

Note to FOL Parents and Caretakers of Children re:OctoberFast...

As OctoberFast begins, you may be wondering:

- Should my kids fast?
- How do I talk to them about fasting?
- How can our family join in the fast if only adults are fasting?

Here are some simple guidelines and ideas for walking through OctoberFast with your children:

1. Food Fasts and Age Guidelines

- ***Children and middle schoolers should not fast from meals or food.*** Their bodies are growing and developing and need consistent nourishment.
- High school students *may consider fasting from food* if they feel spiritually ready, but this should always involve parental guidance, close support, and careful attention to their health and body image (we don't want to encourage unhealthy behavior like eating disorders). As parents and caretakers, only encourage this if they show maturity and a genuine desire to grow closer to God, and you feel comfortable with this decision.

2. Talk About OctoberFast Together as a Family

Take time to explain:

- What OctoberFast is - a season when our whole church family seeks God together in prayer and fasting. (See the Guidebook for more details.)
- The purpose of fasting - setting something aside (often food, but not always) so we can be dependent and focus more fully on God.
- What it means for your home - If parents are fasting, talk through how it may affect routines (like mealtimes or if parents are having different foods) so kids know expectations.

3. Alternative Fasts for Kids

If your child still wants to participate in the fast, suggest creative, age-appropriate sacrifices.

For example:

- Giving up desserts or sweets
- Limiting or going without video games or screen time
- Not watching a favorite show or playing with a favorite toy

Encourage them to replace that time or energy with prayer, reading a book/the Bible, talking about God, or a creative artistic expression (like writing, coloring, painting).

4. Create Family Spiritual Rhythms

OctoberFast is also an opportunity to grow together in faith **with** your kids. Try:

- At meals - share something you're thankful for or a prayer request.
- Before bed - take turns leading a short family prayer.
- During the day - ask, "Where did you see God today?" and share your own answer.
- Take a daily family walk - use the time to talk, pray, or simply notice God's creation or your neighborhood together.

These small practices can help your whole family join in OctoberFast meaningfully, even if only adults are fasting from food. And please feel free to reach out to your student ministries directors or Pastor Tyler with any further questions or if you need resources to help with these.