

Small Disciples Big Impact

By Jaime Heras, DMin., CFLE



*Children are born with awareness of God already in them

Eccl. 3:11 God has planted eternity in the human heart

Jer. 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;

*Needs to be respected (cherished) and nurtured

*Hardwired to know, to love and to serve our God



A Children's Discipleship Plan

G

GRACE FILLED RELATIONSHIPS

(foundation) roots soil

R

REACHING GOALS WITH PURPOSE

(direction and structure) stem

O

ONGOING MODELING

(absorbing light/example) leaves

W

WALKING IN CHARACTER GROWTH

(blossoming from within) flowers

S

SERVING OTHERS

(the outward evidence of
growth) fruits



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Children Discipleship:

**Lead children
to have a growing friendship
with Jesus**



Acronym G.R.O.W.S.



G — Grace-filled Relationships

Build discipleship on love, acceptance, joy and genuine connection.

Key Text: John 13:34–35 — “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Practice: Spend intentional time with the children you disciple. Listen, affirm, pray together.



R — Reaching Goals with Purpose

Set spiritual **objectives** that encourage consistent growth and accountability.

Key Text: Philippians 3:14 — “I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Practice: Create faith habits — daily worship, memorizing verses, serving weekly.



O — Ongoing Modeling

Children disciples learn best by example. Your life preaches louder than your words.

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 11:1 — “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

Practice: Be transparent about your walk; let children see how you pray, serve, and handle struggles.



W — Walking in Character Growth

Discipleship is a process of shaping Christlike attitudes and responses in children.

Key Text: 2 Peter 3:18 — “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Practice: Encourage self-reflection, forgiveness, gratitude, and moral strength.



*“Child training is the grandest work ever
committed to mortals” The Review &
Herald, July 8, 1902.*

“Salvation is free, but discipleship costs
everything we have.”

— *Sermon quote from Billy Graham,
1960s*



S — Serving Others

Serving others and sharing Christ is the exercise of the Christian.

Key Text: Mark 10:45 — “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”

Luke 19:10 — “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”



Practice: Engage in outreach, mentoring, or acts of kindness together. Teach children how to share Christ.



Difference between Teaching and Discipling.



Discipleship at Home — It's Not Optional —



Biblical Foundation

Command:

Parents are to teach their children God's ways.

“...teach them diligently to your children...”
— Deuteronomy 6:4–7; Deut. 11:18–21.



Biblical Foundation

Modeling faith:

Children learn by watching their parents' life.

“... Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice...”

— Philippians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 11:1.



Biblical Foundation

Family worship & instruction:

Make God's Word the center of home life.

“We will not hide them from their
descendants;

we will tell the next generation...”

— Psalm 78:4–7; Proverbs 22:6.;



Biblical Foundation

Service & mission:

Discipleship includes serving others.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...”

— Matthew 28:18–20; James 2:14–17.



**“A Divine Commission to Parents—
God has given parents their work,
to form the characters of their
children after the divine Pattern. ...
A field left to itself produces only
thorns and briars.” CG 169**



Most effective, Research-aligned practices

Daily micro-rhythms (5–10 minutes each)

- Morning/meal prayer — one-sentence gratitude and a short request. Verse: 1 Thess. 5:16–18.
- Bedtime story + one question — read Scripture/story; ask “Where did you see God in that story?” Verse: Psalm 119:105.
- Two-question check-in — “What was the best part of your day? Where did you need God?” (practice listening). Verse: James 1:19.



Most effective, Research-aligned practices

- **Weekly family rhythms**
- Family worship / Sabbath planning (15–30 minutes) — sing, read a short Bible passage, pray, plan a Sabbath act of service.
- Verse: Genesis 18:19; Isaiah 56:6–7.
- Family service project — rotate simple acts (visit an elderly neighbor, pack food bags, volunteer at church).
- Verse: Matthew 25:35–40.



Most effective, Research-aligned practices

- **Everyday discipleship conversations (natural)**
- Use 3-minute faith snapshots: connect everyday moments to God (“We thank God for this food; God cares about our bodies”).
Verse: 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.
- Ask open questions (not lectures): “What would Jesus do in this situation?” “How could we show love here?”
Verse: Philippians 2:3–4.



Most effective, Research-aligned practices

- **Modeling & exposure**
- Let children see you pray, serve, read Scripture. Invite them into your routines rather than hiding them. Philippians 4:9.
- Apprentice them into service (kids help in worship, hospitality, relief projects) — not just spectators. 1 Peter 4:10.



Most effective, Research-aligned practices

- **Boundaries & technology**
- Create device-free family times (mealtimes, family worship, Sabbath afternoon). Use those times for conversation and Scripture. Psalm 119:11.
- Replace screen time with story, creative service or nature walks on Sabbath. Genesis 2:2–3; Psalm 19:1.
- Use spiritual technology: *Alive in Jesus, Growing Together*,



Most effective, Research-aligned practices

- **Age-specific quick tools**
- 0–5 years: Bible picture books, short songs, simple blessings at bedtime. Psalm 127:3.
- 6–12 years: Read a Bible story together, family devotions with short discussion, encourage service tasks. Deut. 6:6–7.
- Teens: Daily listening time (coach, not lecture), faith questions dinner, invite teens into ministry leadership, mentor pairings. Proverbs 27:17.



Workshop Exercises

- Write **one micro-rhythm you will start this week.**
- Role-play (5 minutes): Pairs practice a 3-minute “faith snapshot” conversation for a real scenario (school pressure, social media).



Parent Discipleship Plan Template



Family Mission plan



Resources





“The whole future life is generally molded
by the habits formed **in the first nine years.**”
Child Guidance, p. 194





“In the closing scenes of this earth’s history many of these children and youth will astonish people by their witness to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power.





They have been taught the fear of the Lord,
[Discipleship] and their hearts have been
softened by a careful and prayerful study of
the Bible.





In the near future many children will be endued with the Spirit of God and will do a work in proclaiming the truth to the world that at that time cannot well be done by the older members of the church.” — **CT 166-167.**



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