

valleykids

4 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.

Leverage your time in the car with your child by reviewing a memory verse or Bible story with them. You can also introduce upbeat worship songs to your child and discuss what the songs or verses mean.

Driving home from church, ask your child to tell you the story they learned in Valley Kids. You can also make it part of your weekly routine at mealtime.

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

Your child has increased activity levels as their growing muscles continue to be used and exercised. Your child can begin to use safety scissors and washable paint and now shows preference for a dominant left or right hand. Spend time with your child creating cards for neighbors, a nursing home, or the police or fire

departments. Talk about how Jesus came to save sinners and how we can share this good news with others.

Emotional Development

Your child may not have the ability to complete some tasks independently, but they are growing in confidence in their own abilities. Your child also likes to test boundaries and limits.

Come alongside your child as they work toward independence. Point out your child's strengths and thank God for the areas in which they are growing. Seize opportunities to offer safe, independent choices. When your child tests boundaries, allow them to face the safe, natural consequences of their choice. Remind your child that God wants to talk with us—even when we make a poor choice. God loves his children and wants to hear from them.

Social Development

Your child enjoys cooperative play but may have a tendency to be bossy. This is because children default to seeing the world through their own perspective. But your child is growing in their ability to take on other perspectives and eventually will learn that their way is not the only way.

When your child tries to boss a sibling or friend, talk to them about how God is in charge of everything, including them. Remind your child that they aren't in charge of their siblings and friends. Encourage them to try playing their friend's way and then try it their own way, too.

Cognitive Development

Your child is imaginative and may struggle to

separate facts from fantasy. They also have a strong memory, especially when it comes to remembering their birthday, address, and songs. Children think very literally, which can cause them to get confused when adults use figurative language. Your child enjoys making up stories and storytelling.

Remind your child that God made everything but some TV shows, characters, and books are not true; they are pretend. Discuss how the Bible is true, is from God, and is about God. You may consider discussing this before every family discipleship time, helping your child to distinguish facts from fantasy.

Spiritual Development

Your child enjoys sharing the truths they learn: God is good, God made everything, God is in charge of everything, God wants to talk with us, and Jesus came to save sinners. Your child can connect these truths with the Bible lessons they hear in Valley Kids.

Look for daily opportunities to reemphasize these truths through gospel-centered conversations. For example, when your child achieves something new or employs a new skill, talk to them about how God is good and helps them grow.

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 fourth birthday. Rejoice in how God has continued to grow and develop your child over the last year. Consider writing your child a letter to read when they're older. In the letter, include aspects of their personality that you see and prayers for their life.

If your child is starting school, celebrate this milestone. Model prayer for your child by praying with them for their teacher and classmates before the first day of school.

As your child makes new friends, help them celebrate a new relationship by creating a play date. Afterward, spend time praying with your child and thanking God for a new friend.

