- **Walk along**
- **Book ends - morning and bed time**
- **Door posts - transition**

Point 3: The PROMISE

Notes: The final point is about reminding people of the promises of God. We don't just do these things because we are told to but because we want the next generation to make good choices and know their Father in heaven both now and for all eternity.

Illustration: What are you passionate about? Is it football, camping, music, reading, cooking? Who was it that taught you to love what you love today? For example, who took you to your first football game? Who bought you your first sleeping bag?

As someone shared their passion with you, you now have that passion yourself. When we share our love for God, that passion goes on for another generation.

"So that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth" Deuteronomy 11:21.

Illustration: You might like to get the congregation to shout out some of the promises of God that are found in Scripture.

Conclusion

Notes: To conclude, we want to remind the congregation again of both the importance of marinating in Scripture and intentionally sharing our faith with the next generation.

The Israelites settled in the Promised Land but over time, the words they had been commanded to cherish, got laid aside. Their children were not told of the greatness of God and in the centuries that followed, the Israelites were taken from their land. Today, we have the opportunity to follow the command to share our faith with the next generation. As we look forward with excitement and trepidation, let's keep these two questions at the forefront:

- **How will I marinate myself in the words of God?**

- **How can I intentionally look to share my faith with the next generation in the everyday of life?**

Illustration: A Native American and his friend were walking on Times Square in New York City when the streets were busy, noisy, and filled with people. The sounds of the city were almost deafening. Suddenly, the Native American said, "I hear a cricket." His friend said, "What? You must be crazy. You couldn't possibly hear a cricket in all of this noise!" "No, I'm sure of it," the Native American said, "I heard a cricket." "That's just crazy," said the friend.

The Native American listened carefully for a moment, and then walked across the street to a big cement planter where some shrubs were growing. He looked into the bushes, beneath the branches, and sure enough, he located a small cricket. In utter amazement, the friend said, "That's incredible! You must have superhuman ears." "No," said the Native American. "My ears are no different from yours. It just depends on what you're listening for." The friend replied, "There is just no way. I could never hear a cricket in this noise." But the Native American simply replied, "It depends on what is really important to you. Here, let me show you."

He reached into his pocket, pulled out a few coins, and discreetly dropped them on the sidewalk. Even with all the noise of the crowded street blaring in their ears, nearly every person within twenty feet noticed the sound of the coins and turned to look and see if the money that hit the pavement was theirs. "See what I mean?" said the Native American. "It all just depends on what's important to you."

As Christians, we need to have our lives tuned into God so that in turn, we can help our children discern his voice and the promises that he has for their lives.