

valleykids
NURSERY

2 YEARS 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.

Before reading the Bible with your toddler, remind them that it is God's true Word. They will grow in their understanding of this truth throughout their preschool years.

Continue to develop a rhythm of family devotional time. Be intentional in using a physical copy of a Bible rather than a digital copy. This helps your child clearly understand where the stories come from. Consider using an age-appropriate Bible, such as *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, or *The Big Picture Interactive Bible Stories for Toddlers*.

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

Physically, your toddler is maturing from a baby to a child. Some days are harder than others. One day, your toddler may want to do everything on their own; the next, they may grow frustrated and

require your assistance. This unevenness will smooth out around age 3.

When your toddler wants independence, allow them to do things as much as it is safe to do so. This will often end up in self-expression that may not make sense to you. For example, your toddler may dress in cowboy boots, a firefighter hat, and shorts with a t-shirt, but the fact that they did it on their own is the real victory. On days when being independent is too overwhelming for your toddler, come alongside them and encourage them to try. Model God's patience toward your toddler as they undergo the transition from baby to child. Your child looks to you as their first picture of who God is. Your patience and goodness serve as a reminder that God is good.

Emotional Development

Your toddler may exhibit negative moods and assert their independence with a strong will. Help them choose good behavior in this season by modeling what they should do rather than telling them what they shouldn't do. Provide loving but firm boundaries that help your toddler choose positive choices and attitudes.

Take a moment to reflect on God's law, how it tells us what we should be doing as his children, and model this same loving instruction with your toddler. Ask God to bless your relationship during this emotional season, and remember that God is in charge of everything, even the toddler years.

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 now has a two-minute attention span—their longest to date! Your toddler can also tell you what they're thinking and may even be speaking small sentences.

Seize daily opportunities to listen to your child. Ask them open-ended questions. Be patient, as they may take a moment to consider what to say. Model the truth that God wants to talk with us as you take the time to talk with your child.

Spiritual Development

Your toddler is beginning to understand that the Bible is different from other books you read to them. They're able to sense that it is of great value and importance, even if they can't articulate this through speech.

Provide your child with their own Bible that you can read from together. Teach your child that God made everything and we can trust what he says as we read his true Word.

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.

Choose an age-appropriate Bible and include reading a story in your child's bedtime routine. Celebrate as you complete the Bible for the first time together.

As your toddler's vocabulary expands, teach them a short or condensed memory verse. Celebrate with your child as they learn to write God's Word on their heart for the first time.

Celebrate your child's second birthday. Rejoice in how God has continued to grow and develop your child over the last year.

