

valleykids
NURSERY

7-12 MONTHS

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 model prayer. Pray aloud simple prayers of thanksgiving and praise, and pray for your child's salvation. Pray that they grow in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). Say aloud, "God wants to talk with us! We can pray to God."

As you play with your baby, talk to them about the objects they are exploring. Talk to them about God's care for his children ("God is in charge of everything!").

During playtime and bath time, talk to your baby about how God made everything, including him or her. As your baby discovers the ability to creep, crawl, pull up, and walk, name and thank God for the different parts of your baby's body: "Thank you, God, for feet; God made your feet. Thank you, God, for hands; God made your hands. God made you. God made everything!"

Live a lifestyle that demonstrates worship of 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]." Set aside time to sing to your child in your daily routine. This could be before bedtime or during

the car ride as you run errands. Your child doesn't care how well you sing, but they hear the truth as you redeem the time spent together. Sing the gospel to your child. Sing about how God loves his children. Sing about how Jesus came to save sinners!

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 baby is beginning to strengthen the muscles required to be mobile. They will soon begin to crawl and pull up on furniture. By 12 months, they may be attempting to walk with your assistance.

Celebrate your baby's physical growth. Remind your baby that God made everything!

Emotional Development

Your baby may develop separation anxiety, crying when you leave or when somebody less familiar holds them.

In this season, lean into the truth that God is in charge of everything. Pray over your baby before taking them into Valley Kids or other situations where you have to leave them temporarily. Ask God for wisdom as you walk through this stage. The patience and love that you show toward your baby during this emotional season can reflect the love and patience of God the Father.

Social Development

Your child enjoys being around other family members and other children their age, even if they play next to each other and not with each other.

Help your child understand that God is good by cultivating biblical communities that include them. Take your child to Life Group and allow them to attend Valley Kids.

Cognitive Development

Your baby's memory is developing, and they are able to sense their daily routine, where objects belong, and the familiar faces they encounter.

As your baby begins to demonstrate a growing memory, continue to remind them that Jesus came to save sinners. Pray over your baby and ask that they would one day love and trust Jesus.

Spiritual Development

Your baby can explore the Bible, turn the pages, and look at Bible pictures as you read with them.

Build into your daily routine an opportunity to explore the Bible together. Say to your child, "God wants to talk with us!"

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.

As a family, commemorate your baby's new physical abilities. Take pictures of them learning to crawl, walk, and pull up. Show your baby these pictures and say simple prayers of thanksgiving for how God helps them develop in his perfect timing. As your child grows older, review these pictures and remind them they are made in the image of God.

Create a "Book of Blessing" recording how God has faithfully sustained and grown your family throughout your baby's first 12 months. If you have other children, allow them to draw a picture or write a paragraph noting how God gave them the special gift of a brother or sister. Use this as an opportunity to discuss how they felt when the new baby arrived and how God has taught them to show their little brother or sister God's love. If you don't have other children, use the book as a personal journal to record any challenges faced during your baby's first year, and praise God for how he has used these challenges to draw you closer to himself.

Although the stage of separation anxiety can be disheartening, please don't be discouraged. Instead, use this as an opportunity to thank God for the attachment he is fostering between you and your child.

Take family pictures and create a book that shows each family member. Read the book to your baby, reminding them that God made their family. Pray aloud and thank God for each family member.