

**Living
Church.**

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

SEE AND BELIEVE

OPEN THE EYES OF YOUR HEART

EPHESIANS PART ONE

Hi Families!

Family Discipleship is kind of a big deal. Deuteronomy 6:4-7 instructs parents to make God front and centre in home life; talking with children, impressing upon them and writing with them at all times of the day and night. Put simply a parent's primary ministry is to raise their children to be disciples of Jesus.

For some of you it's already a regular part of the rhythm of your family's week; keep up the good work. Some of you will feel like you could be doing better; keep on trying, practice builds confidence and competence. And some of you feel overwhelmed and don't know where to start; that's ok, your church family is here to help.

Our prayer is that this Family Discipleship Guide will give you some helpful tools in developing a weekly rhythm of discipleship practices to help you and your family to grow together in love and service of God.

We've broken the guide in into 5 parts each with its own specific way of engaging the bible passage that week:

REFLECT encourages family members to reflect on the bible passage and what it means to them.

REACT engages your emotions and helps bringing those reactions before God.

RELATE encourages families to share honestly, and listen deeply to how one another are growing as disciples.

RESPOND helps families to work out real and practical ways they can respond to God in light of the weekly bible passage.

REVIEW encourages families to review the bible passage for the week and engage with it in a different way.

You might like to use these as 5 separate daily devotions, OR you might like to group some of the sections together to make a couple of family devotional times but leave yourself room to use other resources you've found elsewhere. Remember these are a collection of tools, not rules, for family discipleship.

Don't forget to show us how your family are discipling one another by sharing your photos and reflections on our social media pages with the hashtag [#WeAreLivingChurch](#).

Sunday 19th July

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 26:1-29

BIG IDEA

Paul invites us to see reality from Jesus' heavenly perspective, and to have open eyes and hearts to see the triumphant reign of our risen Lord Jesus breaking into our present life.

KIDS BIG IDEA

Ephesians is written by Paul who wants people to see and love Jesus as king like he does.

APPLICATION

Trust Jesus as your king, no matter if life seems good or bad (easy or hard).

Reflect

As parents, encourage your family to personally reflect on the Bible passage, and what it means for them. Try to guide this so it lands close to the big idea.

KIDS

Read Ephesians 2:3-6

Watch this video that goes through Paul's story with your family and to help you dwell further, pose the questions below.



YouTube – Saddleback Kids – Paul's Ministry

Why do you think Jesus chose to appear to Paul and save his life?

Instead of hurting the people that follow Jesus, God want Paul to do the opposite; to become a follower of Jesus and to spread the good news so that many more people could become part of God's family as well.

What does it mean that God raised us up with Christ?

Through Jesus' death and resurrection we no longer have to stay in our life of sin and this is because God loves us so much. We are raised back to life from our dead life of sin. We are made alive even though we don't deserve to be saved.

PRAY

Lord, Thank you that because of your son Jesus we have been made alive. By grace you have saved us and given us a new life. Help us to keep our eyes open to your plan and what you would have us do with our new lives. In Jesus name, Amen.

YOUTH

Read Acts 26:1-29 and Ephesians 2:3-6

Why do you think God chose to appear to Paul and save his life?

Instead of persecuting the followers of Jesus, God wanted Paul to turn his life completely upside down and love and become one of the people he once hated. Paul was changed when he encountered the risen Jesus. As we consider both his old and new self, we can see that he is passionately committed to what he believed. God graciously delivered Paul from his former life and used his passion to build up and encourage the church instead of causing it to suffer.

Like Paul, God changes our desires and helps us become people that build-up the church instead of looking to our own desires. Take a moment to consider how you have encountered God and how the Holy Spirit has worked in your life.

React

As parents, encourage your family to see how they are reacting emotionally to the Bible passage. Engage emotionally and bring it before God.

And you will know God's great power. It can't be compared with anything else. His power works for us who believe. It is the same mighty strength God showed. He showed this when he raised Christ from the dead. God seated him at his right hand in his heavenly kingdom.

Ephesians 1:19-20

KIDS

Paul has this crazy, brilliant and mind blowing story of how he came to faith. Jesus actually spoke to him! Each adult in the family take some time to tell a story of how they have encountered Jesus at one time or another in their life.

Most people don't have stories like Paul. God sometimes works in amazing displays of power and in others he works slowly and in mundane of life. If feel your story has been uneventful, that does not mean that God hasn't used much of his power in your life. As you can see in the Ephesians passage above, the same power that works in all of us is the same power that raised Jesus back from the dead.

How does it make you feel that the God of the Universe and creator of all things, works in your life?

YOUTH

Paul has this crazy, brilliant and mind blowing story of how he came to faith. Jesus actually spoke to him! Each person in the family take some time to write out their story of how they encountered Jesus.

Most people don't have stories like Paul. God sometimes works in amazing displays of power and in others he works slowly and in mundane of life. If feel your story has been uneventful, that does not mean that God hasn't used much of his power in your life. As you can see in the Ephesians passage above, the same power that works in all of us is the same power that raised Jesus back from the dead.

How does it make you feel that the God of the Universe and creator of all things, works in your life?

PRAY

Dear Lord, We praise you for the way that you work in each of our lives. We are all so different and the way that you work in people is different as well. Thank you for the stories that cause us to see how powerful you are, and we also thank you for the stories that show that you quietly walk beside us and faithfully guide us throughout our lives. Please open our eyes to the ways you work in us individually so that we can praise you all the more. In Jesus name, Amen.

Relate

As parents, encourage your family to share honestly, and listen deeply to how one another are growing as disciples.

Parents it will be important for you to model honesty and vulnerability as you answer these questions, so your kids know they can do the same. Allow time for everyone to reflect and answer each question openly and honestly. Make sure you listen well to one another, and pray from the heart.

Describe a situation where you've found it really hard to trust Jesus and rely on Him for strength. What made it hard?

Describe a situation where you've found it really easy to trust Jesus and rely on Him for strength. What made it easy?

PRAY

Pray the prayer in Ephesians 3:15-21 for each family member. Alternatively you can pray it for your whole family at once.

It has been altered slightly to work as a prayer below.

_____insert name or "us/we"_____

*Father,
from you every family in heaven and on earth gets its name. I pray that you will use your glorious riches to make ___ strong. May the Holy Spirit give ___ power deep down inside them. Then Christ will live in their hearts because they believe in you. And I pray that (her/his/us) love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. May (she/he/we) have power together with all the your holy people to understand Christ's love. May (she/he/we) know how wide and long and high and deep it is. And may (she/he/we) know your love, even though it can't be known completely. Then (she/he/we) will be filled with everything you have for (her/him/us). God, you are able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. You do everything by your power that is working in us. May _____ give you glory in everything.
Amen.*

Respond

As parents, encourage your family to work out real and practical ways they can respond to God in light of the Bible passage. Land the application in this section.

Paul's imprisonment and trial is near the end of the book of Acts it seems that Luke has written it to remind us of the end of his previous book (The Gospel of Luke). Paul is on trial - he is suffering. Paul is suffering in a similar way to Jesus. If we commit to a life in service of our king Jesus then we too will find that each of us will suffer in different ways for the faith we have.

Below are some links to a couple of stories. Pick one or read them all, and have a chat about how they showed that they trusted Jesus through suffering.

Kids

Stories from Everone A Child Should Know

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/0c5ccedb-06d0-40fa-a111-2afb7375a20b>

Youth

Doubly Persecuted: The Challenges for Female Believers in the Arab World

<https://http.org/doubly-persecuted>

Youtube: Stories of Christian Persecution | North Korea

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1UWabuK4Ek&f>

Sayid's Story

<https://http.org/sayids-story>

Have you suffered for your faith? Has anyone at school ever picked on you for being a Christian?

Schools can be a horrible place at times. If your child/youth mentions that they have received nasty comments for being a Christian or don't feel comfortable sharing their faith at school, take this opportunity to empathise with them and share experiences from your own life of when you felt out of place in the world because of your faith in Jesus.

What do you think that we can do as a family to help each other trust in Jesus through the difficult times? This will look very different for every family but here are a couple of examples:

Read the Bible together regularly to remind you of all that you have in Jesus

Pray together regularly to bring your struggles before the Lord

Play encourage music around the house that points to Jesus. (playlists below as starting points)

Ask each other how they are going throughout each week.

PRAY

Lord,

We know that you have saved us and given us a new life, and we thank you for this. Please help us to live these new lives that are set apart from the world. We will be different and at times that will be really hard. But we are thankful because we know that you will be with us through it. Help us to grow our trust muscles so that we can rely on you fully when tough things come our way. Help us to be united together as a family so that we can love and support one another.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

Review

As parents, encourage your family to review the Bible passage for the week. This section tries to find a way to engage with the passage in a different way.

I, Paul, am a prisoner because of Christ Jesus. I am in prison because of my work among you who are Gentiles. I am sure you have heard that God appointed me to share his grace with you. I'm talking about the mystery God showed me. I have already written a little about it. By reading about this mystery, you will be able to understand what I know. You will know about the mystery of Christ.

Ephesians 3:1-4

KIDS

Why do you think Paul wrote letters to groups of people?

Paul wrote letters to encourage them to live a life changed by the Gospel. He wrote letters that spoke to each particular group's struggles but also to praise God for the ways he had worked in their lives already.

What do you think Paul's letter to the Ephesians talks about?

Well we will find out more in the coming weeks, but Paul reminded the Ephesians of all that Jesus had done for them. He also encouraged them to turn from their old ways of living in sin and put on their new self (identity) that Jesus had made possible for them through His death and resurrection. This was particularly written with the Gentiles (anyone who is not a Jew) in mind. God had chosen to include them in his kingdom. The rest of the book - which will be covered in our 2nd series in Ephesians - is about how these truths are worked out practically in Christian Living.

PRAY

Lord, We pray for this term ahead. Help us to focus on what you were teaching the Ephesians through the letter Paul wrote them. Help us to see what you have to say to us in this letter. We thank you for faithful people like Paul who gave their lives to spread the good news throughout the world so that we can know and follow Jesus as well. In Jesus name, Amen.

YOUTH

This term we are looking at the first half of Ephesians. This section is filled with reminders of how grand and cosmic the implications of Jesus' life, death and resurrection are. Jesus made it possible for ALL things in heaven and on earth to be brought into unity under Himself.

Watch this Bible Project video to give you an overview of the letter Paul wrote to the Ephesians.



YouTube - Bible Project - Overview: Ephesians