

Ministry Minute

Parenting-as-a-Vocation Kindergarten Affinity

The recent Kindergarten session of Westwood's Parenting Affinity series so impressed Rachal and Dolan Olson that they are eager for their son Myles and daughter Lila to age into future levels.

"As relatively new (Westwood) members, we were looking to meet families in the same stage of life," Rachal described their initial attraction to the five sessions they spent with five other kindergarten families.

They particularly liked that the focus was on the wins and struggles in parenting and what it meant to approach parenting as a vocation and to prioritize that vocation.

The Affinity series, with its parenting-as-a-vocation-focused curriculum developed by Dannica Olsen, Director of Youth and Family Ministry, has served seven Westwood groups.

For many participants, this is the first time they have thought of their parenting as God's work in the world, Dannica said. It shifts the focus to what it should mean to be a successful parent through a faith lens instead of a typical world lens of activities and academic achievements.

The personal invitation, the small size of the group, and the ongoing connections and resources were also pluses for the Olsons. "I feel like we know some people on a deeper level," Rachal said.

A key takeaway for the pair is learning they have much in common with other parents, including those from other backgrounds. And, even more helpful, Rachal noted: "We feel like we don't have to do it all on our own. God fills in the gaps."

Future groups may focus on parenting middle schoolers, young high schoolers, and older high school children, and possibly grandparenting as a vocation, Dannica said.

