

valleykids
NURSERY

1 YEAR OLD

Development and Discipleship Guide



Discipleship help for where your child is now.

Our framework for family discipleship includes time, moments and milestones. This language provides a clear philosophy and strategy for discipleship in the home, encouraging and empowering parents to raise up a new generation of believers within our church.

To help you as a parent, we've incorporated this framework into a guide with examples for each stage of child development.



Time 🕒

Family discipleship time means intentional time built into the rhythm of your family's life for the purpose of thinking about, talking about, and living out the gospel. Time may look different for each family depending on the age and individual development of each child, as well as the number of children in the home.

Use mealtime, bedtime, and playtime to invite your child to pray. They can begin simple prayers, such as, "Thank you, God, for food," at mealtime, "Thank you, God, for Jesus," at bedtime, and, "Thank you, God, for birds," when playing outside. Remind your child that God wants to talk with us, and they can talk to God in prayer.

At this age, your toddler is curious about their brothers and sisters but doesn't play with them (rather, beside them). Talk to your toddler about how God loves them and all people.

Live a lifestyle of worship to God. Pray aloud simple, one-sentence prayers of thankfulness to God for his goodness, such as, "God is good; thank you God, for [child's name]."

During playtime, talk to your child about how God made everything. As your toddler becomes more mobile and active, name and thank God for the different parts of their body: "Thank you, God, for hands; God made your hands. You can share toys with your hands. God made you. God made everything!"

Moments ✓

Family discipleship moments capture and

leverage opportunities in the course of everyday life for the purpose of gospel-centered conversations. Understanding how your child is developing can highlight moments for daily discipleship.

Physical Development

Now that your toddler has better control of their large group of muscles, they are exploring new uses of those muscles, such as walking with full independence, trying to climb, and eventually running.

Encourage your toddler to exercise their newly developing skills by offering a safe place with supervision. With each new skill, pray over your toddler out loud. Say, "Thank you, God, for [child's name]'s feet. Thank you, God, for [child's name]!" Remind your toddler that God made everything!

Emotional Development

For the first time, your toddler understands they have their own "self," leading to more independent thought and action.

In this season, remember God's patience and kindness toward the children of God. Model that same patience toward your toddler. Teach them that God is good.

Social Development

Your toddler enjoys being around their caregivers and begins to act out what others do. They may begin pretending to care for baby dolls, cook, or work with tools. As they see you read your Bible, their curiosity about this book grows.

Live your life with the behavior you want to model for your child; they are constantly watching you to

show them what to do and how to act. Let them see you read your Bible each day, and offer them a Bible to "read" alongside you. Teach your child that the Bible is for everyone, including them. Remind them that Jesus came to save sinners as you explore the Bible together.

Cognitive Development

Your toddler is now not just an explorer of the world, but a learner! Toddlers use trial and error to discover how the world works. Their senses and ever-growing vocabulary provide tools with which to think about the world rather than simply react to it like an infant.

Tap into your toddler's natural curiosity about the world by introducing them to Bible stories. Show them the pictures and tell them the stories. Make it a routine part of your day together. This could be prior to bed, but it also could be in the morning, before nap, or during dinner. As you tell your child Bible stories, connect these new stories to things they already know. For example, if reading the story of creation, take your child outside and look at the trees that God made. These times together may seem disorganized, as 1-year-olds only have an attention span of one minute, but remember that God is in charge of everything. His Word never returns void. He will use these moments for His glory.

Spiritual Development

Your toddler is beginning to recognize pictures from the Bible stories they are learning in Valley Kids. Your toddler often gets excited when they experience something familiar. Harness this love for repetition by retelling them the weekly Bible lesson from Valley Kids.

Milestones ★

Family discipleship milestones mark and make occasions to celebrate and commemorate significant spiritual milestones of God's work in the life of the family and child. Each family's milestones will look different as they relate to what God has done in each individual family.

Celebrate your child's first birthday with family and friends, rejoicing over the gift of life. Consider dedicating your child to the Lord in front of family and friends, inviting them to pray over your family and partner with you in raising your child.

Celebrate your child's accomplishments, such as crawling, walking, jumping, or climbing.

As your child begins to articulate words, celebrate their growth in speech. Pray that they would learn to speak truth.

