

Family

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



*“Discipleship begins
and ends in the home.”*

Parent's Guide to Discipleship

Ask yourself this: as a parent, do you desire the most exciting, joy-filled, satisfying life there is for your child? Of course you do! As parents, our greatest desire is to see our children grow up and live life to the fullest. The primary question we have to wrestle with is what does a truly exciting, joy-filled, and satisfying life look like?

At Mercy Hill, we believe the most exciting life that our kids could live is a life lived for Jesus.

This means that parents play an integral role in the process of seeing their kids follow hard after Jesus. The Bible says in Psalm 78, "We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." All throughout Scripture, parents are given the responsibility to pass on the gospel story to their children.

What story is your family telling? What is the overarching story that your kids are seeing played out in your home? How are you creating opportunities for these grand stories of God's work to be told? Based on your familial habits what story do your children see as important?

It's our desire as the church to come alongside of you and help you answer those questions in a way that reflects the Bible's call on our life as parents. The following is meant to be a tool to help you, as the parent, develop healthy habits for family discipleship. As you think about the various facets of the Christian life - it's our hope to provide suggestions, resources, and a guide to find what fits best for leading your family in each of those areas.

Read it through. Experiment with different tools. Throw stuff out and add other stuff in. Talk with other parents. Visit our "Family Resource Center" page. Don't be afraid to try something new. But whatever you do...do something. The Bible says that every good and perfect gift is from above (James 1:17). This most certainly includes our children. It's our prayer that you will steward well the gift of children as you take this exciting step of discipleship.

THE ADVENTURE Starts Here!

Table of Contents

Helpful Resources	4
Family Devotions	6
Healthy Prayer	8
Serve Together	10
Stay Connected	12
Generosity	14



1. Seek out helpful resources.

Suggested tools to help you build a discipleship tool bag.



BOOKS FOR YOU

GOSPEL CONVERSATION GUIDE

by Mercy Hill Kids Staff

GIVE THEM GRACE

by Elyse Fitzpatrick

SACRED PARENTING

by Gary Thomas

SHEPHERDING A CHILD'S HEART

by Tedd Tripp

PARENTING

by Paul David Tripp

THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE

by Sally Lloyd Jones

THE GOSPEL STORY

by Marty Machowski

THE BIGGEST STORY

by Kevin DeYoung

BIG PICTURE INTERACTIVE BIBLE

by B&H Publis

BIG PICTURE INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORYBOOK

by B&H Publis



BOOKS FOR THEM



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

We have put together a continually updated parent resource section on our Family Resource Center page with articles on parenting and more resources for family worship.

[MERCYHILLCHURCH.COM/PARENTRESOURCES](https://www.merchillchurch.com/parentresources)

We also put together a weekly Kids Guide to help you intentionally lead your family and unify the dinner table conversations around how God is working in each family member's life. Make it a habit to visit that page frequently to continue adding to your discipleship tool bag.

2. Set up family devotions.

“Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by His rules. And family, education, and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual.”
- Jonathan Edwards

SET YOUR EXPECTATIONS:

Expectations are everything. And expectations will make or break your family devotion time. Whether you have a three-year old or a thirteen-year old you can expect difficulty. The goal for your family should be progress, not perfection.



SETUP A GAME PLAN:

No matter how great the team you need a good game plan. Family devotions don't magically happen...it takes intentionality. One of the best resources available on setting up family worship time is a book entitled *“A Neglected Grace”* by Jason Helopoulos.

SET A TIME:

One of the most important parts of setting up a game plan is setting up a time. Here are three easy times for you and your family to establish consistent family devotions:

1. Do it before school - if you're morning people then try and send the kids out the door with the Word of God on their lips.
2. Do it at dinner - this might be one of the only times during the entire day you are all together for any amount of time.
3. Do it before bed - if you're not morning people then try and set up family devotions right before the kids hit the hay.

SET IT IN MOTION:

Intentions don't equal action. That means your game plan has to turn into action. Don't be intimidated by this last step. Give it a shot for a month or even a week. See what worked and what didn't work. Try different resources...different times. Just don't do nothing.

3. Start to develop healthy prayer habits.

MAKE A LIST:

One of the hardest things in developing a healthy family prayer time is figuring out what to pray for...the solution? Have your kids make the list. Every week sit down and create a running prayer list...big prayers, little prayers, short-term prayers, long-term prayers. Prayers for people, prayers for pets, prayers for friends, prayers for..well, whatever.

MAKE IT PUBLIC:

After you've developed your prayer list make it public...put it somewhere where the whole family can see it. The refrigerator might be the best option. Be creative. Think of places in your home that are frequented by everyone and hang that list high and proud.

MAKE IT WORK:

Just like with devotions...intentions don't lead to action, which is why you have to weave family prayer time into every facet of your life. Here are 5 places where your family can practice prayer.

In the car line

At the dinner table

Before bed

On a neighborhood walk

Road trips

4. Serve together.

A family that serves together...stays together. What better way to tangibly put the gospel on display to your kids than to serve alongside of them in our community where we meet tangible needs.

SEE BEYOND YOURSELVES:

We often get so caught up in our day-to-day that we cannot see beyond ourselves. There is a great big world out there that needs the love of Jesus and we have the opportunity as parents to tangibly show the love of Christ.



#1
FOOD HARDSHIP

The Greensboro area is currently ranked #1 in the US for food hardship.



27,000
STUDENTS
(elementary - high school)
in NC classified as homeless

START SMALL:

The best way to start becoming a part of the solution is to start small. Identify local ministries/organizations that are already serving well (no need to reinvent the wheel), set a date on the calendar, and then set realistic goals on how often you can be involved.

OUT OF THE GARDEN

www.outofthegardenproject.org

-sorting and distributing food to the hungry in Greensboro.

BACKPACK BEGINNINGS

www.backpackbeginnings.org

-supplying food pantries at Guilford County Schools, maintaining a clothes closet, and providing backpacks for kids to take food home on the weekends.

HANNAH'S HAVEN

www.hannahshaven.net

-a home for women who are seeking to overcome past substance addiction. Help by providing dinner, playing games with the ladies in home, and seasonal acts of kindness to show the love of Christ.

HOPE ACADEMY

www.hopeacademygso.org

-a private, Christian school strategically established in a poor income area of Greensboro to serve the children in that area. Help needed to encourage teachers, pack snack bags, tutor students, and minor tasks around the school.

5. Stay connected to community

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together” - Hebrews 10:24-25

Sports, school, visitors, and vacation are just a few of the things competing with your family’s involvement in the meaningful, life-giving community we call the church.

PUT IT ON DISPLAY:

Make a list...a list of all the things your family does. Then take that list and prioritize it. Where does your church community fall on that list? The Bible instructs us not to neglect our church community (Hebrews 10) but to make it a priority. The Christian life was not meant to be done alone...do your priorities reflect that?

PLAN IT:

Priorities are helpful, but you need a plan to accommodate those priorities. As you sit down to do your monthly or yearly planning, write your church community commitments first. And then plan accordingly. Instead of planning around vacation or sporting events - start planning around church.

PROVE IT:

It’s not enough to talk the talk about church...your family has to walk the walk. Begin modeling faithful church attendance. Get involved in one of our many Community Groups. If you want your children to love the church, prove to them first that *you* love the church. Take your planned out priorities and model them well for your kids.



6. Show the way towards generosity.

“Every good and perfect gift is from above.”
- James 1:17

Generosity is contagious...and so is stinginess.

PRIORITIZE IT:

Proverbs 23:26 reads, “My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways.” Children are great at mimicking behaviors, which is why it’s imperative that we display behaviors rooted in gospel overflow. Have your child sit with you when you write your tithe check. Have them go with you to bring a gift to a needy neighbor. Teach them the habits of sharing in the home through the lens of generosity.

SPEAK OUT ABOUT GENEROSITY:

If money is a private matter, Jesus never got the memo. The Bible is replete with exhortations about how we view and use our resources. Allow the conversation in the home about generosity to flow freely. One easy way to verbalize generosity is to pray about it during family time.

WORKOUT HABITS OF GENEROSITY:

Jesus said, “for where your treasure is...there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21). Begin creating a simple structure now for your child to practice generosity. One simple way is to establish a rudimentary budget system (*3 jars*). Keep it simple: give first, save second, spend last.

For more ideas on how to create a culture of generosity in your home be sure to visit our Family Resource Center page: mercyhillchurch.com/familyresourcecenter



THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...

OUT THERE!

Go and Tell!



mercyhillchurch.com/kids