

valleykids

5-6 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.

During family devotional time, try to engage your child through physical learning. For example, instruct your child to use Lego bricks to build something from the Bible story or use figures to reenact the story.

As you tuck your child into bed, lead them to pray. This can be as simple as thanking God for people in your child's life or even praying for God to protect your child when they may be scared of the dark or a thunderstorm.

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

Since your child is gaining stronger fine motor skills, they have greater control when using smaller objects, such as crayons, scissors, Lego bricks, and magnetic blocks, and they are beginning to develop hand-eye coordination. Your child is also developing food preferences and identifying

favorite foods.

Provide opportunities for your child to make healthy eating choices. As you eat together, remind your child how God made everything—including our bodies. Brainstorm ways to care for their body, such as walking, playing outside, and eating different fruits and veggies. Thank God for giving you the food you need each day.

Emotional Development

Your child is learning how to manage their responses of anger and sadness. They are transitioning away from throwing tantrums and instead responding through isolation or harsh words. Your child can accept responsibilities and takes them very seriously. They continue learning how to express fears and emotions in a healthy way.

Talk to your child about how God wants to talk with us. When your child is sad or afraid, help them remember they can pray and tell God how they feel. Model what it looks like to express your heart to God.

Social Development

Your child continues to be egocentric, focusing on their wants and needs before anyone else's. They may have "best" friends, but these will change often. They may struggle to understand why you don't know what they're thinking at all times.

As your child wrestles with moments of self-centeredness, remind them that God is good and wants them to show his goodness to others. Help your child to know how they can comfort friends who may be upset or encourage friends

who may be discouraged.

Cognitive Development

Your child desires to learn and understand the world, which is why they ask you so many questions! Your child can write his or her name, as well as recognize it and a few other words.

As your child demonstrates the ability to recognize sight words, start introducing them to sight words from the Bible, such as "God," "Jesus," and "cross." Use this opportunity to talk to them about how Jesus came to save sinners.

Spiritual Development

Your child is able to understand that all of us are born with hearts sick with sin and only God can give us a healthy heart that loves and trusts Jesus. Your child is able to understand that their obedience shows a love and trust in you. They need to learn that even when they do wrong things, you will still love them. As your child grows in this understanding, they will apply their relationship to you to the character of God. Your child can also verbalize their own personal prayers!

When your child gets in trouble for being disobedient, remind them that you love them no matter what and you discipline them because you love them. Remind your child that God is in charge of everything and has put you in charge of them.

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 fifth and sixth birthdays. 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.

As your child starts kindergarten, 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 finishes kindergarten, help them remember all they've learned at school by creating a memory book of their work and pictures of their class.

Celebrate the start of summer in a way that's unique to your child. This could be a morning of donuts, a day at the splash pad, or even lunch alone with you.

