

Copyright © 2018 David Keith Tarkington

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

EQUIPPING FAMILIES OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA, FOR
DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME

A Project
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Educational Ministry

by
David Keith Tarkington
December 2018

APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING FAMILIES OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA, FOR
DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME

David Keith Tarkington

Read and Approved by:

Shane W. Parker (Faculty Supervisor)

Danny R. Bowen

Date _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
PREFACE	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Context.....	1
Rationale	4
Purpose.....	4
Goals	5
Research Methodology	5
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations.....	8
Conclusion.....	10
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASES FOR PARENTS TO BE LEAD DISCIPLE-MAKERS OF THEIR CHILDREN	11
Deuteronomy 6:4-9	12
Psalm 78:1-8.....	19
Proverbs 22:6.....	22
Ephesians 5:1-2	26
Ephesians 6:1-4	29
Conclusion.....	34

Chapter	Page
3. HISTORICAL FAMILY MINISTRY MODELS AND IMPACT ON CURRENT METHODOLOGICAL IMPLEMENTATION	36
Early Church Fathers	37
Reformed and Puritan Focus	38
Modern Era Shifts	41
Modern Era Comprehensive and Programmatic Models	44
Contemporary Models	45
Parenting Roles and Gender	50
Conclusion	55
4. MINISTRY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	56
Target Audience	56
Family Discipleship Survey	57
Project Implementation	58
Conclusion	72
5. PROJECT ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	75
Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose	75
Evaluation of the Project’s Goals	76
Strengths of the Project	81
Weaknesses of the Project	85
What I Would Do Differently	87
Theological Reflections	89
Personal Reflections	92
Conclusion	95
Appendix	
1. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY	98

Appendix	Page
2. SERMON SERIES RUBRIC	103
3. FAMILY-EQUIPPING TEACHING SERIES RUBRIC	104
4. PRE- AND POST-PROJECT SURVEY STATISTICS	105
5. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY RESULTS	108
6. FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE	131
7. RITES OF PASSAGE EXPERIENCES	164
8. FAMILY-EQUIPPING TEACHING SERIES CURRICULUM	170
BIBLIOGRAPHY	182

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
A1. Results from FDS: Perceptions – Unpaired.....	105
A2. Results from FDS: Practices – Unpaired.....	106

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
A1. Part 1 – Church membership.....	109
A2. Part 1 – Length of church membership	109
A3. Part 1 – Children in the home	110
A4. Part 1 – Parental role	110
A5. Part 1 – Marital status.....	111
A6. Part 1 – Prioritization of family devotional time	111
A7. Part 1 – Desire vs. time.....	112
A8. Part 1 – Where children should receive most Bible teaching	112
A9. Part 1 – Biblical questions	113
A10. Part 1 – Sports/school success	113
A11. Part 1 – Parental responsibility as disciple-makers.....	114
A12. Part 1 – Locating key Bible verses.....	114
A13. Part 1 – Church leaders as disciple-makers.....	115
A14. Part 1 – Church as spiritual growth helper	115
A15. Part 1 – Prayer with children	116
A16. Part 1 – Family mealtime	116
A17. Part 1 – Bible reading and discussion	117
A18. Part 1 – Spiritual discussions.....	117
A19. Part 1 – Family devotional/worship	118
A20. Part 1 – Discussing spiritual development	118
A21. Part 1 – Evangelism and witnessing.....	119
A22. Part 1 – Church leaders offering assistance.....	119

Figure	Page
A23. Part 2 – Church membership	120
A24. Part 2 – Length of church membership	120
A25. Part 2 – Children in the home	121
A26. Part 2 – Parental role	121
A27. Part 2 – Marital status.....	122
A28. Part 2 – Prioritization of family devotional time	122
A29. Part 2 – Desire vs. time	123
A30. Part 2 – Where children should receive most Bible teaching.....	123
A31. Part 2 – Biblical questions	124
A32. Part 2 – Sports/school success	124
A33. Part 2 – Parental responsibility as disciple-makers.....	125
A34. Part 2 – Locating key Bible verses.....	125
A35. Part 2 – Church leaders as disciple-makers	126
A36. Part 2 – Church as spiritual growth helper	126
A37. Part 2 – Prayer with children	127
A38. Part 2 – Family mealtime	127
A39. Part 2 – Bible reading and discussion	128
A40. Part 2 – Spiritual discussions.....	128
A41. Part 2 – Family devotional/worship	129
A42. Part 2 – Discussing spiritual development	129
A43. Part 2 – Evangelism and witnessing.....	130
A17. Part 2 – Church Leaders offering assistance	130

PREFACE

Serving as the Lead Pastor at First Baptist Church of Orange Park (FBCOP) is a blessing and an honor. I am thankful to all the members of FBCOP for their prayers and encouragement as I have had the opportunity to follow God's leading through continued studies. I am especially thankful for my wife, Tracy, who has steadfastly supported and loved me throughout our lives together and as I follow God's direction.

I am indebted to the wonderful staff and professors of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for clear, kingdom-focused, gospel-centered direction throughout this journey. I am thankful for the instruction provided over two decades ago by Dr. Philip Briggs and Dr. Wesley Black at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Deeply felt thanks to my SBTS seminar professors, Dr. Timothy Paul Jones, Dr. John David Trentham, Dr. Michael Wilder, and Dr. Stuart Scott. These men and each guest lecturer were used greatly in aiding my understanding of family ministry within the local church and Kingdom implications of leading well. I thank Dr. Danny Bowen for his expertise on statistical analysis and insight regarding the framework of the project.

I would like to thank Dr. Shane Parker for his friendship and service as my doctoral supervisor. He has enabled the work to be enjoyable while continually pushing, challenging, and encouraging me throughout the journey.

Finally, and most important, I am thankful for the grace and love expressed to me by our Lord Jesus Christ. God's steadfast love overwhelms me. This project is intended to bring Him glory alone.

David Keith Tarkington

Orange Park, Florida
December 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

First Baptist Church of Orange Park (FBCOP) exists to love God, love people, and make disciples. These three elements of purpose are derived from the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) as expressed by Jesus Christ. Fulfilling the commands of these passages requires complete surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ and adherence to the gospel. The disciple of Christ matures throughout his or her faith journey. The maturation of the local church remains contingent on the spiritual growth of its members. Loving God, loving people, and making disciples are intertwined. Loving God fully leads to a love for people. The Christ follower, motivated by the gospel, seeks to lead others to know God personally. An obedient disciple of Jesus Christ leads others to become disciples as well. Discipleship at First Baptist Church has traditionally occurred in a framework developed over decades, mostly focused in small group gatherings and church-focused programs. While this model has proven somewhat effective, the need for a strategic shift involving family-centered discipleship within the home has been identified.

Context

First Baptist Church of Orange Park was founded in 1921 to offer church services for the people of Orange Park, Florida, a suburb of Jacksonville. The church began a children's Bible study class, meeting on the front porch of a local home in 1919. The first worship service occurred in an old school building on Sunday, May 1, 1921. Over the years, the community changed greatly, and the church grew considerably.

Numerous men have pastored FBCOP over the years. I began serving as the Student Pastor in January 1994 at FBCOP under the leadership of Dr. Allen F. Harrod.

Over the years, my responsibilities shifted to include college and single adult ministries as well. In 2005, following the retirement of Dr. Allen F. Harrod, FBCOP called me to serve as Lead Pastor.

Disciple-Making at First Baptist Church

Since the inception of FBCOP, teaching the Bible to individuals has been considered vital. Great emphasis was placed on Sunday school and small group Bible studies throughout the years. Much of the church's growth over the past four decades resulted from strong Sunday School campaigns and strategies to grow small groups. Attendance and membership eventually plateaued. Internal issues at FBCOP and lack of preparedness for shifting population growth contributed to this.

Ministry models utilized throughout the past seemed to have lost effectiveness over time. Though many had surrendered to Jesus Christ, been baptized and joined the church, a systematic model of disciple-making remained absent.

Need for a Paradigm Shift

The leaders of FBCOP understood the need for a paradigm shift as it relates to disciple-making.¹ Rather than fully shifting to a newer model of doing church, leadership affirmed shifting to a model where family remained centric. Scripture presents strong expectations for parents to be lead disciple-makers of their children (Deut 6:7).

What the shift in paradigms looks like fully in the current century remains unknown and debatable. Does this require the dismantling of age-graded ministries? Does eliminating age-focused events solve the problem? What about gender-specific

¹The "leaders of FBCOP" refers to the Leadership Team, comprised of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastors, and directors of different ministries such as preschool, children, men, women, orphan care, school partnerships, etc. This team includes full-time staff as well as part-time and volunteer.

ministries? Church leadership agreed that throwing out the old model completely would not provide the needed framework for family-centered discipleship. Nevertheless, the need for a shift in family ministry must occur. Fortunately, members of FBCOP have historically shown a receptiveness to changes in strategy when presented with solid rationale and systematic steps.

Weaknesses of Current Model

The current model of discipleship for children and teenagers at FBCOP offers little more than token parental involvement. Beyond sending home a sheet of paper featuring talking points from the day's lesson, little strategic planning exists for family-centered discipleship.

This is not to say the desire to involve parents and grandparents in intergenerational discipleship has not existed. At times, emphases have been placed upon a family disciple-making model, only to fade with no lasting impact. Sadly, the church has a storied history of beginning new ministry programs and emphases well but sustaining those efforts poorly.

Whether new evangelism strategies, schedule shifts, or thematic events, the unfortunate tradition that FBCOP carries is that of a quick start and then weak, often abandoned implementation. The concern for church leaders centered on launching a hastily compiled strategy without fully considering the repercussions and necessary shifts required among present ministries.

Whenever strategies involving parents and family members are presented, the inevitable question has been asked. "What about those whose parents do not attend the church or are not Christians?" Churches often abandon new strategies for ministry when such roadblocks occur. Rather than forgo a family-centered discipleship strategy, the church must discover ways to step into the lives of those living in homes without Christian leadership.

Rationale

The need for a family-oriented discipleship strategy leads to a shift not only in programming, but in ministry philosophy. Few church members would debate the importance of implementing Deuteronomy 6 in their lives. However, years of promoting, organizing, and hosting events that avoided family and parent-centered strategies reveal that change is difficult. Affirmation of need and approval of strategy do not necessarily equate to ease of implementation.

Dividing families into age-graded and gender-specific ministries has built virtual silos within the church over time. Paul's plea to the Corinthian church was to ensure no division grew among the believers (1 Cor 1:10). While Paul was not speaking of ministry divisions as Christians view them today, the practical reality is that division has developed within many local churches, including FBCOP.

A church with ministry silos tends to fill their calendar with events and activities designed to keep membership busy and content. Unfortunately, busyness and contentedness are not synonymous with disciple-making. Implementation of an engaged family discipleship model may eliminate some "good" events, activities, and programs from the church calendar. The busy church must die so the disciple-making church can survive. This shift remains the biggest challenge for FBCOP.

A realistic evaluation of families in the community must occur. The changing landscape of how family units are defined in the culture cannot be ignored by the church. This challenge regarding worldviews faces the local church. Loving God, loving people, and making disciples must be done without affirming sin, approving of sin, or watering down the gospel. Understanding the changing landscape provides the church with fuel for gospel-focused engagement in the community and throughout the world. FBCOP seeks to reach its community and the world with the hope of the gospel.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip families of First Baptist Church of

Orange Park, Florida, for discipleship in their homes.

Goals

The goals described here provided a systematic rationale of leading FBCOP to a family-equipping discipleship strategy. These goals provided practical, cross-generational opportunities for putting into practice the commands of Deuteronomy 6:7. The following goals were utilized at FBCOP to determine current practices and attitudes regarding discipleship practices in the home.

1. The first goal was to assess current discipleship practices among families with preschoolers, children, and teenagers who are members of FBCOP.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-week sermon series and four-week follow up teaching series centered on a biblical understanding of parents as lead disciplinarians of their children.
3. The third goal was to increase knowledge of family discipleship practices through role-play activities during the teaching series along with consultations with members of the church's leadership team.

Research Methodology

Simply stating that disciple-making best functions within the home setting under parental leadership does not lead to change in strategy or paradigm shifts. The research methodology for this project included a pre-project survey, a post-project survey, and evaluation rubrics for sermons and teaching series sessions.²

The first goal assessed the current discipleship practices among families with preschoolers, children, or teenagers who are members of First Baptist Church. This goal was measured by using a Family Discipleship Survey (FDS) provided to church members

²All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

with preschoolers, children, and teenagers residing at home.³ The FDS was developed and distributed to church members in the desired demographic. The FDS included questions relating to the biblical understanding of discipleship and family responsibilities. The goal was measured by administering the FDS to a sampling of 28 family representatives. Parents of preschoolers, children, and teenagers completed and returned the FDS prior to the family-equipping sermon series and teaching series sessions. The information gathered via the FDS provided church leadership with adequate information regarding preconceived views of family discipleship within the home. Originally, the intent was to have at least 25 family representatives complete the survey. This goal was considered successfully met since 28 family representatives completed the FDS. The data received provided a clear image of the current discipleship practices among the families of FBCOP.

The second goal was to develop a six-week sermon series with a four-week follow up teaching series focused on the roles of parents as lead disciple-makers of their children. The six-week sermon series was presented during the regularly scheduled weekly worship services at all church campuses.⁴ The series centered on the biblical mandate to pass on biblical truth and disciple the next generations as expressed in Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 78, Proverbs 22, and Ephesians 5 and 6. Additional Scripture passages were also utilized, in context, as central truths relating to the family-equipping model. The follow up four-week series was taught to parents and others at the main campus of FBCOP who were interested in the details of this model of family-equipping discipleship.⁵ The series presented at the FBCOP campus on Sunday mornings during the

³See appendix 1.

⁴FBCOP has a main campus, two satellite campuses, and a revitalization project with a small, established church. Each campus has a campus pastor. All preach from the same text each weekend as determined by the Lead Pastor.

⁵Material from the teaching series was made available online for those at the

small group hour. The intent was to increase parents' knowledge of family-centered discipleship practices in church history and in current church models. The goal was measured by the leadership team of FBCOP who utilized a rubric to evaluate biblical soundness, clarity and relevance of the sermon series. The goal was considered successfully met in that a minimum of 90 percent of all rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficient level.⁶

The third goal intended to increase knowledge of discipleship practices through role-play activities during the teaching series and through small group settings along with consultations with members of the church's leadership team. A family worship guide was made available to church members for use weekly.⁷ Beyond the classroom and home study settings, leadership team members provided consultations for group leaders featuring appropriate disciple-making strategies and activities. While presenting the biblical case for family-centered discipleship, family worship guides, video illustrations, and discipleship strategies provided practical illustrations and stories of families that have implemented such practices in the homes. This goal was measured by the leadership team of FBCOP who utilized a rubric to evaluate biblical soundness, clarity, age-level appropriateness, teaching methodology and applicability of the curriculum. The goal was considered successful in who participated in the teaching series also participated in a role-playing exercise.⁸

A development of a long-term family discipleship strategy for use by families

satellite campuses and revitalization campus. The only live training was at FBCOP.

⁶See appendix 2.

⁷Most small groups at FBCOP meet on Sunday mornings prior to or following one of the worship services, but also at other times throughout the week. Some of these groups meet on the church campus. Others meet in homes or other locales.

⁸See appendix 3.

of FBCOP followed the fulfilment of the stated goals of this project. A four-week introduction to family-equipping discipleship is vital, but long-term resources are essential for familial and cultural change.⁹ A long-term discipleship strategy provided step-by-step ideas and recommendations for parents and family members seeking to implement such a process. The guide presented age-focused family worship strategies and gave rites of passage ideas for parents of children of various ages with age-appropriate steps for spiritual growth. This strategy provided illustrations and cultural norm shifts, with solid biblical truths and doctrinal norms of the gospel.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

Preschoolers. In this study, preschoolers are boys and girls ages birth through kindergarten whose parents are members or regular attenders of FBCOP.

Children. For the purpose of this study children are boys and girls in first through sixth grades whose parents are members or regular attenders of FBCOP.

Teenagers. Teenagers refer to boys and girls in seventh through twelfth grades whose parents are members or regular attenders of FBCOP.

Discipleship. Discipleship describes the process of following a leader or mentor. Regarding this project, discipleship is solely focused on following Jesus Christ and living according to the Scriptures. Discipleship begins with a personal transformation of an individual into a child of God through salvation in Jesus Christ. A definite moral change occurs at the point of regeneration.¹⁰ The learning of biblical truths and gospel focused living occurs as believers are sanctified throughout life. The discipleship process

⁹When referring to cultural change in this instance, I mean the subculture that exists within the body of believers at FBCOP.

¹⁰Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 747.

is focused on guiding believers in Jesus Christ as sanctification increases until completed at death or when the Lord returns.¹¹

Family-equipping. Family-equipping is a discipleship model that views the church and household serving together as the two faces of one process of proclaiming and practicing the gospel.¹² This model elevates the biblical role of parents—fathers, especially—as the lead disciple-makers in the family. The church’s role is to equip, thus the name, and support parents in this role while coming alongside as needed. This project sought to lead families to embrace this model and for the local church to support, resource, and equip those within the church.

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the assessment secured from the membership of FBCOP was accurate only to the degree those completing the forms were honest about their views of discipleship within the family. To mitigate this limitation, respondents completed the surveys anonymously. Second, the effectiveness of the sermons and teaching curriculum was affected by the attendance and participation of those in the church. It was challenging to measure effectively the benefits of these teaching series sessions and group gatherings since participants did not attend each session. To mitigate this limitation, incentives for families to attend such as timing of the sessions while providing adequate child-care for all as sessions were offered. The teaching series sessions were made available online via Facebook for viewing by those who could not attend a session in person.

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project addressed home-centered discipleship for parents of preschoolers, children, and teenagers. In FBCOP’s setting, this group includes all children from birth through twelfth grades. Once

¹¹Ibid., 749.

¹²Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, eds., *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011), 255.

this strategy was implemented, considerations for expanding to collegiate and post-high school training must be developed. Second, the project was confined to a nineteen-week timeframe, giving adequate time for preparation and presentation of the six-week sermon series and the coinciding four-week teaching series with follow-up applications.

Conclusion

Making disciples is mandated to the church by Jesus Christ. The command to make disciples in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) did not come with subheadings defining exactly how this should be done. Disciple-making can be accomplished effectively through a variety of means, such as small group, one-on-one, mentor to mentee processes, etc. Yet, even without an unobstructed roadmap of exactly what strategy must be used, the command remains. What also remains is God's desire for the family unit to play a primary role in the disciple-making process. This is evident throughout both Old Testament and New Testament teachings. The congregation at FBCOP has a rich heritage of gospel-focused ministry. However, growth of ministry silos with unclear strategies has led to affirming parents' lead disciple-making roles within the home as idealistic. As FBCOP has begun and now continues to implement a family-equipping disciple-making strategy, spiritual health and holy intergenerational relationships will result. Chapter 2 of this project outlines the biblical and theological foundations for used in implementing this strategy that affirms FBCOP goal to love God, love people, and effectively make disciples.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASES FOR PARENTS TO BE LEAD DISCIPLE-MAKERS OF THEIR CHILDREN

Throughout the biblical narrative, God commands his people to remember his promises and pass truth on to following generations. As humans are forgetful of much, the task of remembering remains paramount. Yet, remembrance apart from obedience gains little as apparent through the teachings revealed in both the Old and New Testaments.

The many references to passing on faith to future generations express corporate responsibility for all God's people. Yet, the primary responsibility for such was given to fathers and mothers. This chapter addresses God's expressed design through biblical references regarding parents as lead disciple-makers of their children.

This chapter explores passages from the Old Testament that provide clear direction for familial roles and expectations. Instructions given to the people of God in an ancient culture often seem foreign to many current parents. Yet, the principles of familial responsibility and roles remain constant. New Testament passages are surveyed as well, providing insight into the same situations from a first century and Christian perspective. Again, contexts change, but truth remains solid. Old and New Testament passages and guidelines reveal God's desire that parents serve as primary disciple-makers of their children regardless of context, culture, or era.

While some may balk at attempted successful application of biblical instructions in modern-era circumstances, the timeless principles of God's unchanging Word provide not only instruction, but comfort. Parents delving into these passages will discover how well God has used those who feel ill-equipped for such a daunting task.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

The book of Deuteronomy has been called the heartbeat of the Old Testament.¹ These writings attributed to Moses within the book are among the most frequently cited throughout both the Old and New Testaments.² Most of the teachings within Deuteronomy consist of Moses' words to the people of Israel following the exodus from Egypt and immediately prior to entrance into Canaan. The primacy of Moses' words come from his discourse in the land of Moab prior to his death.³ While the book focuses upon obedience of God's people as a nation, application lies within the family structure through particularly detailed instruction given to mothers and fathers.

Deuteronomy repeats the law of God presented initially by Moses to the people of Israel from Mount Sinai. As with other books of the Pentateuch, the title of the book in the Hebrew comes from the first few words of the book. Therefore, "these are the words" stand as the transliteration of the Hebrew name of this fifth book of the Old Testament.⁴ The word "Deuteronomy" in English originated from the Latin Vulgate "Deuteronomium," which means "second law."⁵ However, the writing is not a second law, but a reiteration of the law as given prior. Moses' pending end of life ushering new leadership for the nation and a new chapter in the story of God's people awaiting entrance into Canaan provides the backdrop for the book.

¹Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 1.

²David G. Firth and Philip Johnston, *Interpreting Deuteronomy: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, 2012), 13.

³Ibid., 21.

⁴S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902), i.

⁵Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 21.

Deuteronomy closed the Pentateuch and provided solid theological foundation and framework for God's people as they entered the land of promise. The closing of the book highlights Moses' blessing upon the people, reminiscent of Jacob's blessing upon the twelve tribes. The final chapter describes Moses' death. The description of Moses' death completes the story of God's giving of Torah to his people begun in Exodus 19.⁶

The Shema

Following the restatement of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5, the writer reveals the central commandment for God's people in chapter 6. The Shema, a transliteration of the Hebrew meaning "to hear," includes verses 4-9 and has been called the fundamental truth and duty of Israel's religion and lifestyle.⁷ Spoken to a people surrounded by and historically familiar with religions that celebrated numerous gods and goddesses, the Shema separates the God of Israel from the pack of created imposters. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut 6:4).⁸ The declaration that God is one not only identifies his authenticity and uniqueness but reiterates God's name as declarative and complete.⁹

Moses' strong statements of God's identity and Israel's position as his people, reveals an obvious crossroads of personal identity among the people. As the Israelites prepare to settle in the land of promise, they are presented a choice. The choice to live as children of the one, true God or to abandon the faith of their forefathers and fall prey to

⁶Ian Cairns, *Word and Presence: A Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 11.

⁷Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 168.

⁸Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references are from the English Standard Version.

⁹Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 168.

the faithless idolaters of the region weigh heavily upon Moses.¹⁰

The crossroads of identity recognized as the book closes with Moses' blessing and death gives clarity regarding the Shema as central to God's instruction through Moses. Some have argued that the entirety of Deuteronomy simply expresses commentary on verse 4.¹¹ As the most fundamental of Israel's creedal traditions, the Shema stands as an affirmation about God and his nature and a call to his people for commitment to God.¹²

The oneness of God cannot be understated, but for the people of Israel, Moses' declaration not only affirms the reality of God as uniquely one, but also unified as one.¹³ The unity of God revealed his Trinitarian character, but strongly stood in contrast to the gods of the foreign nations where hierarchies and contradictions existed. The God of Israel was and is one, thereby no other stands in authority over him. Contradictory teachings of the one, true God cannot stand as holy and right. Considering the multiple gods of the culture, the Shema declares Yahweh not as the brand name for a cosmic corporation, but the one God of whom Yahweh stands as his personal name.¹⁴ The full implications of what the oneness of God means may not have been fully understood by the Israelites at the time of the writing. Regardless, the convictions revealed generated hopefulness among God's people that became missiological, universal, and solidly

¹⁰Caryn A. Reeder, *The Enemy in the Household: Family Violence in Deuteronomy and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 18.

¹¹Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6a (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 143.

¹²Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 95.

¹³Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 169.

¹⁴Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 96.

monotheistic.¹⁵

God commands love through Moses' declaration to his people. God is one and therefore, deserves and should receive love from his people. The expressed command reveals love as a choice, not just an emotional response or feeling. "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might (Deut 6:5). The command to love stands out as central to the passage since the entirety of the book focuses upon the renewing of covenant with God. The renewal demands obedience. Yet, the possibility of such only exists as a response to God's initiated love for his people.¹⁶

Demanding love of God implies the disposition of obedience as well.¹⁷ To state love for God while living contrary to his commands reveals the proffered love to be inauthentic. Each Israelite was instructed to love and therefore to be obedient to the fullness of God's commandments. To express reverence to God through obedience to his law did not simply reveal love and loyalty, but also served as a means of teaching this approach to others.¹⁸

The love demanded was expected with indicators that heart, soul, and might declare the fullness of such. The Hebrew understanding of heart was not only defined as the physical organ, but also the core of personality which hosts joy, sorrow, courage, trust, and hate, as well as the source for reason, planning and discernment. Therefore, to love God fully with all the heart expresses openness for God in one's processes of

¹⁵Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 97.

¹⁶Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 170.

¹⁷J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 5 (London: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 123.

¹⁸Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 75.

thinking, feeling, and deciding, all for his glory.¹⁹

The soul in this instance does not refer to the eternal portion of the individual that survives death, but to the principle of life shared by human beings and animals. Ultimately, this indicates the living being of an individual and relates to the feelings, appetites, thirsts, and desires. Hence, to love God with all one's soul means to place all feelings and desires at his service, conformed to his divine will.²⁰

The Hebrew word for might in this passage literally translates as “muchness” or “intensity.” To love God with all one's might expresses as a single-focus, love-inspired, intense zeal and determination to know God fully.²¹

Future Generations

The intense clarity revealed in the verbiage of the Shema supersedes the seeming simplicity of the words. While the Israelites were instructed to love God and declare God's oneness and authority, the command to pass faithful truths to forthcoming generations reminds the reader of the importance of family in the faith community and parents as lead disciple-makers within the homes. The presumption is that children will eventually inquire as to why their parents live in contrast with other nations surrounding them. Anticipating this, Moses urged the people to have their answer of covenant truth ready when asked.²²

This expressed faith reveals God's covenant with Israel. Each generation views the acquiescence of their mothers and fathers to God's lordship through covenant living. Yet, the wording of the Shema leads each generation through the crossroads of identity.

¹⁹Cairns, *Word and Presence*, 84.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 85.

²²Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 126.

Each generation faces the challenge to faith in Yahweh and the command to pass on to subsequent generations.²³

God's design expects generational instruction and covenant living centered upon parents expressing the Shema to their children regularly. "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deut 6:7). Having first understood and surrendered to the covenant truth, parents were then instructed to speak of them and repeat them throughout the days while conversing with their children. In other words, the commandments were to permeate every area of life for the family.²⁴

Imagery of parental instruction likens to that of an artist engraving a monument with hammer and chisel. The indelible etching on a memorial requires painstaking patience and precision. The task is daunting, but the final image is permanent and available for future generations to see. Likewise, the precise instruction throughout a child's maturing years hearkens to such an artist endeavor.²⁵

Repetition and Remembrance

Moses models the power of repetition simply by the recitation of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy and the details of covenant living. Repetition helps people to remember. Clearly of great concern to Moses is the potential loss of future generations as faithful children of God. Therefore, each generation stands under the command to own primary responsibility for the faith development of the next.

The repetition of these truths with Moses as the lead teacher, equipping and passing the role to fathers and mothers provides an Old Testament program of catechism

²³Firth and Johnston, *Interpreting Deuteronomy*, 158.

²⁴Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 170.

²⁵Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 166.

for the family unit.²⁶ Clearly, expectations for each generation rise higher than simply a child's ability to recite and repeat biblical truth. Obedience to the law of God innate in these conversations centered on God's character, nature, and redemption story.

As Israel prepares to enter the land of promise, the daunting reality before Moses, Joshua, and the adult leaders of the tribes and families becomes frighteningly clear. Israel's history reminds the leaders what occurs when just one generation forgets the stories of God's deliverance of ancestral members. The book of Exodus begins with the declaration that a Pharaoh in Egypt took charge who had not known, or forgotten, the stories of Joseph and God's rescue of the Egyptian people through his providential plan. "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (Exod 1:8). The wisdom of Moses reveals his concern that Israel, as a people would not be immune to a similar generational amnesia. Therefore, Moses provides illustrative guidelines regarding binding covenant truth upon one's arm and head and the placement of truth upon the doorposts of the homes. "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut 6:8-9). While likely intended metaphorically, the Israelites of old as well as some modern-day Jews read the instructions literally as evidenced by the use of phylacteries and mezuzahs.²⁷ Regardless, the urgency of learning the truth, remembering the truth, and living as people of promise with hope for future generations is revealed by these instructions.

The generation that was to enter the land of promise was not the same who experienced the greatness of God when rescued from Egypt. The people of covenant themselves had been taught of God's greatness and deliverance and therefore, were

²⁶Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 11.

²⁷Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 168.

expected to pass along these truths. The commandments given by God were designed, not as a burden to bear, but as gracious provision by a beneficent God.²⁸ Instruction of faithful truths were not debatable. Parents seeking to live obediently to God would teach, talk about, and explain the truth of God and his character. Remembering the experiences of previous generations was expected and needed. This seems as one of Moses' greatest concerns throughout these verses. The older generation passes the baton to the next, but desires that ignorance of past struggles, rescues, and lessons not develop. Repetition and intentional remembrance serve as antidotes to forgetfulness.

The binding and posting of these teachings revealed the expected use of both oral and written instruction. Instruction was crucial for the obedient, loving Israelites and the home was revealed to be the location where it would happen.²⁹ Obedient parents must not only know the covenant truth but must love willingly as instructed. The dominant pattern expressed in Deuteronomy, and specifically in this passage, presumes the family to be the central locus for instruction for future generations.³⁰

Psalm 78:1-8

The Israelites held to the teaching of the Shema as essential for faithful family discipleship. Therefore, as the nation grew, leaders and teachers of faithful living would echo these truths in various ways. In Psalm 78, the psalmist Asaph did so not only words meant for public performance and praise of God, but also explicit teaching and training.³¹ As one of twelve psalms credited to Asaph and considered a psalm of remembrance, the

²⁸Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 126.

²⁹Firth and Johnston, *Interpreting Deuteronomy*, 173.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 175.

³¹Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 11 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 319.

principle focus recounts God's historical works.³² Echoes of Moses' teaching of the Shema resonate throughout this psalm. Asaph relies on historical accounts as evidence of God's plan for familial disciple-making and training within the home.

Contextual reading bifurcates the psalm into levels having to do with personal decisions of the current generation and those of the corporate tribes as relating to God's plans for Israel.³³ Thematically, the psalm does not resonate positively. "I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings from of old" (Ps 78:2). As an historical meditative psalm, it has been declared as a somber confession of the nation's covenantal failures.³⁴

As the priest would likely utter this psalm before the people, reminders of the incomprehensible come to the surface. A generation of forgetful forefathers personally viewed the miracles of God, received his great commands and covenant promises, and amazingly walked away in rebellion. The people ignored the truth and lived unfaithfully and in disobedience.³⁵ Idolatry and spiritual adultery resulted. Consequently, God's people faced defeat and difficulty. These verses present an introduction to the remainder of the psalm where disobedience of Israel resulting in the loss of the ark developed.

The psalmist opens not with an address from God, as some infer, but of a teacher proclaiming God's truths.³⁶ "Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your

³²Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman, III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 229.

³³Broyles, *Psalms*, 319.

³⁴Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 284.

³⁵Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 539.

³⁶Jean Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. by James Anderson (Middletown, DE: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 2:359.

ears to the words of my mouth!” (Ps 78:1). Yet, God’s message speaks clearly through the words of his prophet and teacher. Those words review the separation experienced between God and his people, as evidenced through the later declarative statements regarding the tribe of Ephraim and the house of David. “The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back on the day of battle. They did not keep God’s covenant but refused to walk according to his law” (Ps 78:9). Division and separation result from disobedience and covenant abandonment on behalf of God’s people. God’s covenant to his people reveal promises for protection and presence with expected reciprocal loyalty and obedience from such. Generations of disobedient, forgetful Israelites paved the way for consequential results for the nation. As historical evidence of such disobedience lays bare through this psalmist’s writings, redemptive hope echoes for future generations.

The purpose of the introductory verses in this psalm are clearly stated. The future generation of God’s people must not repeat the mistakes of their forebears.³⁷ “And that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God” (Ps 78:8). Philosopher and essayist George Santayana famously stated, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”³⁸ The originality of his quote evaporates as the psalmist states virtually the same thing. Though Santayana claimed atheism as his religion of choice, or lack thereof, his statement here reveals biblical truth. Therefore, even godless thinkers unknowingly acknowledge the biblical value of applicable remembrance as it relates to future hope.

The instruction here hearkens back to the Shema and commands of Moses. Apparently, Moses’ inferred fear that future generations would choose to forget the past

³⁷Broyles, *Psalms*, 322.

³⁸George Santayana, *The Life of Reason: Or the Phases of Human Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), 1:284.

became reality. Yet, forgetful humans are called back with a reminder to remember. Memory jogged and shaken should result in an attitude of trust in God and in behavioral changes through keeping his commands.³⁹

Personal reminders for each singer reverberate through the declarative of generational instruction. Though much has been abandoned prior, as evidenced through the remainder of the psalm, hope for the future remains. “So that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Ps 78:7). Instructions for repentant steps appear in these verses as every parent must become not only a historian, but a visionary. What has been learned from the ancestors who experienced God’s great covenantal truth must be transmitted by parents to the younger generations.⁴⁰ To ignore the command is equivalent to willingly concealing truth.

Proverbs 22:6

Future hope for God’s people as stated by Asaph in Psalm 78 reminds the learners that God’s commands must be kept and taught. Therefore, proper understanding and interpretation of God’s teachings are vital. Perhaps the most quoted and yet, misinterpreted proverb included in Scripture is this maxim from chapter 22. “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6). Parents of seemingly prodigal children place hope on the truths of this passage with a desire to see their disobedient progeny return to faith later in life. However well-meaning, this passage has been misappropriated in numerous ways throughout history.⁴¹ At times, this misappropriation comes from desperation on the part of parents seeking a

³⁹Broyles, *Psalms*, 322.

⁴⁰Calvin and Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 2:361.

⁴¹Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 404.

grand reunion with children who have strayed. At other times, a simple misunderstanding of the language and terms lead to misapplication. The brevity of the passage presents may lead to an over simplified understanding of Solomon’s wise teaching. Some theologians have declared, based on the meanings of Hebrew terms used, the proverb to be less about the rearing children in the home and more about the role of a young adult serving in the temple.⁴² Yet, even if this is a primary focus, the principles of training toward right living as stated in this passage, partnered with likely results of sustained or reclaimed faith does not destroy a modern application for families. The idea of offering a child right instruction with appropriate dignity as an image-bearer of God, along with respect and responsibility fits well within a familial setting.⁴³

Many Solomonic proverbs create difficulty for readers due to the compact presentations. The verses offer brief expressions about the human experience requiring intense, prolonged reflection.⁴⁴

Training and Discipline

The proverb initiates with emphasis on parental instruction and training. An inclusio structure evident in this chapter connects verse 6 with 15 as bracketed truths centering upon disciplining children.⁴⁵ “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him” (Prov 22:15). The construct of training apart from discipline does not exist as presented here or in other biblical passages.

The instruction to train as presented here originates in the Abrahamic covenant

⁴²Hildebrandt, Ted, “Proverbs 22:6a: Train Up a Child?,” *Grace Theological Journal* 9 (1988): 17.

⁴³Ibid., 18.

⁴⁴Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 238.

⁴⁵Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 187.

presented in Genesis. “For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him” (Gen 18:19) In this understanding, training involves dedicating and initiating one’s child in the way of the Lord. In Deuteronomy, the same term translated as “train” refers to the dedication of a building. “Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying, ‘Is there any man who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it’” (Deut 20:15). An account in 1 Kings utilizes the term relating to the dedication of the temple. “Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD” (1 Kgs 8:63). These Old Testament passages translate the same word to mean train or dedicate.⁴⁶ The intentionality of the term reveals the dedicative expectation for parents.

The passage contrasts the child with the adult indicated with the phrase “when he is old.” The age of the child is not given, but inferred to be young, as the stage of adolescence was not truly recognized in most ancient cultures. Children live in the home, under the guidance of parental instruction and discipline. Following a rite of passage, the child would then be considered an adult among the community.

Training a child includes use of understandable vocabulary, concepts, and illustrations.⁴⁷ Creating tailor-made strategies for each child is not advocated in this passage, though some would lean toward that. Rather, the parent’s instructive guidelines should be on elementary principles of right, wrong, morality, and truth.⁴⁸ Childhood

⁴⁶Derek Kidner, *Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 147.

⁴⁷Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 188.

⁴⁸Ibid.

would be the proper time for such instruction. To delay would be risky for the child's development.

However, some believe the training affirmed in the passage refers to that which leads to success in a future vocation.⁴⁹ Still others believe it to be solely emphasizing moral education.⁵⁰

A Proverb Is Not a Promise

The second portion of the verse that declares the child trained in God's wisdom will not stray shines as one of the most remembered statements of Scripture for parents. Yet, while this portion sounds like a promise, it is not. Proverbs do not offer promises but reveal to readers what consequences most likely will occur. In other words, in this case the writer reveals that children will more likely grow to become responsible, obedient, God-honoring adults when trained right or well as children.⁵¹

While the portion of the verse concerning the child not departing from truth leads to the misappropriation of promise language, parents must not abandon the hope presented. Character formation stands as a desired end and while not guaranteed, the truth of the proverb centers upon the quality of the family-centered discipleship and training.⁵² While the specific age referenced by the phrase "when he is old" cannot be known, the implication is full adulthood. This provides hope for parents that the child will persevere later in life.⁵³

⁴⁹Kidner, *Proverbs*, 147.

⁵⁰Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15-31*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 204.

⁵¹Longman, *Proverbs*, 405.

⁵²R. N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), 124.

⁵³Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 22

Ephesians 5:1-2

Faithful perseverance of coming generations did not remain simply an Old Testament teaching. The first century church illustrated the value of intergenerational ministry with family units as key. Throughout Paul's letter to the Ephesian church, imagery of the church as the body of Christ prevails. The Parousia features prominently in this letter as Paul continually associates the coming through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit resides within and animates the body of Christ for His good works.⁵⁴

As Paul clarifies within the letter, the body remains primarily illustrative of God's church. Yet, other images are used as well. Early chapters compare the church to a building, not in a modern-day cultural sense, but as a biological facility that grows. "In whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2:21). Even here, the building of the church takes shape in the Spirit so that both Jewish and Gentile converts have common access to the Father.⁵⁵

Paul's purpose in writing this letter confounds many theologians, as evidenced by the numerous theories. While some believe it to be a teaching of church liturgy, others suggest the focus centers upon baptismal instructions for newly converted Gentiles. Yet, the Gentile baptismal understanding alone leaves gaps of understanding. Therefore, Gentile believers and Jewish converts that make up the church at Ephesus receive instruction throughout the letter regarding life together. The common theme throughout the letter appears as unity and oneness within the church.⁵⁶

(Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 165.

⁵⁴F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 235.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids:

Due to God's gracious act of love and rescue through Jesus Christ, Paul then instructs the church to walk accordingly. "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1-2).

The concept of walking as children of God through imitating God provides imagery of a human father and child. Though not revealed verbatim in Old Testament writings, the idea of imitating God was presented by Hellenistic Jewish authors, such as Philo.⁵⁷

Paul often utilized the theme of imitation. In this passage, readers and members of the body are urged to intentionally imitate God by showing forgiveness to others just as he showed them. In doing so, the clear relationship between God as father and the Christian as child becomes evident.⁵⁸

The depiction of the Ephesians as God's dearly loved children reveals clarity regarding the demand for imitation.⁵⁹ The father-child illustration begins in the Old Testament, with God's creation of Adam and the declaration of Adam as God's son. "The son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (Luke 3:38).

Paul writes of the powerful connection between a parent and child and the value and role of imitation. In the first century, as the church grew throughout the regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, with both Gentile and Jewish church family members, the genealogical training from one generation to the next in the truths of God was often missing. This is evidenced in Paul's writing the Corinthian church as he

Baker Academic, 2002), 98.

⁵⁷Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 644.

⁵⁸Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 367.

⁵⁹Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 310.

declared himself as worthy of imitation due to lack of earthly models. “For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me” (1 Cor 4:15-16).

Similarly, the Ephesian Christians are instructed to be as children imitating their father. Yet, the earthly father is superseded here by the heavenly one. To live holy lives, modeling of the father must occur. Imitation and recognition of authority go hand in hand. Imitating God is the church’s imitation of their father. Imitation of Christ is the disciple’s imitation of their Lord. Imitation of Paul is the converts’ imitation of their apostle.⁶⁰

Harkening back to Moses’ demands to pass along God’s truths to coming generations lies the expectation that family and the parent-child relationship remain central in God’s design. As Paul declared the church to be as children imitating their father, the imagery of familial training and generational teaching become clear. Though Gentile believers have been grafted into the family through adoption in Christ, the Old Testament declaratives regarding family roles, generational training, and imitative behavior resound.

Paul launches from his discourse on imitation and walking in love into instructions for family relationships. Husbands and wives have specific roles within the relationship. The Ephesian church was not unlike others at the time, as well as throughout time. Gender confusion develops and while male and female roles have shifted based on cultural worldview changes, God provides clear guidelines and expectations. The role of the family in the health of the church and individual believers is accentuated throughout the chapter.

⁶⁰Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 368.

Ephesians 6:1-4

The role and value of family in the local church as expressed in chapter 5 required clear understanding of individual roles and expectations within the family unit. Following clear delineation on husband and wife roles within the family, Paul then speaks to God's expectations for children. This section of Scripture covers the household code, beginning in Ephesians 5:22 and ending in Ephesians 6:9.⁶¹ There is apparently nothing specific happening in Ephesus alone that led to this command for children and parents. Yet, the inclusion of these instructions appears as part of the three family-centered relationships within the household, apparent among the Aristotelian tradition and Hellenistic Judaism.⁶²

Children's Responsibility

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph 6:1). As with the pattern revealed in the previous chapter regarding wives and husbands, the submissive role appears first.⁶³ God expects submission by children to parental authority. Paul's use of the word "children" here implies intimacy and dependence upon the parent. Likely, Paul addresses this to children living within the home as dependents, but at an age of clear understanding.⁶⁴

Although Paul offered similar instruction to children in his letter to the Colossian church, differences exist. "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord" (Col 3:20). The phrase "in the Lord" from the Ephesian passage does not appear in Colossians. Nevertheless, the intent of godly obedience remains. To obey

⁶¹Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 419.

⁶²Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 397.

⁶³Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 785.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 787.

“in the Lord” seems to exempt children from obedience of ungodly, pagan parents if such obedience would conflict with their duty to God.⁶⁵

The injunction “in the Lord” refers to Jesus Christ in this passage, as it does throughout the letter.⁶⁶ The question then becomes focused on whether the command relates to obeying only Christian parents or for Christian children to show obedience. At first it seems the demand applies only to children whose parents are believers. However, the prepositional phrase “in the Lord” more likely refers to the child’s obedience to parents being an extension of the child’s obedience to the Lord.⁶⁷ Therefore, Paul’s command to these children infers their position as part of the Christian community and the church family.

Obedience follows loyalty. In the familial relationship between child and parent, loving obedience results from faithful submission. Therefore, obedience declared in this passage demonstrates children’s responsibility morally to carrying out God’s instructions.⁶⁸ Jewish children understood obedience to parents as part of God’s law. “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you” (Exod 20:12). Paul’s recitation of this Old Testament law to the church at Ephesus reveals that even Gentile believers were to hold to this as God’s continued intent for family life. Likely, Paul was writing this address to children living within the home as dependents, but at an age of clear understanding.⁶⁹

Why should children obey their parents? Paul simply states “for this is right.”

⁶⁵Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 397.

⁶⁶Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 786.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 787.

⁶⁹Ibid.

Ultimately, doing right honors God. God's sovereignty and holiness is revealed in what he defines as right. Paul explains more clearly in his letter to the Colossians when he declares that to obey pleases the Lord.

A Command with Promise

“Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise,) ‘that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land’” (Eph 6:2-3). Chiefly, this command confirms obedience is right as enjoined with the fifth commandment in the law of God.⁷⁰ Though the members of the Ephesian church come from varied backgrounds, the presence of Jewish believers leads to Paul’s referencing the promise of old. While the command to honor both father and mother appear in Exodus, the version of the command Paul references here comes from the Deuteronomy passage. “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you” (Deut 5:16).

The emphasis of the phrase “that it may go well with you” reveals a promise to faithful living under God’s law. There are two promises offered to the children of Israel in the Old Testament passage. The first references long life. The second speaks to the land of promise given by God to his people. Other than these references, the promise of well-being and longevity of life find no clear definitions in the Old Testament.⁷¹ The recitation of the passage by Paul causes some confusion. In most passages, Paul speaks not of earthly rewards such as long life, but of eternal rewards. Therefore, the emphasis of “that it may go well with you” has been interpreted to center upon the virtue a person

⁷⁰Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 398.

⁷¹Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 792.

gains through obedient living and “live long in the land” not as a reference to the land of Canaan as in the Old Testament, but to immortality. These are how Philo interpreted the passage.⁷² However, the danger in this interpretation leads to a works theology that provides eternal life to individuals based on their earthly obedience and behavior, rather than surrender to Christ.

The principle of long life offered here by Paul seems to present a principle, much as the Proverbs 22:6 passage does. Faithful obedience fosters self-discipline. This in turn most often results in stability and long life. Conversely, undisciplined living often leads to risky behavior and a probability of shortened life-span. While not true for all, the principle remains.

Another portion of the verse needing explanation focuses upon the statement “this is the first commandment with a promise.” How can this be the first commandment with a promise when the second commandment has promises as well?⁷³ The promise offered to those breaking the second commandment is severe punishment.

Therefore, numerous explanations have developed over the years to explain Paul’s assertion. Some have stated that this command stands first in importance. Yet, to hold to that interpretation is to disavow what Jesus declared to the lawyer seeking answers. “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment’” (Matt 22:37). Christ’s echo of the Shema cements this as the primary commandment for all.

Perhaps the best explanation of the command being the “first commandment with a promise” because it stands as the first in the listing with a specific promise attached. The second commandment’s promises stand as more general in nature.⁷⁴

⁷²Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 405.

⁷³Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 790.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Parental Responsibility

As with Paul's explanation of roles within the marriage, this part of the household code begins with the one offering submission and ends with the other party. Children obey. Parents then are to respond well.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). Paul's address of fathers in this passage reveals the strong Greco-Roman understanding of family responsibility that existed throughout the region during the first century. Traditional Roman notions of family life and education led to almost absolute legal power of the father, the *patria potestas*.⁷⁵ Therefore, the emphasis on father presented here not only affirms the spiritual headship within the home but speaks to a cultural worldview prominent in Ephesus. The Jewish believers within the church had history of seeing the father as primarily responsible for the religious upbringing of children within the home.⁷⁶

Parents, with fathers as the lead, must not provoke or wrongly assert their authority over their children in a manner designed to lead to resentment rather than obedience.⁷⁷ The abuse of parental authority runs the risk of driving children away from the Lord rather than training them obediently. Harsh, unfair treatment most often results in resentment and bitterness.⁷⁸

Bringing up one's child in the Lord requires intentional training. As the word infers, training of this sort does not automatically or accidentally occur. The only other

⁷⁵Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 398.

⁷⁶Ibid., 400.

⁷⁷Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 398.

⁷⁸Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 401.

occurrence of such training in Paul's letters focuses on the inspired Scripture's value.⁷⁹ "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16). Parents, and specifically fathers, are expected to be primary teachers of God's truths.

Paul's warnings to avoid provoking resonate with fathers who have experienced severe training in their own lives. The warnings are clear, and the wise parent takes this verse to heart. Fathers must weigh the value of their words and actions when responding and teaching their children. Responsive teaching rather than reactionary responses allows for healthy training. Reactionary flare-ups, overly harsh words, sarcastic statements, insults, demeaning comments, inappropriate teasing, and unreasonable demands would fall under the subject of provocative parenting.⁸⁰

The parental responsibilities echoed by Paul emphasize the commands of God in the Decalogue, the affirmation of generational training in the psalms, and the principles of proverbial truth. Obedience is expected from children. Parents, therefore, must parent as obedient children of God, with biblical patterns and priorities.⁸¹

Conclusion

God intends the family to be the center for discipleship and spiritual training of children. From the days of Moses and throughout the Old Testament, this understanding has been clear. While churches seek to discover programming options and curriculum items that will lead to stronger discipleship within the body of believers, the Scriptures clearly affirm there remains nothing new under the sun. Moving forward in family-

⁷⁹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 399.

⁸⁰Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 415.

⁸¹Bryan Chapell, *Ephesians*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009), 317.

equipping discipleship reveals that historic, biblical training centered on the character of God through the family unit as key.

Moses declared the older generation responsible for training the younger. Asaph echoed this as the people of God were to sing of these truths. Solomon affirmed the principle of godly training and spiritual instruction for children as best. In the New Testament, Christ affirmed and fulfilled the law and Paul gave detailed answers regarding familial roles.

The relational aspects of disciple-making clearly appear within the family unit. In a culture where expertise for life skills market well, Christian parents run the risk of outsourcing that for which they are best suited. Wise church leaders reveal this role for parents and equip them well as lead disciple-makers. Unfortunately, many have settled for allowing others to stand in their place. Where gaps exist, such as with orphans or children of non-believing parents, the church must stand ready. The church must continually remind parents, as Moses declared to the children of Israel, to live holy and teach God's truths diligently to the next generation. This begins in the home.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL FAMILY MINISTRY MODELS AND IMPACT ON CURRENT METHODOLOGICAL IMPLEMENTATION

A search for the term “family ministry” in the Bible comes up lacking. While current popular family ministry terminology may not be found in Scripture, a clear affirmation of such ministry remains. Old Testament passages such as Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78 command parents and elders to be primary instructors regarding vital spiritual truths of God. In the New Testament, Christ chastises his followers who sought to keep children from him and his teaching by commanding them to “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14). Paul’s writings to the Ephesian church reveal guidelines for discipleship within the home as well as the responsibilities of children. Paul reiterates to children their command to “obey your parents in the Lord” (Eph 5:1) then follows up with instructions to parents to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 5:4b). These instances, plus many others, reveal not only the place of children within the faith community, but the disciple-making roles of parents and the church.

Throughout history, as local churches sought God-centeredness and biblical soundness, various models of engaging children and adolescents through discipleship processes evolved. As with all models, effective and ineffective aspects soon developed and were revealed. Leaders in local churches and parents now reap the benefits of centuries of church history. Leaders and parents are privileged to learn from Christian leaders and models of the past. While biblical truth remains steady and unchanging, models for familial engagement morph to best impact those within the local churches and communities. These shifts do not represent changes to biblical instruction or kowtowing

to unbiblical worldviews. Rather, as in the past, the church must seek to provide biblically solid training and leadership for families facing ever-increasing pressure from culture influenced not by truth, but by a self-worshipping moral revolution.

Early Church Fathers

For centuries, church leaders have advocated intentional discipleship strategies within the local church and home. Biblical qualifications for those seeking to serve within the church clearly address the home life and Christian character outside the local church gatherings as well as the effective service within the body.

Christian leaders such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp pointedly emphasized the patriarchal responsibilities within the home. Clement instructed wives to love and serve their husbands, while commanding husbands to live holy lives in obedience to the Lord. Clement echoed Paul's instructions to the Ephesian church and ultimately to all believers in his writings on such. Clement's letter to the Corinthians addressed the father's role as primary teacher of the children in the home.¹

Ignatius echoed such patriarchal responsibility in his writings to the church as well. His instructions clearly placed primacy on the father regarding discipleship of sons and daughters with proper education being an indicator of righteousness. Ignatius stated that a righteous father educates his children well.²

The martyr Polycarp served as a church leader in Asia Minor and also affirmed the duty of fathers as disciple-makers of their children. He declared that husbands should walk in faith, thereby teaching their wives to do so as well.³ As loving husbands and

¹Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 5.

²Ibid., 81.

³Ibid., 34.

wives, not only do parents model Christ's relationship to his church but are equipped to train their children well in the knowledge and fear of God.

Reformed and Puritan Focus

The call for parents to train their children well was not lost on the reformed and puritan leaders of the church. The development or lack thereof, of Christian education at the time of the Reformation led parents to focus less on spiritual training and more on technical and job skills. The Roman Catholic Church supervised the training of young people in sequestered areas such as monasteries and convents, thereby removing primary spiritual training from the home. Over time, spiritual education was ultimately reserved for the wealthy and the aristocracy.⁴ The Roman Catholic Church's efforts in education were marred by corruption of clergy. Therefore, parents of the non-wealthy caste pushed their children toward trade rather than education and ultimately provided little for the next generation regarding spiritual growth and discipleship.

Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin viewed Christian education as a biblical command reserved not simply for the church but centered within the household with godly parents taking the lead as instructors. The understanding was that God's assertion throughout both Old and New Testaments placed this responsibility primarily upon the father, as evidenced in the Shema (Deut 6:4-9). Luther believed and taught that parenting was holy as a vocation and highly regarded by God. Luther asserted that while the marriage between man and woman would provide protection against sexual sin, the primary responsibility of the household was to operate as a training ground where children would grow in knowledge and understanding of God.⁵

⁴Reimer Faber, "Martin Luther on Reformed Education," *Clarion: The Canadian Reformed Magazine*, August 7, 1998, 376.

⁵Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, eds., *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective* (Grand Rapids:

John Calvin, unlike Luther, did not raise children from infancy into adulthood. His one son died shortly after birth. Calvin, however, did provide spiritual guidance to the two sons of his wife, Idelette de Bure, from a previous marriage. Calvin's understanding of childhood and children revealed in his writings viewed them as objects of God's wrath while simultaneously heirs of his covenant.⁶ Calvin's understanding that while parents held primary responsibility in the role of disciple-making of their children, the entire community of faith within the local church also held this responsibility.⁷

Like Luther, Calvin emphasized the importance of the father and his role as spiritual leader within the home. Calvin asserted that the coming generations must also have clear access to the truths of God as revealed in Scripture. Calvin addressed the men of the church with this teaching, challenging them to transmit such truths to their children, removing excuses of ignorance among fathers for such.⁸ Among the Reformers, the home grew as a central place of emphasis for spiritual training. This led to an evident shift from the sequestering of children under the tutelage of priests, monks, and nuns to the primacy of parents. Thus, the development and growth of catechesis within the home resulted.

Puritan leaders in England, while seeking to purify and reform the church and state in England, affirmed the paternal responsibilities within the home. Some Puritans, out of frustration and persecution left England to set up anew in the American colonies. Despite separation by the Atlantic Ocean, Puritans in New England remained connected

Kregel Publications, 2011), 117.

⁶Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 118.

⁷Ibid., 119.

⁸Jean Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. by James Anderson (Middletown, DE: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 2:361.

through what they defined as great sympathy and persistent family ties.⁹ Groups on both continents held strongly to their convictions for purification, viewing the home a “household of faith.”¹⁰

The concept of church and state separation was foreign to Puritan leaders. The home served as a substitutionary parish of sorts.¹¹ Puritan fathers, hearkening back to Abraham, viewed their entire household, including servants, to be part of the church. Thus, the responsibility for leading well landed firmly on their shoulders. Puritan leader Richard Baxter declared that fathers have divine responsibility bestowed upon them that not only is honorable but perfecting through Christ. Parents, fathers especially, were challenged by Baxter to lead and teach well in that they could do more for subsequent generations than any minister could.¹²

Jonathan Edwards, the famed colonial theologian in New England, pushed against a modernist sentimental view of family and, along with Baxter and other Puritan leaders, emphasized patriarchal governance.¹³ Edwards grew up in a household, not unlike other Puritan leaders, where his own father would teach the three principal steps toward true conversion: conviction, humiliation, and regeneration. His father Timothy, modeled the patriarchal role of spiritual teacher, always teaching his children and holding

⁹Abram C. Van Engen, *Sympathetic Puritans: Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 120.

¹⁰C. Jeffrey Robinson, Sr., “The Home is an Earthly Kingdom. Family Discipleship Among Reformers and Puritans,” *The Journal of Discipleship & Family Ministry* 3, no. 1 (2012): 21.

¹¹Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England: 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 123.

¹²Richard Baxter, *The Godly Home* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 124.

¹³George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 187.

them accountable.¹⁴ Consequently, prior to preaching his sermons to his congregation, Edwards first urged these biblical truths upon the fathers of the families.¹⁵ For the Puritans, God’s first and appointed means of faith enactment and development should occur first in the homes. This guidance was expected to be under the guidance of fathers.¹⁶

Modern Era Shifts

Patriarchal guidance of children in the changing culture proved to be a challenge for many families. Upon the entrance into what has been termed the “modern era” by historians, complete with the advent of the nineteenth century’s Industrial Revolution and the urbanization in the west, churches were faced with challenges of ministering to and with families that were being dramatically shifted from prior generational models. The birth of the youth movement, complete with young peoples’ organizations and parachurch groups moved family ministry from a home-based focus to a specialized ministry.

Charles Spurgeon, acclaimed nineteenth century English pastor held high the value of family worship and devotion. As modernity was overtaking the culture, Spurgeon lamented the decline of family worship. Standing as one who honored God through his preaching and writing, his words challenged the church to esteem family piety and to not forsake the coming together in the home daily for prayer, study of the Word, and worship.¹⁷ As movements seeking revival were becoming more the norm in

¹⁴Ibid., 26.

¹⁵Timothy Paul Jones et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 69.

¹⁶Baxter, *The Godly Home*, 231.

¹⁷Tom Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2013), loc. 7757, Kindle.

England and other areas of the west, Spurgeon shared his thoughts on the type of revival truly needed by the church. His strong words declared that during the time of the Puritans, the family was esteemed greatly. Yet, he now saw families of “so-called Christians,” as he labeled them, having no semblance of family worship and providing little to no restraint on the worldly temptations placed upon children. While the evidence of empty spirituality in the homes was viewed in the actions of children, Spurgeon’s call was to the parents for revival. His admonition led to a challenge for Christian parents to seek revival in domestic religion, teaching, leading, and disciplining their children in the truth of God’s Word.¹⁸

As industrialism grew, Spurgeon did not stand alone waving the warning flags regarding family ministry. While descriptive terms may have varied, numerous Christian leaders challenged parents and churches to be proactive and responsive to the changing demographic. In most cases, the workload pressed upon the patriarchs in the home moved the father out of the home. No longer were fathers primarily working the farm and including the children but leaving each morning to the factory only to arrive home tired and disconnected. Families, by and large, lost their fathers.¹⁹

The Sunday school movement began during this era as Robert Raikes, an English philanthropist concerned about the growing rates of young incarcerated people, sought to stand in the gap, believing education would serve as an antidote to social ills. Focusing first on lower-class children, Raikes Sunday schools grew rapidly in England and eventually expanded across the Atlantic in the United States. Yet, Raikes initial schools on the Lord’s Day focused as much on what could be termed secular education,

¹⁸Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Kind of Revival We Need,” *The Spurgeon Archive*, accessed August 3, 2017, <http://archive.spurgeon.org/revival.php>.

¹⁹Henry Frederick Cope, *Religious Education in the Family* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915), 20.

with less focus upon biblical training. Upon the advent of public schools in the United States, American churches embraced the concept of Sunday schools. Those opposed to school on Lord's Day celebrated the reclamation of Sunday for worship and religious training as Sundays morphed into a day where spiritual and biblical truths could be taught to children in a school-like setting within the church facility.²⁰

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the growth of young peoples' organizations, both inside the church and outside, as parachurch organizations grew. This era saw a change in focus from children in the family being progeny added to the home workforce to a significant demographic that would impact all of western culture. Organizations such as the YMCA declared their existence as improving the spiritual condition of young men of the day.²¹

A strengthening of denominational identity among church attenders in America developed greatly at the beginning of the twentieth century. With this, not only were parachurch young peoples' groups growing, but denominational ones were as well, holding strong allegiances.²² However, one of the biggest criticisms of these organizations at the time centered on the homogeneity of race, as most all were solidly white, with little or no diversity present.²³ Nevertheless, with this growth of denominational young peoples' groups, most responded by segmenting their ministries by age. Teenagers would gather together for study and even worship. Children would have Sunday schools focused on their learning style and comprehensive ability. Worship

²⁰Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, *The Development of the Sunday School* (Boston: Fort Hill Press, 1905), 8-9.

²¹Frank Otis Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917), 29.

²²Mark H. Senter III and Chap Clark, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 181.

²³*Ibid.*, 306.

would allow all to gather together, but not all did. At this juncture, the specialization of age-focused ministries grew, leading to a virtual, if not actual, removal of the home as the center for spiritual familial training.

Modern Era Comprehensive and Programmatic Models

Specialized age-focused ministry led to further responses by families and churches. The early twentieth century saw the advent of comprehensive and programmatic models as denominations sought to solidify their respective doctrinal teachings and keep young people within their churches. The customs of home-centered worship and family devotions seemed to be fading.²⁴ Church leaders lamented the seeming abdication of leadership by fathers of their children to the school, the state, and the church.²⁵ Though the emphasis on regular religious practices within the home remained strong, the practicality of providing church-based training ultimately became the predominant model.

Following numerous attempts at resurrecting the home-based strategies held prior to the modern era, church leaders found themselves with varied successes and numerous family-centered models. Samuel W. Dike, a Vermont pastor, developed what he termed “the Home Department.” His plan moved church leaders into the homes complete with resources and recommendations designed to equip parents.²⁶ His comprehensive model proved difficult to maintain and created confusion of purpose.²⁷

²⁴Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 168.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Edmund Morris Ferguson, *Church-School Administration* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), 124-25.

²⁷Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 169.

The segmented-programmatic method of ministry developed as a church-based model centered on the efficiency celebrated in the business world. This model grew immensely and remained strong through the later decades of the twentieth century. By separating every age group within the church, at the church facility, for the purpose of education and training, parents increasingly perceived church leaders as the professionals tasked with teaching their children.²⁸ Support for a model centered on separation of family members centered upon ease of management. Yet, the false assumption, whether intended or not, was that parents were not intended to be the primary persons responsible for their children's Christian formation.²⁹

Contemporary Models

Despite the growth of family models through the twentieth century, with segmented-programmatic model serving as the predominant paradigm for many churches by the 1970s and 1980s, many church leaders desired a better strategy within their respective churches.³⁰ The necessity for family ministry finds foundation not in cultural trends, but in biblical truth. Strong, theologically sound family ministries are necessary and significant due to the familial nature of the church.³¹ Consequently, three contemporary models of family ministry have emerged since the late twentieth century. Each offers strong points, but also gaps in function that could be construed as weaknesses.

Family-Based Model

Family-based ministry emphasizes the value and role of the church as partners

²⁸Ibid., 171.

²⁹Jones et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 13.

³⁰Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 173.

³¹Jones et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 2.

with parents for next generation disciple-making. Church leaders attempting to better organize their churches for family ministry often discover the easiest shift of focus to family-based ministry. In such ministries, the age-graded and segmented structures birthed in the early twentieth century are not forsaken. No emphasis or need for total reorganization or abandonment of age-graded ministries exists for those holding to this model.³² Rather than a new format of programming, the family-based model centers on a new mindset. Intentional engagement of parents comes to the forefront as church leaders seek to provide strategic understanding and tools for parents seeking to impact their children spiritually.³³

Mark DeVries, in his book *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, pioneered the model.³⁴ DeVries' asserts the church's priority of family while allowing and even championing the division of age groups within the church. Timothy Paul Jones utilizes the illustration of a sunflower to best describe this model. Each petal of the flower represents the separate or segmented ministries within the church, but all are connected to the central region. This example shows that while each petal, or ministry, remains separate, all are connected to the mission of the local church.³⁵

DeVries's exposition of this model revolutionized the thinking of many student pastors and church leaders at the time. Questions focused on the role of parents as solutions rather than problems pushed leaders to a realization that early church fathers and historical Christian leaders took for granted. This emphasis on the role of parents led to strategies of ministry that while remaining segmented, broadened the vision of the

³²Ibid., 99.

³³Jim Burns and Mark DeVries, *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003), 16.

³⁴Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 174.

³⁵Ibid.

local church and leaders. DeVries proclaimed that successful youth ministries were not about isolating large groups in separate buildings, but by incorporating students and adults together in the community of faith.³⁶

Few church leaders would argue against the focus on family ministry. The church and the home, both created by God for his glory, must work in tandem for the purpose of making disciples. The synergy of working together under God's lead and power allows for much greater impact upon a generation.³⁷ Perhaps the most glaring concern with the family-based model is the question of reach. Does this model go far enough to bridge the gulf between church and family?³⁸

Family-Integrated Model

Another model reflecting current trends eliminates segmented and age-grade programming altogether. Considered to be the most radical response to segmentation within the church, the family-integrated model places generations together for virtually all gatherings and ministry opportunities. In such churches, there are no youth groups, no children's groups, no Sunday school divided by age, and in most cases, no preschool ministry.³⁹

For many church leaders, the concept of a family-integrated model brings more questions. Decades of programmatic ministry have left many with an inability to imagine a concept of church without such divisions. Yet, the family-integrated evangelists push

³⁶Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 103.

³⁷Reggie Joiner and Cary Nieuwhof, *Parenting Beyond Your Capacity: Connect Your Family to a Wider Community* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 33.

³⁸Jones et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 129.

³⁹Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 174.

strongly for this model, teaching that the church is rightly defined as a “family of families” leading to family-centered functions as central to evangelism and discipleship.⁴⁰

Practically speaking, a family-integrated model cleans up the often over filled church calendar. A simplified church leadership list and structural organization chart results as well.⁴¹ The value of a simplified model may overshadow the ministry gaps and blind spots within the church. For example, while proclaiming the elimination of preschool ministry so that families may worship together, some family-integrated churches may discover a gathering of fathers or mothers standing in the back of the room during corporate worship attempting to calm their babies. At some level, the church without a preschool actually does have one. It just happens to be standing in the back of the room.

The illustration may be an overstretch and generalization, but the question remains, “Are the benefits of family-integration developing parents as lead disciple-makers within the home?” In most cases, the impact may be fruitful, but care must be taken, as with any model, to not eliminate those who may be viable for church membership, but not fit in the traditional nuclear family template (i.e., lone teenage attenders, single parents, grandparents, childless couples, etc.)

Family-integrated church leaders assert that the unity found in Christ allows for quality ministry across gender and generational lines.⁴² Churches launched with such a model would have much greater success of implementation and application than those seeking to shift from a traditionally held long-term segmented-programmatic model. For those pastors and church leaders seeking transition toward a family-integrated model, the

⁴⁰Voddie Baucham, Jr., *Family Driven Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 191-195.

⁴¹Jones et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 56.

⁴²Jones et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 92.

fact remains that much education and explanation must precede any programmatic change. Otherwise, those church leaders may be given an unplanned opportunity to plant a new local church as family-integrated.

Family-Equipping Model

Jay Strother, minister to emerging generations at Brentwood Baptist Church in Tennessee, declares the family-equipping model as the younger brother to the family-based model.⁴³ As opposed to the family-integrated model, this one allows age-graded ministries to remain intact, for the most part. However, as with any ministry model, a thorough evaluation of effectiveness and overall support of the church's mission must be made to determine whether any specific ministry should actually exist. At times, good ministries may have served their purpose and time for a program funeral exists. What makes the family-equipping model unique from the family-based one is that every age-graded ministry not only is evaluated but redeveloped in structure to call parents as primary disciple-makers of their children.⁴⁴

Family-based models simply add intergenerational events as opportunities to allow parents and children to serve side-by-side for a season. The family-equipping model actually shifts full focus onto parents as the church equips and comes alongside parents as they disciple their children. Every level of ministry is reworked as the church serves as the equipper of parents for their godly responsibility of discipleship.⁴⁵

The family-equipping church does more than just invite parents to specific ministry events. Every aspect of ministry with children or teenagers focuses upon

⁴³Jones et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 127.

⁴⁴Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 175.

⁴⁵Steve Wright and Chris Graves, *reThink: Is Student Ministry Working?* (Wake Forest, NC: InQuest Publishing, 2007), 28.

training, involving or equipping parents as their respective children's primary disciple-makers.⁴⁶ Opportunities for service traditionally held for the professional church leaders or ministry directors now strategically involved parents.

The family-equipping model seems to be the most practical choice for a church seeking to better engage with families and to help parents regain what Scripture commands. While each contemporary model presents clear advantages, they are not without challenges. For a traditionally segmented-programmatic church seeking to shift toward more intentional family-focused ministry, without just adding intergenerational events, this model, with proper training and education of the congregation by church leaders would be most apt for implementation and effective impact.

Parenting Roles and Gender

The church has historically sought to equip and enable parents to be lead disciple-makers of their children. As seen in Paul's writings to the first century church or through historical readings of and about church leaders throughout the centuries, intergenerational discipleship has been held high. For the church, God's call to family discipleship remains. Nevertheless, moral and cultural revolutions have created challenges unknown by many Christian leaders of the past. The moral revolution of the twenty-first century has sought to redefine sexual norms, gender identity, and parental expectations. Therefore, strong emphases on biblical definitions of manhood, womanhood, gender, and family relationships must take place within the local church and family units. The call to family discipleship cannot be separated from the teachings of biblical manhood and womanhood. Biblical parenting requires a biblical understanding of manhood and womanhood.

⁴⁶Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 166.

Biblical Manhood

Authentic manhood has been under attack since the beginning of the human story. This began as Adam stood passively next to Eve during the temptation in Eden. His passivity resulted in his complicity through his abdication as role as protector and husband. “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate” (Gen 3:6). While many men have jokingly, or perhaps not jokingly, blamed Eve for the fall into sin, the Scripture clearly reveals Adam’s role.

Ever since that moment manhood has been seemingly relegated culturally to either a subservient weak role as a form of penance or an over-the-top masculinity resulting in little more than caricatures of gruffness and violence, tinged with a carefree and careless persona. Fathers who never gain understanding of God’s design tend to mistakenly adopt their own father’s or family’s cultural presumptions regarding manhood that either leans toward the overly punitive or lethargic.⁴⁷

The modern tendency to stress equality of men and women has minimized the God-designed uniqueness of gender ascribed to his image-bearers. The loss results in generations of young men and women who do not know what it means to truly be a man or woman.⁴⁸ There appears to be gaps in understanding how to differentiate the uniqueness of male and female, as God designed, and the role of man and women within the world. Resulting from the push of the moral revolution, sexuality and gender have been relegated to little more than personal choice based on feelings, rather than celebrated

⁴⁷Eric Davis, *Raising Men: Lessons Navy SEALs Learned from Their Training and Taught to Their Sons* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2016), 5.

⁴⁸John Piper and Wayne A. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 33.

as God's purposeful design for individuals.

Humanity alone was created as image-bearers of God. Both man and woman hold this title. Despite what Walt Disney's inch-high philosopher Jiminy Cricket once said, man is more than just a "human animal."⁴⁹ As God's image-bearers, Adam and Eve mirrored God's character to each other. Adam, created genetically male and masculine of heart, reflected God's image to all creation. Even, as well, created genetically female and feminine of heart did the same.

Throughout history, humanity alone has borne the image of God among his creation. God created man and woman equal in essence and worth in his eyes.⁵⁰ Yet, equality of essence and worth is not synonymous with equality in role. Children must see these roles differentiated by mature models.

To be an authentic, biblical man, one must embrace the masculine heart created and given by God. To honor God a man must understand and submit to God's desires for maturity and masculinity. Paul references this in his first letter to the church at Corinth. "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways" (1 Cor 13:11). The mature man intentionally steps away from childish behavior. As generations have come and gone, along with cultural shifts, the growth of adolescence as blurred the lines between childhood and adulthood. Consequently, many adult men live as boys. Their attitudes, actions, passivity, and even false machismo have become covers for empty, false manhood. This confusion regarding manly action, while seemingly exacerbated in modern culture, has always existed. John Calvin stated, "Nothing is more shameful than

⁴⁹*Sing Along Songs—The Bare Necessities* (Walt Disney Pictures, 1994), DVD (Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2006).

⁵⁰Aubrey Malphurs, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1996), 30.

for an old man to indulge in youthful wantonness, and, by his countenance, to strengthen the impudence of the youth.”⁵¹

God’s design for authentic manhood was lost at the fall along with the rest of his original design for creation.⁵² Through God’s grace, the opportunity to reclaim that which was lost exists. Robert Lewis uses a definition for authentic biblical manhood at his church that calls men back to their original design. Lewis explains that God leads men to reject passivity, expect a greater reward, accept responsibility, and lead courageously.⁵³ This simplified definition, easily remembered with the acrostic “REAL” provides simple aspects of what it means to live authentically as mature, biblically-grounded, men.

The bestowing of authentic manhood results in changed lives for the good. Men who live authentically and lead their homes well offer a ripple effect that impacts future generations. Confusion regarding gender roles and identity may be cleared when fathers walking as godly men shepherd their wives and children to love God and obey his Word. A strong family, led well, has potential for impacting the church and society for the glory of God.⁵⁴

Biblical Womanhood

The struggle to live authentically as God created woman goes back to Eden. While Adam chose Eve over God by standing passively next to her while the serpent

⁵¹Voddie Baucham, *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2011), 29.

⁵²Eric Mason, *Manhood Restored: How the Gospel Makes Men Whole* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013), 13.

⁵³Robert Lewis, *Men’s Fraternity: The Quest for Authentic Manhood* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2005), 8.

⁵⁴John Crotts, *Mighty Men: The Starters Guide to Leading Your Family* (Sand Springs, OK: Grace and Truth Books, 2004), 2.

tempted, Eve effectively chose knowledge over God based on the lies offered her by the serpent. The consequences of the first couple's sin led to banishment from the garden and ultimate difficulty as sin infected all of creation. Eve's consequences resulted in pain during childbirth and a struggle regarding role. "To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you'" (Gen 3:16). Biblical leadership now has a distorted view due to sin.

Submission to men in complementary roles receives much opposition among contemporary women. This occurs even within the church. Yet, in the same way authentic manhood was distorted due to sin, so too has been authentic womanhood. God's design for Adam to be the primary leader in the marital relationship of the first couple continues throughout the biblical narrative to today. Paul's use of the term "head" when referring to the man's role in the marriage and within the church was not to be exasperating but liberating for both men and women.⁵⁵

Authentic womanhood and mature femininity honors God and frees women to live fully in the truth of the gospel. The nurturing role of mothers cannot be replaced by men. The bestowed femininity placed upon women remains holy and unique. Submission to one's husband follows biblical instruction as Paul stated, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph 5:22). Christ remains both men and women's supreme authority. Even in a marriage relationship where a husband lives sinfully, a wife can stand with Christ against sinful pressure from her husband and still have a spirit of biblical submission.⁵⁶ Authentic womanhood stands equal with man as God's image-bearer, but submissive in role as God defined.

⁵⁵Malphurs, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 42.

⁵⁶Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 47.

Conclusion

The primacy of parents, especially fathers in the home, as lead disciple-makers of the next generation clearly leads to convictional realities for many current churches. Well intended church leaders of the past sought to reclaim lost generations of the Industrial Revolution. The young peoples' movement within and outside denominational structure effectively reclaimed many young people in the early twentieth century that otherwise had abandoned church. The sad result was the shift away from the church leading parents well to be disciple-makers in the home. This essentially created a “professional disciple-making” strategy propagated by the local church.

Recently, church leaders have sought to reclaim that which was lost and with the implementation of family-based, family-integrated, and family-equipping models in the local church, parents have been thrust back in to the disciple-making role for the next generation. For legacy churches with long histories, as well as new church models in a culture that celebrates specialization, the family-equipping model seems to be the best option for churches. This model, as well as others, leaves the church to address strategically the gaps in families that must be filled.

For those within the church who do not have Christian parents or homes where Christ is honored, the church family must step in. A confused understanding within the church of mature manhood and womanhood will potentially undermine any effort to implement biblical family ministry. Even in situations where single parents are the only parent or where grandparents stand in that role, the defined lines of biblical manhood and womanhood must be declared. The focus of family ministry must never be the individual families within the church, but God alone. A biblical, gospel-centric model for family ministry seeks to impact families and send them on mission for the sake of the gospel. Ultimately, the goal remains God being glorified.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 178.

CHAPTER 4

MINISTRY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The Family-equipping Discipleship (FED) project was conducted at First Baptist Church of Orange Park, Florida in spring 2018. This chapter describes the implementation of the ministry project, the target audience, surveys, and weekly processes of educating, training and resourcing families in the local church.

Target Audience

The target audience for the project was parents of preschoolers, children, and teenagers of the First Baptist Church of Orange Park. The congregation of FBCOP is diverse. With multiple worship services, numerous campuses, and various options for small group studies, numerous avenues for parental involvement in the study exist. While primarily focusing on the parents of preschoolers, children, and teenagers, in some cases, grandparents raising their grandchildren, foster parents, and guardians became members of the target audience. The six-week sermon series was preached during the primary worship services at the FBCOP main campus by me, the Lead Pastor, and at newly launched campuses of the church by associate pastors and campus ministers.

More than 600 individuals, representing various ages and family demographics, heard the sermons preached on at least one of the given Sundays. Following the six-week sermon series, over forty parents attended each of the four weekly sessions taught by me at the FBCOP main campus on Sunday mornings. More than sixty attended at least one session of the four-week study. Parents were asked to complete an online Family Discipleship Survey (FDS) prior to and following the presentation of sermons and the teaching series. The FDS design purposed to identify current discipleship practices and perceptions among parents who are members of

FBCOP. The FDS was provided to church members with children and teenagers residing at home. The project's scope covers data received and insight gained from those who attended the six-week sermon presentations, the four-week teaching series, and completed the FDS regarding discipleship and family dynamics.

Family Discipleship Survey

Data compiled from the FDS prior to the presentation of the six-week sermon series and four-week teaching series provided needed insight regarding perceptions of discipleship and family demographics.¹ The online survey was distributed in January 2018 via weekly emails from the church and online links were made available on the church's website and official church social media sites. Surveys were distributed in printed form on Sunday mornings in January 2018 to parents choosing not to complete the online version. The information from the completed printed forms was transferred to the online survey collection site for ease of data compilation. The FDS utilized questions developed by Timothy Paul Jones and made available in his book *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*.² Parents completing the survey were asked to select a four-digit code of their choosing rather than submitting by name. This allowed for anonymity.

The FDS was categorized into three parts based on information requested and question type. Part 1 contained seven questions that provided demographic details including age, gender, marital status, and church membership status. The first two fill-in-the-blank questions requested the four-digit code and current age of respondent. Remaining questions sought either "yes" or "no" answers or checked answers providing

¹See appendix 1 for the Family Discipleship Survey (FDS).

²Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 216-18.

gender and age of children in the home. Part one confirmed church membership and provided information for categorizing participants demographically.

Part 2 of the FDS contained nine questions categorized under the sub-heading “Parental Perceptions.” Questions in this section focused on areas such as parental desires and priorities regarding spiritual activities and disciplines within the home and church. These questions centered on areas of perceived importance. For example, parents were asked their opinions related to family devotionals and the role of the church regarding biblical training. Respondents answered questions revealing their confidence in leading their children through biblical studies, theological questions, and discipleship processes. A six-point Likert scale was used to receive responses for each of the questions in this section.

The third and final part of the FDS, questions 17 through 24, examined parental practices and frequency of faith-based activities for and with their respective children. Such areas as family fellowship, meal time, Scripture reading, prayer, and evangelistic conversations with others were addressed. Parents were asked to estimate the amount of time spent participating with their children in these various areas over weekly or monthly timeframes. Available answers were selectable from a scale ranging from “never” to “seven or more times.” These questions were helpful in providing insight into how families utilized time on weekly and monthly bases. Additionally, parents were asked if church leaders had contacted them over the past year to offer help or analysis in engaging with their children regarding disciple-making. This section revealed that while parents’ intent to engage their children in these areas may be high, actual practice varies.

Project Implementation

The leadership team of FBCOP, comprised of pastoral staff members and age group directorial staff began using terminology indicating a shift in models in 2016. The term “Family-equipping Discipleship” became part of the church lexicon at this time. Full project implementation began in January 2018.

Pre-Project Groundwork

Rather than simply initiate a shift to a new family ministry model, the pastoral staff and leadership team began using the term “family-equipping discipleship” in public forums at the church and with church members attending events two years prior to project implementation. The intent was to introduce family-equipping discipleship to the lexicon held by church members. While the term “family-equipping” remained incomplete for many, the concept that parents should serve as lead disciple-makers in their homes resonated. Detailed information on rites of passage experiences (ROPE) for children in the church were provided online and at various meetings of church members.³ By speaking of family-equipping, church leaders were able to discern church members’ readiness to implement a new approach to family ministry.

FBCOP has historically held family ministry in high regard. Nevertheless, the expressed ministry opportunities throughout the years were made available as elements of a family-based model that effectively separated family members from one another. Over time, family ministry as expressed at FBCOP was as a discipling model relying on age-graded ministries leaving parents in their own age-groups as virtual bystanders to the promoted disciple-making strategies for their children.

Due to the many years of programming within a family-based model structure, church leadership believed an incremental introduction with strategic talking points focused on elements of family-equipping would allow for a smoother transition and acceptance of the family-equipping discipleship model.

Initially the leadership team (church staff and age-graded ministry leaders) considered the project as a six-week sermon series on family discipleship with coinciding small group studies allowing Sunday school classes to further discuss material presented. After analyzing demographics representing the church’s small groups and lack of ability

³ The Rites of Passage Experiences (ROPE) of First Baptist Church are provided in detail in appendix 6.

to properly gather all leaders for training in a concept they were not yet fully versed, it was determined to begin with the sermon series at all campuses and follow with a four-week teaching series training time for all parents and those with children in their homes.

Discussion among the leadership team members centered on the definition of family-equipping and the need to move toward the model. With all in agreement, talk then focused on the introduction and full implementation of this model.

The first step would be the development of a sermon framework and schedule to be presented to the church. It was determined that the sermon series would begin in February 2018 and last through mid-March. The sermon series titled “Equipping for Life” was introduced to the leadership team at this time. Each campus pastor would preach through the same Scripture passages with the theme of family-equipping uniting all campuses. The sermons presented at the primary campus (FBCOP) would be the ones reaching the majority of church members, as well as be recorded for podcasts and online distribution.

Preparation: Week 1

The first sermon, titled “Parents as Lead Disciple-Makers,” was prepared this week. This sermon utilized Matthew 28:18-20 as the key passage. The emphasis centered on the definition of discipleship and Christ’s commission to make disciples with a connection to the parental role. As sermons were completed, pastoral and leadership team staff members were given copies of the transcripts prior to the preaching of the sermons. Feedback from others on pastoral staff were welcomed and discussed during weekly staff meetings. The sermon addressed the concept of parents as disciple-makers and the pastors and leadership team insights during the preparation stage proved helpful in keeping the focus clear and messages on track.

Preparation: Week 2

The second sermon in the upcoming series, with key passage being

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 was written this week. This sermon, titled “The Shema,” would provide historical context for this greatest of all commands given by God to his people. Through this sermon, references to Christ’s affirmation of the command and instructions to obey would be expounded upon. While an instructional passage on the love one must have for God, the emphasis on this day would center on the commands from God to his people regarding the passing on and teaching of truth to coming generations.

Preparation: Week 3

The third sermon was prepared this week with key verses from Psalm 78:1-8. This sermon, titled “Hope for Future Generations,” utilized the foundational passages from the previous two sermons to emphasize the importance of passing on biblical truth to coming generations. The children of Israel would sing this psalm. The strange thing about the passage centers on verse 2. The statements in this verse were not celebratory. They were declarations of previous generation’s failures. This seemingly discouraging portion of Scripture leads to the encouraging word that God remains faithful. This hope must continually be taught to each generation.

Preparation: Week 4

The fourth sermon was prepared this week with emphasis from Proverbs 22:6. This sermon, titled “A Proverb, not a Promise,” presented listeners with insight into one of the most popular verses in evangelicalism. This passage regarding the correlation of training well and lifelong faith offers great hope for parents. Yet, the revealed truth from this sermon would be the danger of falling for what has been deemed by some as a form of prosperity gospel. In other words, some believe if they raise their children correctly, God must guarantee their children’s faithfulness to him. While the principles of godly parenting are declared clearly, a misuse of the passage as a way to force God to do something is not only a misreading, but dangerous. The congregation at FBCOP, as with other churches, consists of families who have experienced brokenness in their homes.

Many faithful Christian parents have sought to raise their children in the faith only to have them rebel. Yet, the proverb does offer much hope. This very challenging sermon, due to the realization of brokenness among many, leads to moments of rejoicing, sympathy, empathy, and healing. The proverbs are valuable. They are inerrant and helpful. Yet, they are proverbs, not promises. That must be understood.

Preparation: Week 5

The fifth sermon was prepared this week with key verses of Ephesians 5:1-2. This sermon, titled “Imitating God,” would utilize an illustration from the children’s game “Simon Says.” Paul instructed the church to imitate God as children. Paul implies that disciples of Christ imitate God in the same way children do their parents. The child copies his or her parents’ ways, words, and mannerisms. While the focus remains for Christians to walk as faithful children of God, the teaching presented here also reminds parents that as they live their lives, others, especially their children, are imitating them. This refers back to the first sermon in the series related to God’s command to make disciples. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, parents are making disciples. The question to be answered focuses on the type of disciple being made.

Preparation: Week 6

The sixth sermon was prepared this week featuring key verses from Ephesians 6:1-4. This sermon, titled “Responsible Family Members,” emphasized the familial roles of both children and parents. The emphasis on honoring one’s parents connected Old Testament commands to New Testament teachings, reminding listeners that Christ fulfilled the law, rather than abolished it. The passage also commands parents, especially fathers, to instruct their children well and bring them up understanding God’s teachings and his Word. This would be the final message in the sermon series.

The first session of the teaching series was completed this week.⁴ The family-equipping teaching series would be taught beginning in week 15 to all parents, grandparents, guardians, and any wishing to know more regarding the philosophy behind the family-equipping model and the shift in methodology. This first session was titled “The Model Matters” and covered the basics of three family ministry models utilized in the local church.

Implementation: Week 7

The first sermon in the family-equipping series, “Parents as Lead Disciple-Makers,” was preached this week. This sermon series was promoted through announcements on Sundays, church-wide emails, and posts on social media for two months prior to this day. This sermon series presented a departure from the customary ones presented at FBCOP. Rather than continuing verse-by-verse through a book of the Bible, this series would be thematic, utilizing numerous passages from both the Old and New Testaments as proof-texts and emphases for a church-wide shift toward a family-equipping model of ministry. A question was posed through the preaching regarding the task completion of disciple-making. How would a disciple-maker know when they had completed the disciple-making task? Answers revealed in the sermon related to the life-long process of sanctification and spiritual maturation. Regarding parents’ responsibilities of disciple-making in the home, encouragement was offered to stay the course, remain faithful, and continue teaching, training, and leading children as they move through rites of passage experiences (ROPE) into adulthood.⁵

Implementation: Week 8

The second sermon in the family-equipping series, “The Shema,” was

⁴See appendix 7.

⁵See appendix 6.

preached this week. Utilizing the key passage from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, parents were reminded of the greatest commandment of loving God fully. The familial instruction in this passage affirmed the premise that parents should view themselves as primary teachers of biblical truth for their children at all times. While some view biblical training as something that takes place in the local church setting, often in Sunday school classes, this message reiterated the biblical command for parents to teach their children at all times, in all venues.

The second teaching series session, titled “Feeding Time,” was completed this week. The title “Feeding Time” comes from a Native American parable about two wolves. A grandfather expresses that there are two wolves inside everyone. One is good and the other is evil. These are constantly battling each other. The old man’s grandson asks which wolf wins. The answer is “The one you feed.” While neither the family-based nor family-equipping models of ministry should be classified as evil, the point of the illustration is that if the church seeks to shift to a family-equipping model of ministry, then all ministry emphases and programming points should feed the model.

Implementation: Week 9

The third sermon in the family-equipping series, “Hope for Future Generations,” was preached this week. This sermon, focusing on Psalm 78:1-8 reminds believers to remember the spiritual legacy of past generations. This legacy may be positive or negative. Regardless, the lessons learned from previous generations are applicable to the present.

In these moments of recollection, the psalmist declares the greatness and goodness of God and his faithfulness throughout. Parents are instructed to be the ones who not only share these stories with their children but focus on leaving a legacy of faithfulness as well.

Implementation: Week 10

The fourth sermon in the family-equipping series, “A Proverb, not a Promise,” was preached this week. Based on conversations with those in attendance, a clearer understanding of the popular Proverbs 22:6 passage was revealed through this sermon. Perhaps the most significant shift in thinking from many who responded was the realization that a proverb and a promise are not synonymous. Presented here were instructions on what would be considered proper training. While not a promise, the wisdom of the proverb provides motivation for parents to be proactive in spiritual training of their child while providing hope for the child’s future faithfulness as an adult.

The third teaching series session, titled “Spiritual Heroes,” was completed this week. This session, focusing primarily on the definition and processes of disciple-making, related to the first sermon in the “Equipping for Life” sermon series. Parents would be instructed that the family-equipping model of ministry would essentially focus on equipping parents to be lead disciple-makers.

Implementation: Week 11

The fifth sermon in the family-equipping series, “Imitating God,” was preached this week. Paul instructed the believers in the Ephesian church to be imitators of God as children (Eph 5:1-2). All followers of Christ were challenged to live lives that model Jesus. This simple charge is not an easy task, as it requires total surrender. Additionally, parents were reminded that where Paul used the phrase “as beloved children” he was illustrating that Christians are to follow Christ as little children follow their parents. Therefore, parents were reminded that the training and leading of their children occurs not only with intentional sessions, but through everyday life moments.

Implementation: Week 12

The sixth sermon in the family-equipping series, “Responsible Family Members,” was preached this week. With instruction based on Ephesians 6:1-4, parents and children were presented with expectations of each family member. The biblical

instruction for expected godly behavior of children is often celebrated by parents. Yet, the instructions for parents, especially fathers, included in this passage affirm the loving mutuality of a family seeking to honor God.

Implementation: Week 13

The fourth teaching series training session, titled “Church and Family,” was completed this week. This final session provided for role-play and introduced practical elements of family worship.

This thirteenth week began with Palm Sunday, and the church’s emphasis throughout the week centered on celebrations common with the week prior to Easter Sunday. Therefore, sermons and teaching emphases focused on Jesus Christ’s last week on earth prior to his crucifixion along with a special worship service on Good Friday.

Implementation: Week 14

Promotional items for the family-equipping teaching series were shared via social media, the church’s website, and special announcements and displays on Sunday morning. This week began with Easter Sunday and the congregational attendance was larger than other Sundays throughout the year. Therefore, the emphasis for the family-equipping teaching series was heard by more individuals and families with a hope that many would attend the teaching time in the following weeks.

Implementation: Week 15

The first teaching series training session, titled “The Model Matters,” was presented to parents and others with children in the home. This training session took place prior to the primary worship service at the FBCOP campus. Over sixty people attended this course, and that number would remain constant for the full four-week series. Each of the four sessions was presented in the student ministry building at FBCOP at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings. On normal Sunday mornings, Sunday school classes meet at this time. There is also a worship service that takes place at 9:15 a.m. This worship

service regularly hosts less than the 10:45 a.m. service and those with children or teenagers in the home who attend this service were encouraged to move to the family-equipping teaching sessions.

Session 1 provided information on the history of ministry to teenagers and children in America, going back to the early twentieth century with the advent of young people's unions and parachurch groups. Details regarding the birth of the Sunday school movement were explained as well. The growth of the family-based model was explained. Based on the discussion in the room, the vast majority of attendees who grew up as regular church attenders were most familiar with the family-based model of ministry. This was the most common experience for all.

Details and differences of the family-based, family-integrated, and the family-equipping models of ministry were shared. Each model was lauded for the focus on family, children, and biblical soundness. Yet, as details were given of each model, encouragement from church leadership a shift to the family-equipping model was emphasized. Challenges as well as benefits of this shift were expressed. Once FBCOP began programming and planning with the family-equipping model as the guide, there would be no misunderstanding from church leadership as to the type of model to be utilized at the church.

Implementation: Week 16

The second teaching series training session, titled "Feeding Time," was presented to parents and others with children in the home. This training session took place at 9:15 a.m., prior to the primary worship service at the FBCOP campus. Attendees from the first week returned, along with new attendees as well. Following the academic information presented in the first session regarding the history of family ministry models in evangelical churches, this session sought to provide evidence and steps for having a family-equipping discipleship model as the chosen one for FBCOP.

In addition to offering biblical justification for such a model shift, the rites of

passage experiences were presented fully to parents during this session. Parents were divided into small groups and instructed to discuss and come to a consensus related to ages or moments in life when a child no longer is considered a child, but an adult. The answers were varied and with the non-uniform responses, a presentation on the need for familial and church-based rites of passage experiences commenced. In this session, handouts were provided that delineated each age and grade-level's recommended ROPE event. Parents were shown where the defined ROPE events are located on the church's website as well as video links for training and simple descriptions of each event. The clear emphasis was made to parents that the desire of the church is to equip parents to lead their children through these momentous events, rather than perform them in their place. Additionally, parents were asked how such ROPE events would actually occur in their families. This was encouraged to help parents realize the flexible nature of each, while emphasizing the expectations of parents at FBCOP. For those children in the church who do not have two-parent homes or Christian parents, the explanation was given that in such cases, the men and women of the church are to fill the gaps, not as replacements, but as spiritual mentors when available.

Implementation: Week 17

The third teaching series training session, titled "Spiritual Heroes," was presented to parents and others with children in the home. This training session took place prior to the primary worship service at the FBCOP campus. As an opening illustration, a video clip from the 1984 film *The Karate Kid* was shown.⁶ In this videoclip the main character, a young teenage boy named Daniel played by Ralph Macchio, is being trained by the karate master, Mr. Miyagi, played by actor Pat Morita. The scene shows a frustrated Daniel expressing anger at his mentor. Daniel does not believe that

⁶*The Karate Kid*, directed by John G. Avildsen (Columbia Pictures, 1984), DVD (Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005).

Mr. Miyagi has prepared him well or has taught him anything regarding karate. At this point, Mr. Miyagi reveals that all the mundane things he has asked Daniel to do, such as wax his car, paint his fence, scrub his floors, etc., were actually learning opportunities. This short video clip provided an introduction for discussion regarding disciple-making and the leading of children. Often, children do not understand the larger picture related to teaching, discipline, and instruction. Yet, parents are called to provide these things and more. The disciple-making process is a long-term one and the small, seemingly mundane elements of training are essential.

Parents were divided into groups for discussion on areas of disciple-making. Discussion points regarding the biblical mandate to make disciples along with the role of the local church were offered. Parents were able to see how a family-equipping model of discipleship would not only equip them in the areas of disciple-making but elevate their roles in these areas of training to their rightful place, according to Scripture.

Implementation: Week 18

The fourth teaching series training session, titled “Church and Family,” was presented to parents and others with children in the home. This training session took place prior to the primary worship service at the FBCOP campus. The theme for this session was family worship. A video from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s Honest Answers series on YouTube by Dr. Donald Whitney, titled “How Do You Do Family Worship?,” was shown to begin this session.⁷ The practical testimony and instruction for family worship elicited much discussion among attendees.

The theme of church as family and family as church offered opportunities for emphasizing the primacy of family worship and parent-led discipleship. This session

⁷Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, “How Do You Do Family Worship? Honest Answers #32,” YouTube video, 6:06, August 16, 2017, <https://youtu.be/v9SUYzSLmrE>.

gave practical insight into the need for worship in the home. Additionally, details from Scripture presented both in the “Equipping for Life” sermon series along with insights from the history of family ministry were given to learners.

Whereas lecture and small-group discussions were effectively utilized in previous teaching sessions, this session provided learning experiences through role-play. Groups were created. Each was instructed to pretend to be a family unit gathered for family worship. Each group designated “parents” to lead out while others played different aged children in the home. The groups were given a passage of Scripture and allowed fifteen minutes to create and enact a family worship time, complete with distractions and common challenges.

Following the role-play, a debriefing between group members occurred. Insights into effectiveness, challenges, and need for such family worship time were shared. Each was encouraged to learn from the role-play and begin, if not already doing so, hosting family worship times regularly in their respective homes.

Follow-Up: Week 19

Following the implementation of the sermon series and family-equipping training sessions, parents were offered a weekly resource for helping them begin and continue with weekly family worship experiences in the home. Each week a bookmark was inserted in the Sunday worship bulletin as well as provided via email. This bookmark and email offered key Scripture passages and recommended questions for parents to ask their children based on the passages. Additionally, song recommendations were provided. The passages, questions, and songs were based on the sermon preached at FBCOP on Sunday mornings. Therefore, a continuity with church-wide weekly worship gatherings and home worship times is possible.

The Family Worship Guide (FWG) has been made available for free download at the church’s website. This guide offers catechistic questions and answers for preschoolers and children through fifth grade. The Scripture for elementary school grade

children utilized in the guide coincides with that being taught to children during mid-week gatherings at FBCOP.

ROPE events are made available on the church website with church-wide events scheduled for many at FBCOP. These ROPE event emphases are made public through announcements on Sunday mornings as well as through weekly emails and handouts in the preschool, children, and student ministries.

Family Discipleship Survey – Part 2

The FDS provided to members of FBCOP was offered once more at the completion of the final teaching session. The survey was identical to the one offered prior to the implementation process. While the survey was only offered to church members at FBCOP, there was no way to ensure the same individuals took both surveys, using their selected four-digit-code for identification. Therefore, an unpaired *t*-test for independent samples was utilized to study the results. In order to allow for proper use of the *t*-test, only those surveys by church members with children in high school or younger living in the home were utilized. The comparative surveys utilized the answers from first 28 qualifying respondents. Respondents gave answers related to their perceptions of family worship and discipleship and their actual practices. The answers revealed in the surveys provided insight into the need for continued emphasis on family-equipping. The purpose of the second survey was to determine if any significant shift in understanding or practice by parents in the church had occurred during the time of project implementation. Statistics from both surveys are included in appendix 4. Results from the survey questions are shown in graphical form in appendix 5.

Once all responses from the pre-project and post-project surveys were collected, the data was entered into a spreadsheet. The results were analyzed in two ways. First, all data were compared utilizing the unpaired, one tailed *t*-test for independent samples. Second, data from individual questions were compared in order to determine if specifics regarding parental perception or practice revealed any significant change.

The results from the *t*-test run on data related to perceptions revealed no statistically significant difference ($t_{(54)} = 0.59, p = .2779$). The results from the *t*-test run on data related to practices of parents also revealed no statistically significant difference ($t_{(54)} = 0.24, p = .4055$). Therefore, the results of this project failed to reject the null hypothesis. Possible reasons for this result are examined in Chapter 5.

Question 24 in the surveys asked respondents to express the number of times church leaders contacted them to offer intentional help in actively engaging their children regarding spiritual development. Based on conversations with parents participating in the teaching series, more one-on-one conversations with church leaders occurred following the presentation of the pre-project survey. As church leadership continues to focus on the family-equipping model of discipleship, more intentional conversations occurred. Resources designed to assist parents have been developed and have been distributed to the church membership as a whole.

Conclusion

Project implementation was multi-faceted and involved numerous areas of ministry within FBCOP. Initially, the intention was to offer a small-group curriculum for parents that would coincide with the preaching series as stated prior in this chapter. Logistics and further discussion among the leadership team of the church determined the model of implementation described in this chapter to be best. A limitation of the material presented to FBCOP was identified at the outset. For various reasons, not all parents of FBCOP were able to attend all worship services where the sermons were presented. The same issues regarding perfect attendance would occur during the four-week teaching sessions as well. In order to address this limitation, audio recordings of each sermon were made and uploaded to the church's website and app. The family-equipping teaching series was recorded on Facebook Live and made available on the church's Facebook page with handouts available on the church's website for download.

The two delimitations as defined in the first chapter considered the focus upon

families with preschoolers, children, and teenagers in the home as well as the time frame for the study. The nineteen-week process included the FDS prior to implementation and following. The FDS was provided via online distribution and personal contact but was limited to those parents at FBCOP who chose to participate in the study. Numerous parents expressed interest in having the teaching material made available again in the future, through a training seminar much like our four-week study. The church's leadership team discussed the potential of having the teaching series as an annual training seminar for parents, either in small group or conference setting. The possibility of a two-day weekend conference covering the material, to be offered not only to FBCOP, but to other churches as well was also discussed.

The sermon series served as a good overview of the calling for parents to be lead disciple-makers in the home. While the material covered in the sermons coincided well with that in the family-equipping training sessions, the focus was broader. The sermon series, presented to the entire church, addressed parental responsibility while also touching on the roles of each member in the local church. The exegesis of Scripture was clear in delineating the role and responsibility of all believers to make disciples and live holy. This message was obviously not only for parents. Yet, as the sermons were presented, points were made that revealed the individuals' and the church body's roles in the processes of family-equipping discipleship.

As the FDS was first administered, insight into beliefs, expectations, and perceived biblical roles of parents were utilized in guiding the points in the teaching series training sessions. Additionally, the evaluation rubrics for sermons and teaching series training sessions, along with the Family Worship Guide helped in the final sermon presentations and teaching sessions.

These insights are shared to provide clarity regarding the process of the nineteen-week project implementation. The project was designed to enable and equip parents and leaders of FBCOP to shift toward a family-equipping model of ministry

while providing needed resources for parents to lead their families well. I offer my evaluation of the project in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The purpose of the ministry project was to positively impact parents at FBCOP, leading them to change perception and activity regarding disciple-making in the home. While the shift from a family-based model of ministry at the church to a family-equipping one was deemed necessary and continues to occur, the results from the project revealed that parents were not limiting themselves to the model of ministry held by the church. The project was successful in revealing parental perceptions and activities regarding discipleship of their respective children. However, the project did fail to reject the null hypothesis. This chapter offers evaluative information on the project and possible reasonings why the project failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

This project sought to equip parents at FBCOP of children and teenagers to be disciple-makers in their respective homes. The declared purpose intended to ensure that parents understood the biblical mandate of disciple-making within the home while equipping them to fulfill this task. The process for achieving the purpose involved a six-week preaching series at FBCOP followed by a four-week teaching series for parents. A survey, titled Family Discipleship Survey (FDS), designed to determine attitudes toward family discipleship in the home and actual practices was given to FBCOP members with children or teenagers living at home. The survey was offered twice. The initial survey offering occurred prior to the implementation of the preaching series and teaching sessions. The second survey was given at the conclusion of the teaching series sessions. The effectiveness of the project was measured by comparing the results revealed related

to perceptions and practices in the two surveys. An unpaired *t*-test was conducted using both scores from the pre-project FDS and the post-project FDS. The surveys were compared by section. The *t*-test result of perceptions of parents ($t_{(54)} = 0.59, p = .2779$) and the results regarding the practices of parents ($t_{(54)} = 0.24, p = .4055$) showed a failure to reject the null hypothesis. This revealed that parents made no significant shift in their attitudes or practice of family-based discipleship in the home during the duration of the project. Many parents, however, did indicate through personal interview a higher level of information and engagement from church leaders following the project implementation as opposed to prior. The statistical difference regarding perceptions and practices from respondents are presented in the unpaired-samples *t*-test.¹

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Goal 1: Assessment of Current Practices

The first goal was to assess current discipleship practices among FBCOP church member parents with preschoolers, children, and teenagers living at home. The goal was met through the completion of the FDS. The FDS, administered both prior to and following the implementation of the preaching series and teaching sessions, provided clear assessments related to familial discipleship practices in the home among church members. All parents of preschoolers, children, and teenagers at FBCOP were given ample opportunity to complete the survey. Age-graded ministry leaders ensured that all parents in attendance at FBCOP at least three weeks prior to the first sermon were given a printed copy of the FDS. Through the church's social media pages, the church's website, and via church-wide emails, all church members were given access to a web-based version of the same survey as well. Each parent was instructed to complete the survey only once, either online or utilizing a printed version.

¹ See appendix 4.

Anonymity was guaranteed for each person completing the survey. For those completing the survey on paper, an envelope was provided for them to return sealed with their answers. Parents could return their completed surveys by placing them in one of many sealed containers on the church campus utilized for offerings, prayer requests, and first-time guest registration cards.

Those completing the survey online were asked to provide a unique, self-defined four-digit code. The code was used simply to identify which answers related to respondents. Identifying respondents by name was not available through the online site as the survey was presented.

Respondents were asked questions to identify demographics as well as perceptions related to discipleship. Those who were not members of the church, did not have children ages 18 or younger in the home, or were not age 18 and older themselves were not utilized in reporting.

Answers to the survey questions were shared with the pastoral staff and ministry leaders of FBCOP. With this information, leadership was able to determine attitudes and practices of disciple-making as revealed by church members who are parents of preschoolers, children, or teenagers in the home. These responses provided actual data rather than suppositions based on church event-based activity.

Goal 2: Sermon and Teaching Series

The second goal was to develop a six-week sermon series and four-week follow-up teaching series centered on a biblical understanding of disciple-making in the home. This understanding focused on God's intent for parents to be leaders in this process for their children. Preparing to preach any sermon, much less a series focused on a specific subject is something that must be prayed about and not taken lightly. Sermons preached at FBCOP over approximately the past ten years have been expository in nature and verse-by-verse in structure. Other than short breaks for special emphases and holiday

foci such as on Christmas and Easter, sermons have remained true to this format.

For the focus of this project, the six sermons presented in the “Equipping for Life” series focused on the role of parents as lead disciple-makers of their children. The family-equipping model of discipleship was presented with historical examples and biblical proof-texts. In addition to encouraging and challenging parents to lead out as disciple-makers, all church members were informed and challenged to fulfill their roles as expressed in the Great Commission. While the sermons initially focused on parental responsibilities, every church member was challenged biblically to accept his or her role as part of the body of Christ. For example, no parent should feel as if they alone are to lead their children into the journey of faith as a Christ follower. Though parents are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truth and modeling the life of a disciple, all church members and Christians are to be active in this area. This is true especially in cases where there may be only one parent or guardian in the home or where the child is the only one attending church or seeking to follow Christ.

As sermons were compiled and presented, an evaluation rubric was presented to a select group of church members and leaders at FBCOP.² Sermons were evaluated favorably based on this rubric from others on the leadership team and those invited to give assessment. All indicators met or exceeded the level of sufficiency. Additionally, pastors who preached from the same text at satellite campuses provided insight and helpful feedback prior to and following the preaching of the sermons.

Since sermons were prepared well in advance to being preached at the church, the worship pastor was able to select songs that affirmed the sermon focus of each. During most months, children gather for worship separately during the Sunday morning worship time. Yet, during these presentations, there were numerous times when all ages

²See appendix 2 for the sermon series rubric.

gathered together for worship. This allowed for a stronger emphasis on intergenerational discipleship and life together as members of FBCOP.

Following the presentation of sermons, a four-week teaching series was held at FBCOP.³ The teaching series was developed to reemphasize the overall points presented in the sermons while giving parents insight into practical steps for leading well in their respective homes. Initially, discussion among pastoral leadership intended on having the teaching series sessions presented during a special gathering on Sunday evening or during the Wednesday evening regularly scheduled church meeting times. However, it was concluded after prayer and discussion among the pastoral staff and leadership team that in order to make the most impact and gather the largest number of parents for the classes, the best time would be Sunday mornings during the already scheduled small group Bible study hour. Therefore, these four sessions were presented at 9:15 a.m. on four consecutive Sundays. I led this group as pastor in order to give strong emphasis on the subject matter. Not every parent was able to attend at this time, but attendance was consistent for the four weeks with over 60 each week. During this time, an associate pastor preached at the 9:15 a.m. worship service. Other small groups without parents of preschoolers, children, and teenagers continued to meet at this time as regularly scheduled. Those who would normally have attended but served in other areas in the church at this time either missed the teaching sessions or had to find substitute leaders for the four weeks.

The teaching sessions were succinct and began with an overview of the models of family ministry that churches have held for years. Identifying FBCOP's history of being family-based allowed members to see the strengths and weaknesses of the model. Since all family models described are helpful and good, it was clearly explained that

³See appendix 8.

church leaders of past years had not failed to do well. Yet, the motivation and explanation for transitioning to a family-equipping model was expressed. Parents were encouraged to ask questions and help in the evaluation of a shift to this newer model.

As with the sermon series rubric, a select group of church members and staff attending the teaching series sessions provided insight and evaluative remarks prior to and throughout the presentation of the material.⁴ Each scored the sessions with high marks on the rubric indicating a sufficient level of each desired element. This goal was considered successful due to the evaluative remarks on each rubric and consistent attendance and feedback from persons attending the worship services and teaching series sessions.

Goal 3: Increase Knowledge of Family Discipleship Practices

The third goal was to increase knowledge of family discipleship practices through role-play activities during the teaching series along with consultations with members of the church's leadership team. This goal was completed partially through the time spent with parents during the teaching series sessions. Introduction to family worship as a valuable element of home life was presented to parents attending the teaching series sessions. Following a session on the biblical value of family worship and parent-led discussion times with children, a role-play scenario was developed involving all in attendance. Attendees were divided into small groups with each person playing a role of a family member (parent, grandparent, teenager, young child, visiting friend, etc.) Each group was given a Scripture passage and instructed to role-play a family worship experience. Guidelines and examples were provided prior through lecture and video illustration. This element of the teaching sessions received highly positive remarks from

⁴See appendix 3 for the family-equipping teaching series rubric.

all who attended and participated.

Following the role-play experience, a time of interactive discussion with other groups and leaders regarding the ease and practicality of family worship time in the home occurred. Members of the church's pastoral staff and leadership team were made available to church members for further discussion regarding family discipleship and the practical steps available for beginning and maintaining family worship in the home.

Strengths of the Project

The project proved timely and helpful for families and leaders of FBCOP. First, the assessment of current ministry practices at FBCOP provided a starting point for church leaders and parents in understanding the need for a shift in ministerial philosophy. The teaching series provided a historical perspective related to ministry models that have existed for decades. By examining the strengths and weaknesses of the family-based and family-integrated models of ministry, church leaders and members were able to identify how God has used these models through recent church history to meet needs and provide ministry opportunities for families. The project provided insight into FBCOP's current family-based model and how it has benefited families over the years. Though family-based and family-integrated models have many positive aspects, the detailed presentation of the family-equipping model of ministry revealed that it would be best suited for implementation at FBCOP. Attendance during worship services maintained a consistent level as did attendance during the teaching series. This revealed that parents as well as the majority of other church members, did not intentionally disengage from the subject matter.

Second, the project provided clear information related to parental roles as related to disciple-making in the home. Material presented was historically insightful and biblically sound. Details concerning the biblical mandate for parents to be disciple-makers in the home was clearly presented with numerous proof texts. Both Old

Testament and New Testament passages were utilized in the teaching. This revealed that God expected not only the children of Israel, but the members of his church to see the home as the central location for spiritual training and teaching. Parents received the information well. The preaching of sermons followed by the teaching series sessions allowed learners to not only gather information, but to process it over time. This provided opportunities for questions to be asked of leaders regarding family ministry and biblical expectations.

Third, the project revealed how the local church may provide support for parents seeking to train their children as disciples of Jesus Christ. While expressing the value of parental disciple-making, church leaders must continually provide avenues for the equipping and encouragement of parents throughout the journey of faith. Parents responded well to this concept of equipping as they were presented with practical insight and aspects of the process. Church leaders provided answers to questions regarding children whose parents are not followers of Christ or circumstances where children do not have two parents in the home working together as Christian guides for their children. The church's role in equipping does not leave families without assistance whose makeup lies outside the demographic of Christian mother and father in the home. In cases where parents are not Christians or where an identified spiritual gap exists in the home, church leaders and other members of the church must stand ready to serve. This has been the case historically and must continue to be. Parents responded well to this and many stated their understanding of being the ones to stand in the gap for others as well. The unity of the body of Christ was emphasized as the value of having a church family became clear.

Parents were given numerous resources from church leaders that aided in leading and living as disciple-makers in their respective homes. While resources alone do not fix circumstances of family discipleship, having these available provide guidelines and tools that have proven helpful in the lives of many. The resources were made available in printed form and online through the church's website. These included a

worship guide to be used in the home, guidelines and ideas for annual rites of passage experiences, and conversation starters for family worship times. Additionally, resources specifically related to a biblical worldview of popular cultural trends were provided for parents of older children and teenagers. While intended for use in homes, these are useful for small group Bible studies and larger church membership gatherings as well. Parents shared their approval of having such resources available. This revealed that church leaders sought to continually walk with parents as their children mature from childhood to adulthood. Many stated that they viewed the access to such resources as tangible proof that church leaders intend to equip parents for faithful living as disciple-makers in their homes.

In order to offer continued guidance and assistance to parents seeking to lead their children well in the area of spiritual growth, numerous resources and year-by-year plans were presented to and provided for families.

The continued challenge of a long-term discipleship strategy for parents is to provide resources and personal assistance for parents without seeming to only offer abundant resources and curriculum items apart from a systematic plan. Every family is unique. Some join the church when their children are older. Others are members of FBCOP when their children are born. Others have varying demographic identifiers such as children being raised by their grandparents or by single parents. A long-term strategy for home-based discipleship must address this as well as consider situations where parents are not believers or may not be engaged in the church.

Rather than abandon a discipleship strategy altogether or lower expectations, FBCOP has developed a model that allows parents to begin discipling their children where they are currently while seeking to equip them well for the future. For the first time in the history of FBCOP parents have been provided a catechism for children that includes step-by-step Scripture memory, doctrinal truths, and helpful insights related to Christianity. This question-and-answer Family Worship Guide is provided at no cost to

all parents with children up through grade 5 on the church's website and also in printed form.⁵ The Scripture verses included for memorization coincide with the passages children at FBCOP are expected to memorize as part of the AWANA program. This reinforces parental leadership in memorization of Scripture while other adult leaders in the children's ministry affirm that which has been taught in the home.

Additionally, parents were presented with a strategy for leading their children through rites of passage experiences (ROPE). These annual events take place in various venues. Some are designed for the home. Others are recommended to occur at a church service or gathering of other believers. Each of these elements is designed to allow parents to intentionally lead their children, from birth through high school graduation, along a journey through spiritual maturation.⁶

Resources for parents related to family worship, Scripture memory, doctrinal training, biblical instruction, and rites of passage provide an abundance of help for families. Yet, resources alone do not change culture. Therefore, as part of the long-term strategy, pastors and leaders have been trained and encouraged to be available for consultation, while continually encouraging parents to begin, restart, or continue leading their children in these areas of spiritual growth. The church has been historically known for starting ministry programs well but leaving them left incomplete over time. Therefore, the continued attention on disciple-making by church leaders along with calendared emphases and rites of passage allow for a strategy that not only is beneficial initially but provides goals for years to come. This must be managed and reevaluated continually over time.

⁵See appendix 6.

⁶See appendix 7.

Weaknesses of the Project

Despite the strengths revealed in the previous paragraphs, the project was not foolproof. Some weaknesses were exposed. First, the project was not effective in surveying all parents in the church. Distribution of the survey tool was widespread among church membership, yet only a small number of those actually completed the surveys. While the information received was helpful, having a broader pool of data would have been greatly beneficial. Parents may have ignored the survey for various reasons. In some cases, the time needed to complete the survey fully may have been a deterrent. Yet, the online statistics reveal that the survey took on average only four minutes to complete. Others may have chosen not to complete the survey due to the subject matter. There is no way to determine this at this point, but parents may have felt guilty regarding their understanding and practice of disciple-making in the home and chose to ignore the survey or not complete it entirely.

Second, due to timing allotted for the teaching series some parents were unable to attend. Though steps were taken to allow all parents in FBCOP to attend the teaching series time, some likely did not find replacements in their areas of ministry service while others may actually have used their area of service as an excuse for not attending. Small groups with high percentages of parents of children and teenagers ceased to meet during the training time in order to join the larger group for these four sessions. Yet, others who served in preschool or children's ministries as leaders chose to remain with their respective classes rather than utilize provided substitute leaders. Still others served as worship band members or audio/visual technical support in the worship service that met concurrently. While the worship service could have been cancelled and leaders forced to utilize substitutes, it was deemed disruptive and potentially harmful to press these issues.

Third, while the material presented to parents during the preaching series and teaching sessions was biblically sound and historically accurate, it seemed that a heavier focus on philosophy of ministry overwhelmed the practical aspects of implementation.

The settings for these sessions, other than session four of the teaching series, included a traditional formation of seating where listeners sat in rows facing the speaker. This layout allowed for clear focus of listeners but did not provide for great interaction among learners. This seating arrangement worked well for the sermon series, but in the teaching time, a better layout could have been utilized. However, during the fourth teaching session rows were removed and parents gathered in numerous groups facing each other. This session included role play activities. The face-to-face interaction among learners allowed for greater conversation, interaction, and potential learning. The interaction provided great opportunity for practical insight and application of material. It seemed that seating layout, lectures including historical and biblical insight, and challenges of transitioning a family-based to a family-equipping model of ministry left parents with many notes and details on why family-equipping models work in the local church, but less insight on how they work practically.

Finally, as revealed in the responses to the pre-project and post-project surveys, no great difference in attitude or activity regarding parent led disciple-making in the home was revealed. As stated prior, the project failed to reject the null hypothesis. As I reflected on the possible reasonings of this response, it occurred that as church leadership identified the need to shift toward a more family-focused model of equipping, much had been shared regarding this prior to the implementation time when the first survey was made available. Whether through sermons, age-graded ministry meetings, blog posts, or email articles, church leaders had consistently encouraged parents to view themselves as lead disciple-makers in their families. Though the terminology of family-equipping used in the preaching series and follow-up teaching series were not used prior to implementation of the project, the aspects of encouraged family devotion time, viewing parents as primary faith developers, encouraged Scripture memory, and other disciplines had been expressed during months prior. Therefore, it appears that what was viewed as necessary within the church's structure of training and leading had already

been agreed upon, if not overtly, by those church members who had faithfully attended and participated in church life prior to the implementation of the project. While this could be considered a weakness for the project, the positive results in the lives of church members discount any perceived negativity.

What I Would Do Differently

Reflecting upon the project presented at FBCOP, it is clear that the material presented and the need for implementation of such a model of ministry was needed. However, as with any presentation of an extensive preaching and teaching series, accompanied with resources designed to impact numerous people, there are things I would do differently were I to begin such a project again. First, based on the review of survey results from the pre-project survey, it is clear that many members of FBCOP had already begun to shift or clarify their attitudes regarding family ministry and home-based discipleship. Sermons, articles, and conversations regarding discipleship continually referenced the parental roles in leading children into being disciples. In other words, the shift toward a family-equipping model had already begun to happen prior to the fullness of understanding fully what this would mean for the church as a whole. Therefore, the pre-project survey as compared to the post-project survey did not reveal much of a change in attitude or proclaimed practice. There are numerous reasons besides timing that could have led to this. The Hawthorne effect is described as the influence or biasing of observers on an experiment.⁷ Consequently, since the presentation of family-based discipleship had been referenced through sermons and other avenues of the church, it is possible that some church members completing the surveys were anticipating desired responses and provided answers that were expected, rather than what was truly believed

⁷Richard Gillespie, *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2.

at the time. Additionally, to have extended the project timeline to allow for an earlier pre-project survey may have provided more dramatic shifts in attitudinal understanding of the disciple-making model proffered through the family-equipping model.

Second, while the pastoral staff and ministerial leaders over age-graded groups at FBCOP aided greatly in the promotion of the full project, to do this again I would invest more time individually with these leaders prior to implementation. There was no pushback or negativity from any on the leadership team. However, there were clearly some who fully grasped the concept of family-equipping ministry and what it would entail earlier than others. The team serving at FBCOP consists of qualified, called, Christian leaders with much to offer. Their expertise in the processes of planning, preparation, and presentation of the family-equipping model could have been better utilized had I spent more training time individually with each prior to implementation.

Third, during the teaching sessions, the role-play illustrations used in the final gathering proved to be greatly insightful and helpful. Though to use such a methodology in each session likely would have seemed repetitive and caused some to disengage or not return, I do believe that using more group-based training and interactive methods in sessions 1, 2, and 3 would have been beneficial. Therefore, when this material is presented again in the future, the first three sessions will be modified to include such training techniques.

Fourth, the provision of an adult small group study for those in attendance and those who participate weekly in small group Bible studies is needed. Initially, a six-week small group study was part of the plan, but due to timing and scheduling conflicts at the church, it was changed to the four-week teaching series. To have a curriculum that delves into the biblical teaching regarding disciple-making and building upon the sermons presented and the historical and practical aspects of family ministry would be beneficial to parents attending the church. Having qualified and trained small group leaders guiding their respective groups through this material would allow for more questions from

learners, creative learning experiences, and deeper conversations on the subject. This follow-up curriculum could be four-weeks long. These four sessions would be in addition to the pastor led four-session teaching series.

Fifth, with technological options available, a livestream video of the teaching series sessions should have been offered. The sessions were made available on Facebook Live, but that limits potential audience members to only those who are Facebook users. The cost of offering a livestream video option would be worth the investment if it could be determined how many would want to participate who are unable to be in the room during the sessions. This stream could be provided as a link on the church's website, promoted through social media and email, and shared with a predetermined hashtag moniker to allow for ease of sharing and tracking viewership.

These elements may not be essential for the presentation and dissemination of material but would provide for a better learning experience, in my opinion. The material presented was biblically sound and clearly put together but expanding the planning and presentation team by utilizing others in leadership while offering more options for learning would enhance and improve the overall experience. These changes could possibly provide parents with clearer understanding of the philosophy of family-equipping discipleship as well as provide more practical concepts of implementation.

Theological Reflections

As with any study or project founded on truth and a biblical worldview, numerous areas of personal reflection and theological affirmation became clear through this project. First, the sufficiency of Christ was clearly revealed throughout the development and presentation of this project. There were many parts involved in this presentation of the family-equipping model. Though many elements were discovered and discussed from a historical, practical, and ultimately biblical perspective the clarity that God alone remains the hope for families and individuals shone through. Christ is

sufficient and while this may seem to be obvious for the Christian pastor or leader seeking to guide his church into a family-equipping model, this simple truth must remain at the forefront. No amount of preparation, proclamation, or presentation performed from human-based creative or intellectual perspective can truly change a life or provide what families need. All the elements of this project are beneficial, but apart from Christ, the material remains lifeless. God has been and always will be the provider of all that is needed for His glory and our good, in the church and in the family (Phil 4:19).

Second, God values his church and utilizes its prevailing nature for his glory. As evangelicalism faces challenges in the current age and culture, the reality remains that God continues to use his church in ways that provide for the good of his children. The church is his body and includes all the redeemed of the ages. The local body of believers provides a venue and home where individuals and families can be challenged, matured, and equipped as disciples. For those individuals who do not have parents or other family members able to lead well as it relates to following Christ, the body of the local church under the Holy Spirit's lead has the charge and capacity to fill the gaps. The beauty of family that extends beyond human DNA relationships is expressed in the local body of believers who are his church.

Third, the Scripture affirms in numerous places, clearly in the focal passages referenced in this project, that God has ordained the family for good. Parental responsibilities for disciple-making in the home are non-negotiable for the child of God. To ignore such a calling as a believer is to live in disobedience to God. The family remains foundational for society and useful for God. As worldviews clash, roles and identities of family members become more confusing. At least that seems to be the case for many. Yet, as Scripture reveals, God's creation and ordination of the family unit includes specific expectations and roles of each family member. Fathers are called by God to be the spiritual leaders in their families. The passing on of biblical truth to younger generations is commanded by God for parents to fulfill. Mothers and fathers are

distinct in identities, roles, and expectations. Yet, even with the distinct God-ordained roles, each is provided needed gifts and resources to accomplish that which God expects. Children, as well are given clear commands related to honor, respect, and love of their parents. As Christian parents seek the Lord, they are to lead their children by word and deed to do so as well. This is God's design for replicable disciple-making.

Fourth, gender identity is understood as a bestowed gift from God at birth. The confusion related to gender that many espouse through varying cultural worldviews ignores the reality of God's pre-ordained plans for creation. While some would view this element as outside the realm of family discipleship, I would disagree. As more and more children and teenagers struggle with sexuality and gender confusion, parents are forced to answer questions previous generations rarely faced. To have a biblical understanding of manhood and womanhood not only strengthens one's personal identity, but allows parents to bestow appropriate, biblical blessings upon their children. Proper theological understanding in these areas provide clarity for confused young people while relying on the foundation of God's Word.

Fifth, the value and power of intergenerational learning and discipleship shines through as this family-equipping model was prepared and presented. The family-based model championed age-graded ministries. Much good has been accomplished for God through the work of age-graded ministries over the years. However, a missing link has been identified. It was not so much missing but ignored by many. Cultural shifts and historical models of urbanization, industrialization, and compartmentalization in education have impacted local church organization and ministry life. Though much has been accomplished through varying models of ministry, the biblical examples and instructions regarding older people training younger along with proverbial passages related to the imparting of wisdom from the senior adults have been left undone in many churches. An unintentional result of the fully age-graded model has left children and teenagers as little more than subsets of a whole, rather than part of the local family within

the church. The family-equipping model purposely removes barriers between age groups at times for the purpose of intergenerational ministry and healthy living. These shifts bring glory to God and benefit his church and children.

Finally, the church and family have been viewed as separate by many for years, at least in regard to importance and usefulness by God. Yet, as this project unfolded, and more Scripture was studied, the fact became obvious that God's ordination of the family in the early chapters of Genesis along with his setting up of his church in the book of Acts go hand in hand. Each exists for one ultimate purpose. That purpose is to bring glory to God. The fringe benefit of this reality is the good for his people. God's glory results in good for the church and his children individually. This is not to state that family life is or ever will be easy. Neither will church life be this side of heaven. Yet, the promises of God remain true. When Christians are honored to have the privilege and blessing of children in the home, God's provides to those parents what is necessary to lead their children into faith. As stated prior, children without Christian parents have the opportunity of experiencing godly leadership, love, and discipleship through those in the local church. It sounds simple, but so many never experience that personally. This reminds us of the calling to make disciples as we go throughout this world, seeking to leave none left unimpacted by the gospel.

Personal Reflections

Numerous challenges have been revealed through the planning, preparation, implementing, and evaluating of this project. First, as a parent of adult children not living in the home, clear feelings of regret developed. I actually discovered others in our church family who were experiencing this as well. A convictional feeling of not leading well when my children were younger became overwhelming at times. While my wife and I now have peace that we did the very best we knew at the time, we did repent of allowing church life and busyness to keep us from being as strategic and intentional in discipling

our children. Perhaps the fact that one of our children has walked away from the church and a biblical worldview revealed this regret? As many parents do, we have many “What if?” questions related to decisions made and not made in the past. We wonder if any of those were the catalysts that drove our child away. Nevertheless, as these feelings and thoughts were very real, through prayer and continued processes of leading others in the church, God affirmed that he equips us, prepares us, loves us, and despite our failings, protects us. The affirmation that God loves our child even more than we do was reiterated through this project. The promise of his love for us and for our child allows us to realize that even in our failures, God remains faithful. Therefore, we press on, as I did through this project, believing God will use it for good.

Second, I have served FBCOP on pastoral staff for over twenty-four years. I have dear friends in this church. I have mentored many young people over the years and have seen God do amazing transformative things in individuals and families. This project has moved me to reflect on these stories as I anticipate many others in the future. As I worked through this project, looking to Scripture and historical accounts of biblical parenting and examples, God revealed some in FBCOP who have been and continue to be good role models. These elements of faithful, home-centered discipleship were not fully absent at FBCOP. While a stated philosophy of ministry such as family-equipping discipleship was not used in the past, there were numerous families who fulfilled the roles God ordained. These brothers and sisters in Christ, many who are much older than me and some who are no longer alive, have been revealed by God to me as inspirations.

Third, the study required for this project partnered with the service alongside fellow believers has strengthened my commitment to and calling into ministry. This has been more than a positive journey of study. It has been challenging for me as a pastor and leader. I have learned to value those God has called to serve alongside me. God has revealed where I am weak, he brings strength. In fact, as pastoral leaders, he often provides strength in leadership areas where I lack through the ministry of brothers and

sisters in Christ on my church staff and leadership team. Unfortunately, I have taken that for granted in the past, not seeing all that God has been doing through us together.

Fourth, though I have served on pastoral staff for over two decades, this project has reminded me that much work is left to be done. The family remains embattled and it seems that times will be much more difficult for mothers, fathers, and children in the years ahead. There is nothing new under the sun, so the reality of sin and family divisiveness is not unexpected. However, as young people have children, especially Christian young people, it is clear that fear remains a great motivator or detractor in their lives. No generation has faced the varied pressures the current one faces it seems. At least no generation has been bombarded with such speed and intensity of the changing worldviews. Therefore, as the pastor to these young families I feel not only called to preach the gospel clearly and lead them well regarding his truth, but to equip them with resources that are biblical, helpful, and practical for this age. The equipping of parents to lead well remains a constant challenge. Therefore, as resources have been provided for parents of all aged children, the reality is these must be continually updated, researched, and distributed. Resources will not rescue families. Only God can and will do this. Yet, he has blessed us with great provision and to ignore that and cease to offer useful tools for mothers and fathers is tantamount to turning our back on God's children.

Finally, I have deepened my love for God, his Word, and his church. Pastoring a church remains one of the greatest honors of my life. Nevertheless, the local church remains a work in progress, full of people who are growing in their personal faith just as I am. Some are walking deeply with Christ. Others are far from living faithfully. Still others are wolves in sheep's clothing. The cynicism that naturally develops in working with any group of people remains prevalent in pastoral ministry. When ministry becomes difficult, due to circumstance in my own life or situations in others, the easy response is negativity, sarcasm, short-sightedness, and selfishness. All of these elements are displayed in Scripture by men who were ultimately used by God for great things. Men

such as Moses, Jonah, David, Peter, Paul, and others have their own stories of failure and misguided steps. Yet, this is not to be desired and through this project God has renewed my love for his church and the calling which he has given me.

Conclusion

Christ's clear commission to his followers was to go make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). This commission did not come before the body of believers for a vote. There was no business meeting or committee developed to study the implications of such a move. God commanded his church to do this and to ignore the command is sinful. I have been convicted where this has been practically ignored in my own life. I have seen where FBCOP has given great lip service to the concept with little application over time. Understanding that a philosophical shift in ministry models does not create a disciple-making culture is obvious. Yet, this project has proven to be a great journey of faith and a resource for change.

I have sought to demonstrate through this project the need for a transition to or implementation of a family-equipping model in the local church. I have provided a biblically sound case for parent-led discipleship in the home. Scripture from the Old Testament and the New Testament affirm the family as center in God's plan for disciple-making. Through historical examples, along with sociological constructs, I have provided details related to the need for clear strategies of discipleship. While the command and commission to make disciples are clear, next steps must be clarified and revealed to individuals seeking to be obedient in this area. This is especially true for parents of children and teenagers. Therefore, I have sought to provide such steps through resources, training, and examples.

The survey results failed to reject the null hypothesis. Nevertheless, the process of development and presentation of material was deemed helpful. This was affirmed by statements of those within the church weeks after the completion of the project.

Historically, FBCOP has not allowed projects or ministry implementations to grow healthy over time. In fact, the church has a history of starting many new ministries well, with great fanfare and excitement only to see these programs eventually just die out or disappear with little explanation and unfortunately, weak results. The family-equipping model of discipleship must be more than another program. Though only in place for a short amount of time, it seems that this paradigm shift in ministry is taking hold.

Conversations among church leaders and parents within the church continue to focus on the vitality of family worship and leading well in the home. Mothers and fathers are utilizing resources made available. Staff are taking the time to prioritize church-wide rites of passage experiences with children and teenagers in the church. These church events provide support for parents who seek to do well, but often feel overwhelmed.

In light of this project, FBCOP has taken steps to provide more than digital or printed resources for parents. However, these elements have been and continue to be available. Additionally, intentional conversations with parents along with steps to provide parenting mentors are now in the works. By offering to young parents constructive moments with those who have been where they currently are on the journey of Christian parenting, the possibilities of intergenerational ministry with effectively positive results increase. From a church-wide perspective, older adults are exposed to the value of intergenerational activities and ministry experiences. The relational connectedness between generations cannot be forced or manufactured. Yet, opportunities for cross-generational engagement can be offered. The pastors and ministry leaders must guide well into these areas.

By elevating the discipling role of parents, church members view the partnership of family and church from a more biblical worldview. As transitions continue related to calendaring, planning, and ministry emphases, more members will discover that family-equipping is more than just the latest trend or ministry program. The transition has begun, but much is left to be done. Many within the church remember the glory days

when large youth groups and busy children's ministries existed at FBCOP. The numbers in these areas are not where they used to be, but the longing to reach young families remains strong. There are many great stories in the annals of FBCOP's history, but as this shift in focus occurs, it is clear that God still has much in store for his church. This is true globally, but also in Orange Park and surrounding communities through the faithful service of his children at First Baptist Church of Orange Park.

APPENDIX 1
FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY

The Family Discipleship Survey (FDS) is used to assess the current discipleship practices among families with children who are members of First Baptist Church. The FDS is provided to church members with children and teenagers residing at home. This survey was modeled, with permission of the author, from Timothy Paul Jones' Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey as presented in *Family Ministry Field Guide*.¹

¹Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 215-219.

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY

The Family Discipleship Survey (FDS) is designed to identify current discipleship practices and perceptions of among families who are members of First Baptist Church of Orange Park, Florida (FBCOP). The FDS is provided to church members with children and teenagers residing at home. If your children are too young to participate effectively in a described activity, please honestly assess what you anticipate doing when your children become old enough to participate. For the purpose of this survey, “church leaders” includes pastors, ministers, deacons, teachers and small group leaders. The researcher, David Tarkington, is compiling this data for a ministry project designed to assess the current discipleship practices of those at FBCOP. Any information you provide will be held as confidential. At no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary. Participants are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. By completing the survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

1. PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: _____

(Please create a unique four-digit number)

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer. Some questions may ask you to state your opinion. Use the following scale when answering:

SD = Strongly Disagree

DA = Agree Somewhat

D = Disagree

A = Agree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

SA = Strongly Agree

PART 1

Please answer the questions below by filling in the blank or checking the appropriate answer.

- 2. What is your current age? _____
- 3. Are you currently a member of FBCOP?
 Yes No
- 4. If “Yes” to number 2, how many years have you been a member of FBCOP?
 Less than 2 years 2 – 5 years 6 – 10 years 11 years or more
- 5. Are you a parent of children in high school or younger living in the home?
 Yes No
- 6. If “Yes” to number 4 are you
 Mother or Father?
- 7. Marital status:
 Married Widowed Single/Never Married Divorced

PART 2: PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS

Please answer the questions below by checking the appropriate answer.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	AGREE SOMEWHAT	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. I prioritize consistent family devotional times in my family’s schedule.						
9. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in my home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.						

10. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.						
11. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.						
12. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.						
13. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.						
14. If asked, I could easily locate key verses in the Bible related to disciple-making of my children.						
15. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]						
16. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child’s spiritual growth.						

PART 3: PARENTAL PRACTICES

Please answer the questions below by checking the appropriate answer.

	NEVER	ONCE	A COUPLE OF TIMES	THREE OR FOUR TIMES	FIVE OR SIX TIMES	SEVEN OR MORE TIMES
17. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past week have I prayed aloud with any of my children?						

18. How many times in the past week has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?						
19. How many times in the past month have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?						
20. How many times in the past month have I discusses any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?						
21. How many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?						
22. How many times in the past two months have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?						
23. How many times in the past year have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?						
24. How often in the past year has any church leaders made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual development?						

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your honesty in completing this survey will help us to best develop and implement a process for family-equipping disciple-making within our homes.

APPENDIX 2

SERMON SERIES RUBRIC

SERMON SERIES EVALUATION					
1 – INSUFFICIENT 2 – NEEDS ATTENTION 3 – SUFFICIENT 4 - EXEMPLARY					
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	COMMENTS
The content of the sermons is faithful to Scripture.					
The content of the sermons is theologically sound and has a clear, central truth.					
The content of the sermons covers the biblical principle of family discipleship.					
The sermons provide practical application for all members of the church regarding family discipleship					
The sermons provide logical lead ins for families in small groups utilizing the corresponding curriculum.					
The sermons lead to a moment of response for parents regarding family discipleship.					

APPENDIX 3

FAMILY-EQUIPPING TEACHING SERIES RUBRIC

FAMILY-EQUIPPING TEACHING SERIES EVALUATION					
1 – INSUFFICIENT 2 – NEEDS ATTENTION 3 – SUFFICIENT 4 - EXEMPLARY					
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	COMMENTS
BIBLICAL FIDELITY					
The content of the lessons is faithful to Scripture.					
The content of the lesson utilizes Scripture accurately and clearly.					
SCOPE					
The content of the lesson covers the biblical principle of family discipleship.					
The lessons reinforce principles presented in corresponding sermons related to the familial role for discipleship.					
METHODOLOGY					
The lesson utilizes various learning approaches designed to connect with different learning styles.					
The lesson provides examples via role play and case studies that are effective for adult learners.					
The lessons are logically and clearly arranged.					

APPENDIX 4

PRE- AND POST-PROJECT SURVEY STATISTICS

Table A1: Results from FDS: Perceptions – Unpaired¹

Respondent	Pre-Project Survey	Post-Project Survey
1	33	33
2	31	32
3	32	31
4	33	34
5	30	34
6	34	31
7	35	28
8	26	29
9	30	32
10	32	35
11	30	34
12	32	29
13	29	30
14	36	38
15	35	34
16	34	37

¹The results are unpaired. That means that respondent 1 in the Pre-Project Survey is not the same person as in the Post-Project Survey. This is true for all respondents in the tables presented in this appendix.

Table A1. Table A1: Results from FDS: Perceptions – Unpaired (Continued)

Respondent	Pre-Project Survey	Post-Project Survey
17	33	26
18	33	34
19	33	36
20	36	32
21	27	33
22	33	33
23	32	28
24	29	25
25	33	29
26	34	31
27	37	33
28	30	28

Table A2. Results from FDS: Practices – Unpaired

Respondent	Pre-Project Survey	Post-Project Survey
1	37	44
2	18	39
3	30	27
4	27	37
5	10	38
6	27	36
7	35	18
8	37	14
9	34	34

Table A2. Results from FDS: Practices – Unpaired (Continued)

Respondent	Pre-Project Survey	Post-Project Survey
10	19	26
11	26	35
12	39	30
13	20	17
14	34	18
15	23	37
16	25	30
17	35	18
18	33	33
19	30	33
20	35	39
21	33	34
22	21	38
23	17	15
24	37	46
25	23	15
26	36	15
27	39	19
28	23	34

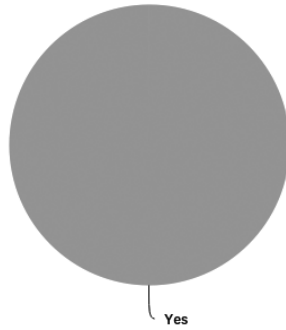
APPENDIX 5

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY RESULTS

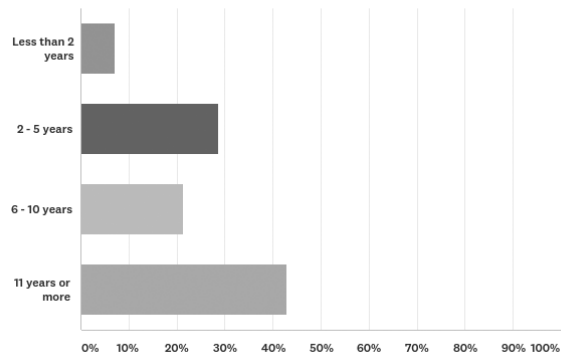
The following results come from the FDS, Parts 1 and 2, offered to parents who are members of FBCOP. To ensure the numbers for both surveys were identical, the first 28 responses to the pre-project survey were used. The post-project survey had 28 valid responses.

Pre-Project Survey (Part 1)

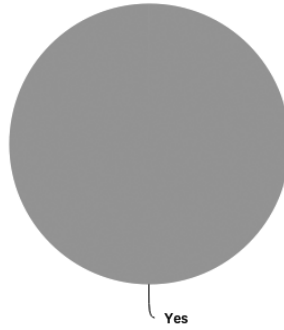
Q3. Are You currently a member of FBCOP?



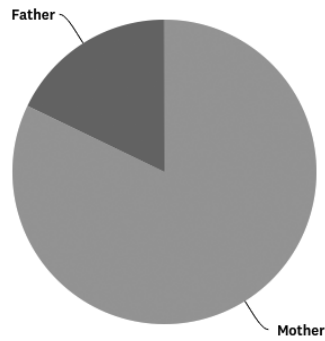
Q4. If yes to Number 3, how many years have you been a member of FBCOP?



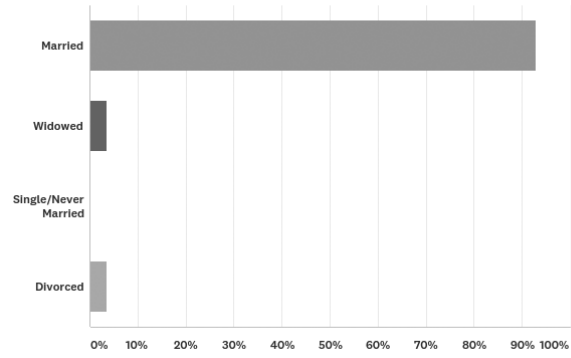
Q5. Are you a parent of children in high school or younger living in the home?



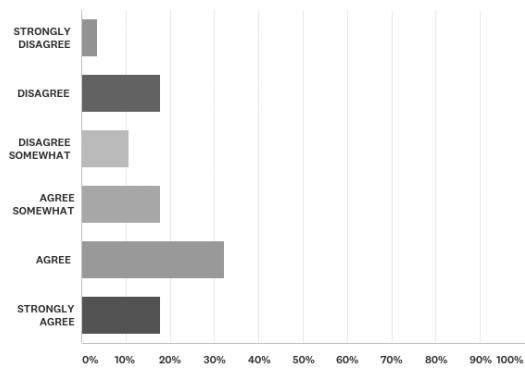
Q6. If yes to number 5, are you ...



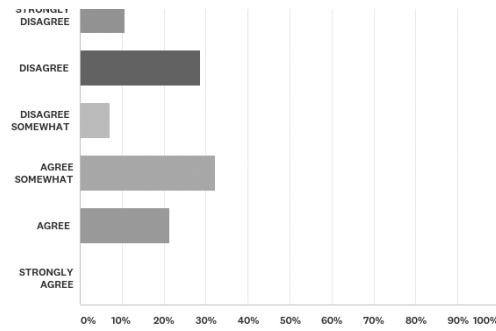
Q7. Marital Status



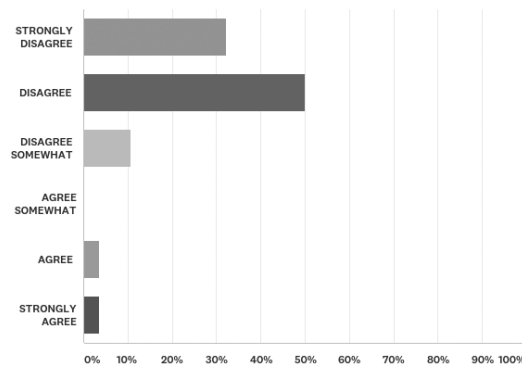
Q8. I prioritize consistent family devotional times in my family's schedule.



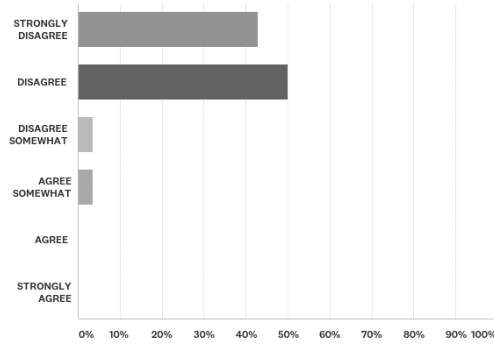
Q9. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in my home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.



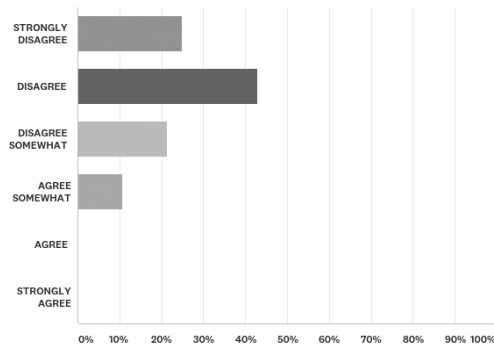
Q10. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.



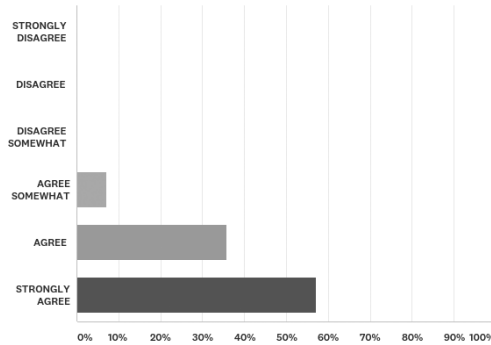
Q11. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.



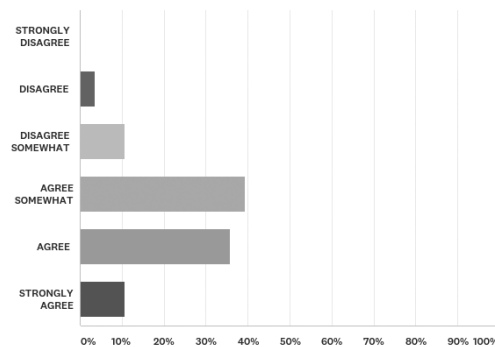
Q12. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities – even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.



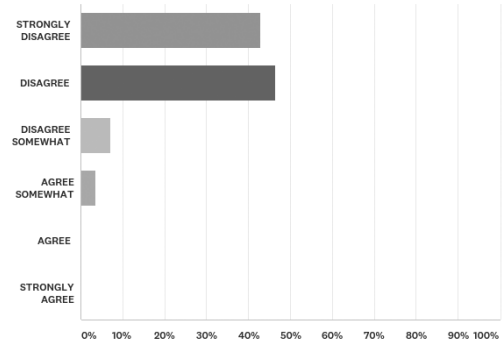
Q13. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.



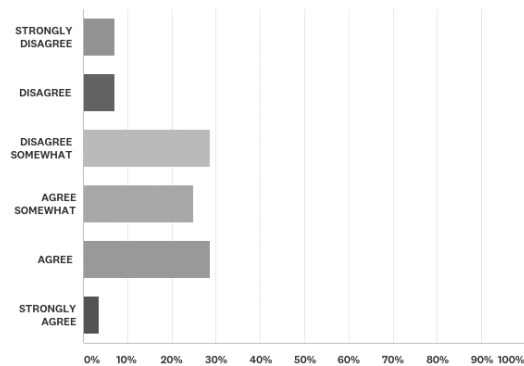
Q14. If asked, I could easily locate key verses in the Bible related to disciple-making of my children.



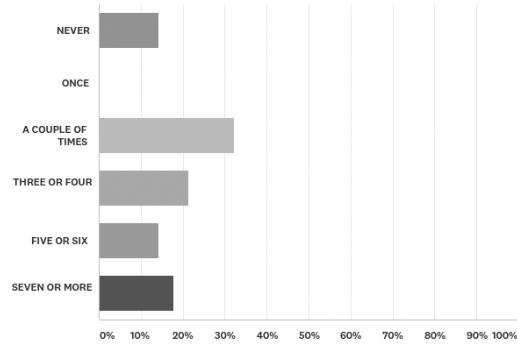
Q15. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others.
 [REVERSE SCORED]



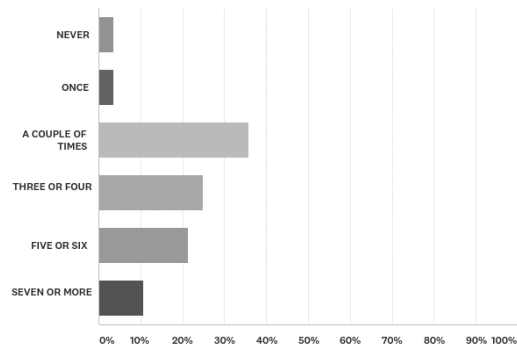
Q16. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.



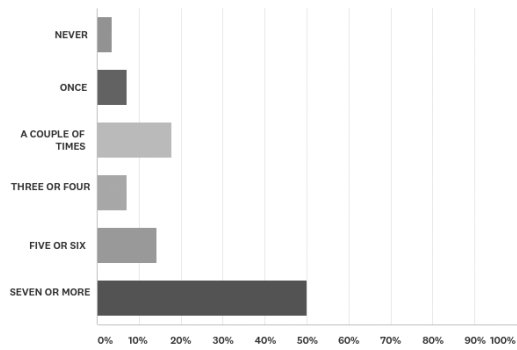
Q17. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past week have I prayed aloud with any of my children?



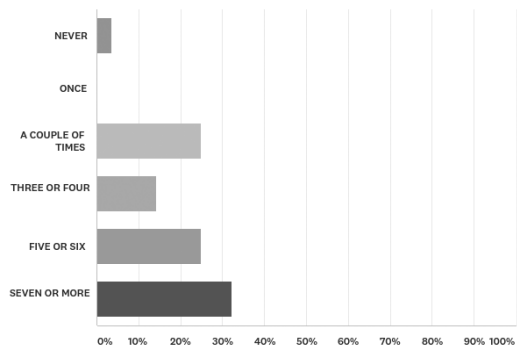
Q18. How many times in the past week has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?



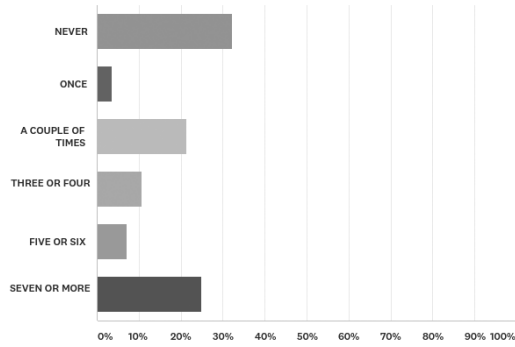
Q19. How many times in the past month have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?



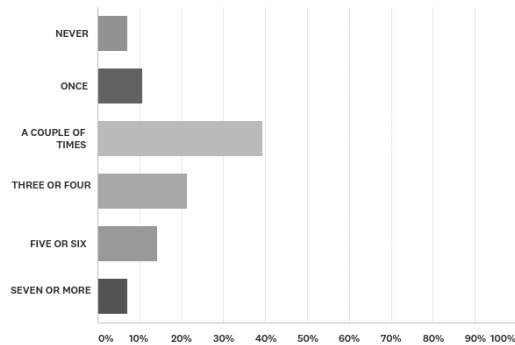
Q20. How many times in the past month have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?



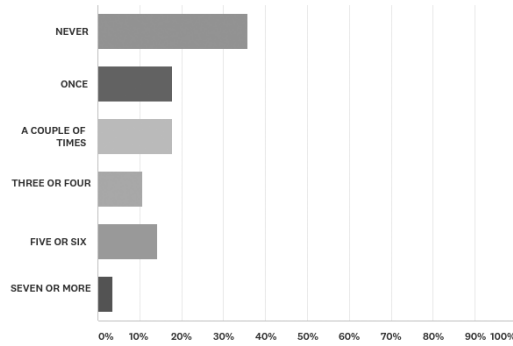
Q21. How many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?



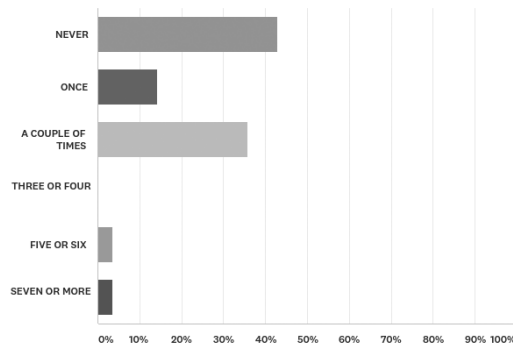
Q22. How many times in the past two months have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?



Q23. How many times in the past year have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?

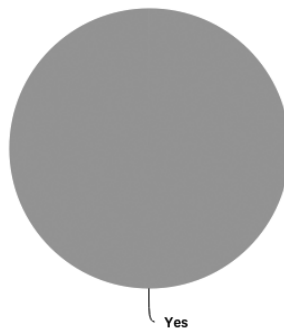


Q24. How often in the past year have any church leaders made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my children's spiritual development?

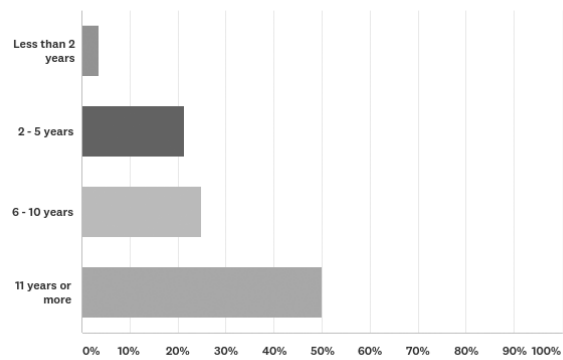


Post-Project Survey (Part 2)

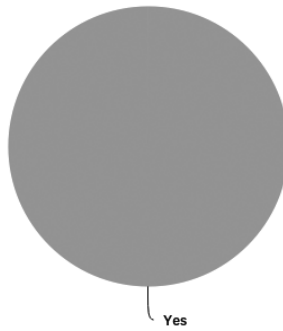
Q3. Are You currently a member of FBCOP?



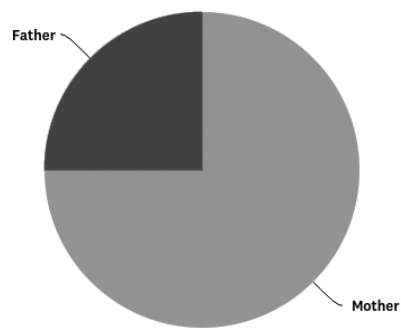
Q4. If yes to Number 3, how many years have you been a member of FBCOP?



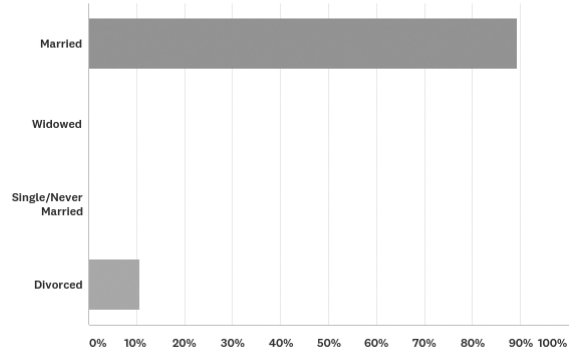
Q5. Are you a parent of children in high school or younger living in the home?



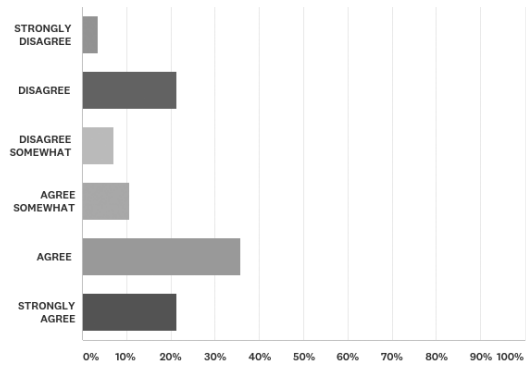
Q6. If yes to number 5, are you ...



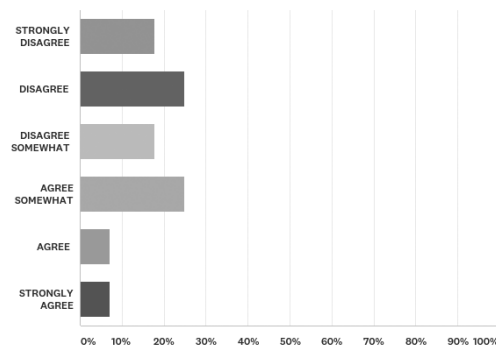
Q7. Marital Status



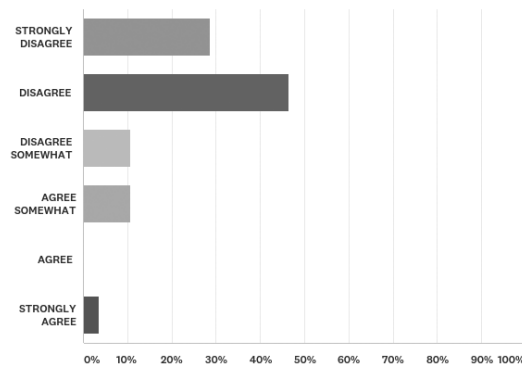
Q8. I prioritize consistent family devotional times in my family's schedule.



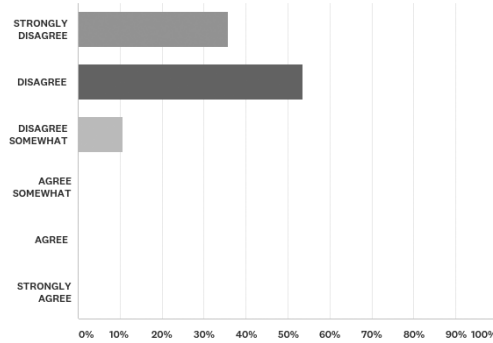
Q9. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in my home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.



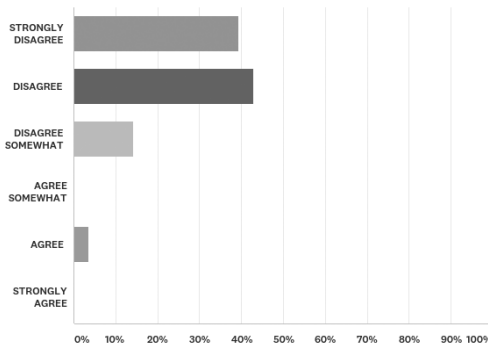
Q10. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.



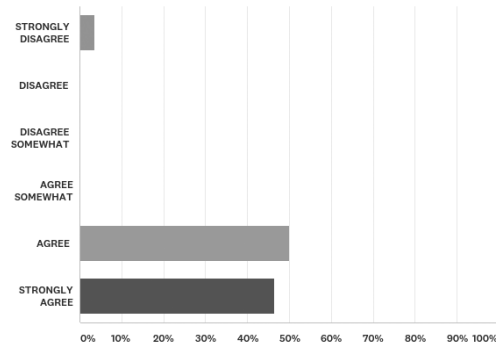
Q11. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.



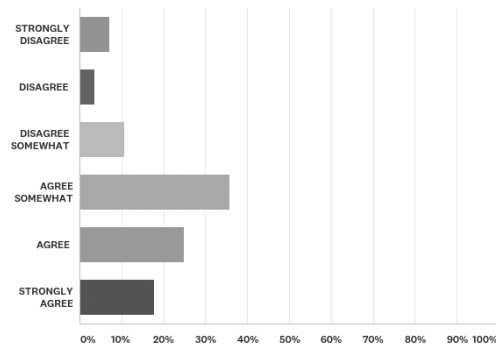
Q12. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities – even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.



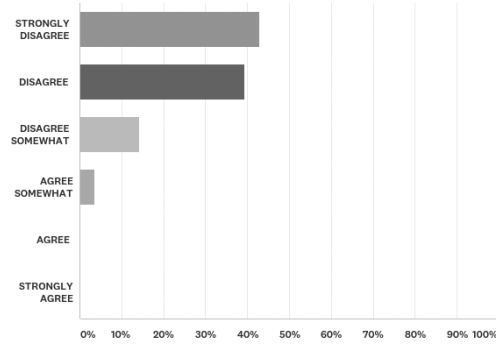
Q13. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.



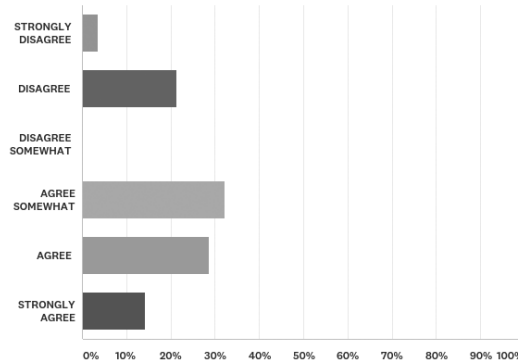
Q14. If asked, I could easily locate key verses in the Bible related to disciple-making of my children.



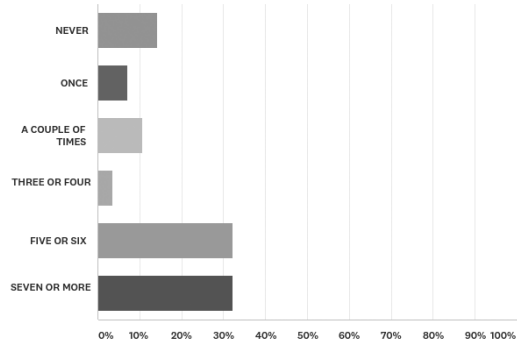
Q15. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others.
 [REVERSE SCORED]



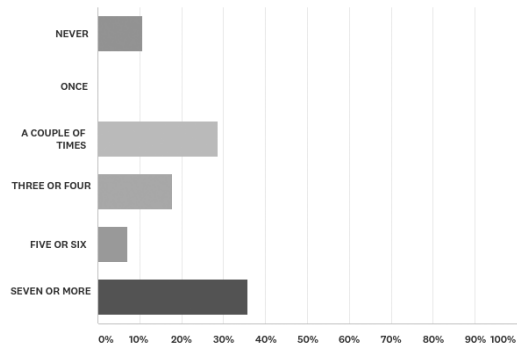
Q16. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.



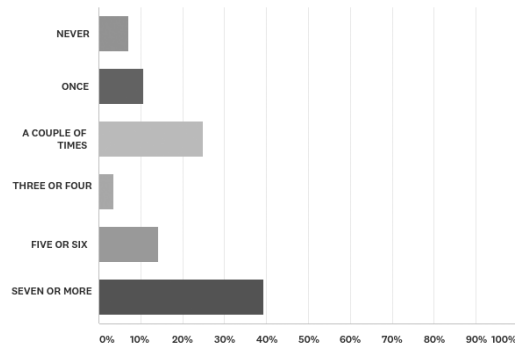
Q17. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past week have I prayed aloud with any of my children?



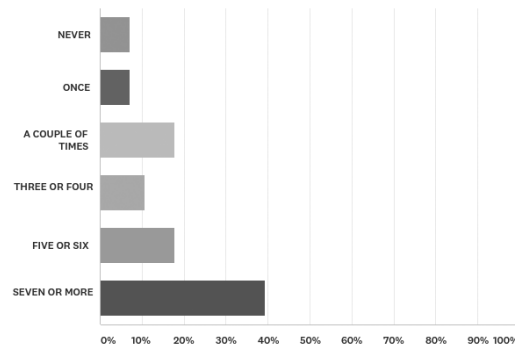
Q18. How many times in the past week has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?



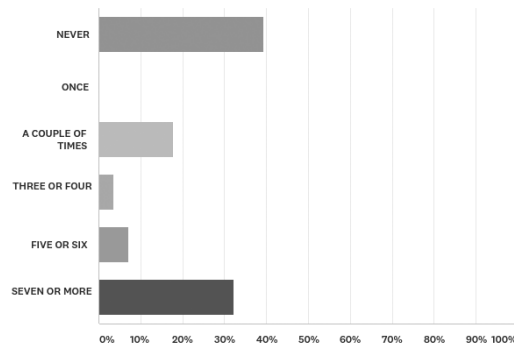
Q19. How many times in the past month have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?



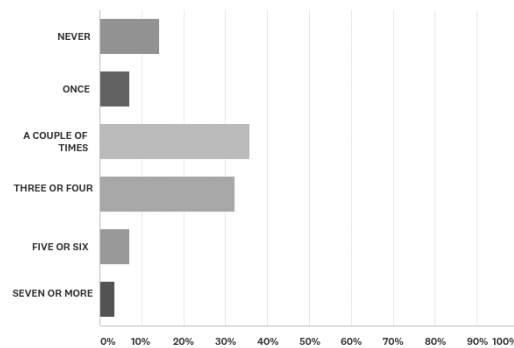
Q20. How many times in the past month have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?



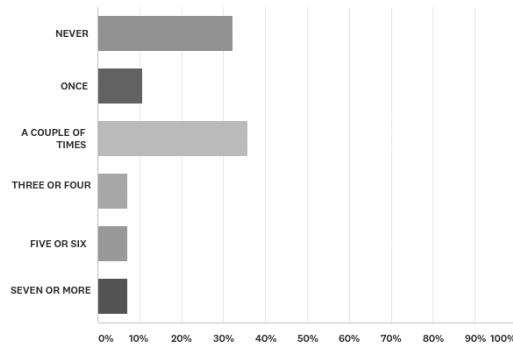
Q21. How many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?



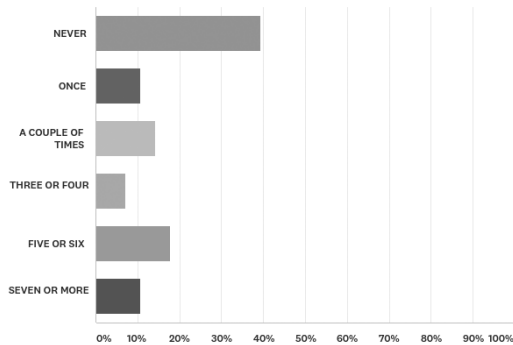
Q22. How many times in the past two months have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?



Q23. How many times in the past year have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?



Q24. How often in the past year have any church leaders made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my children's spiritual development?



APPENDIX 6
FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE

The Family Worship Guide (FWG) is provided for parents of preschoolers and children up through fifth grade. This guide gives an overview of how home-centered, family worship can happen with specific learning points for children based on their age and developmental level. That taught through this guide is affirmed and supported through the ministries of First Baptist Church.¹

¹Much of the information included in our Family Worship Guide was provided as a gift from Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Some aspects have been adjusted to fit best for the context of First Baptist Church of Orange Park.

INTRODUCTION

David Tarkington, Lead Pastor

Every Christian parent desires to raise their children so they can grow up to love and trust Jesus. God's great commission to all Christians to make disciples was not some design to begin at a church building. The family is God's design and within the family, parents are given the great honor and challenge of leading their children to know God and to grow in their walk with Him.

As the First Family², we desire to partner with you, as parents in this journey of faith, equipping and enabling you to be the lead disciple-makers for your children. Don't back away because this seems overwhelming. This wonderful journey is centered on God, enabled in the home, and equipped through the community of faith...your church. In other words, we're in this together.

God's Bible must be prominent in conversation and daily life with our children. Training our children in godliness is not something that can be put off until they are older. Whatever your child's age, and wherever you are along the journey of faith yourself, we must begin now to equip and enable our children to grow in their faith. In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, God gives us these instructions:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. - Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)

This call was for God's people in the Old Testament and the truth remains today – the home is the center of worship. However, in our culture, that concept can seem strange or even daunting for parents.

Our leadership team recognizes that we have a responsibility as your church to walk alongside you as you train your children in godliness and faith. This is our role for two-parent households, one-parent households and in unique cases featuring grandchildren, foster children, etc.

²The term “First Family” is the name of our mini-network where First Baptist Church of Orange Park (FBCOP) is the main campus. Our church has three satellite campuses and the teaching plans and family-equipping curriculum is covered at all locations. Therefore, each campus is part of First Family.

This booklet is a resource designed to give you hands-on helps for guiding your children as well as additional resources. We believe this booklet will reveal some resources that can help you. There are costs to most of these, but believe me, they're worth it, if implemented well. Another purpose of this booklet is to introduce you to the concept of family worship.

Thank you for allowing us to take this journey with you. It's going to be exciting!

WHAT IS FAMILY WORSHIP?

Christian writer Patrick Kavanaugh compares family worship to a family meal. Just as a “family meal” is the time when all family members come together to eat, so too is “family worship” the time when all family members come together for spiritual encouragement.³ A good family meal requires intentional planning and preparation. Family worship requires this as well. I know, some of you are saying “We don’t even get to have family meals nowadays!” and that is true in our culture. Yet, I know that when I deem something to be important, I make time for it.

“Happy is the household where the altar burns day and night with the sweet perfume of family worship!”

– C.H. Spurgeon

Don’t let the term “family worship” overwhelm you. There’s no expectation that you as parents are to have your children sit in rows while you lead in hymns and then preach a sermon to them. However, if that works for you, I guess you could go for it, but the image of family worship is one of family taking time to read the Bible, teach truth, and pray. A song is good, too if you like.

When? Consistency Is Key.

Some parents pray and teach the Bible to their children each night before bedtime. Others supplement bedtime stories and prayers with more structured worship times including singing, as I mentioned above. Some families have their worship time in the mornings. Others do this around the mealtime while the family is together around the table. Family schedules are as unique as families. Regardless when you schedule your time, be consistent and press on. It will be easy to skip a day or two but do your best not to do this. If you break the consistency you seek to set, you may find yourself years from now wishing you had persisted. In fact, I’m confident you will. Yet, here’s the reality – you have the capacity to this and do this well. Your church is here to walk with you.

Also know that creatively teaching the Bible to children is not limited to an intentional time of family worship. As parents, we reveal the truth of God’s Word throughout our lives and conversations. As we know, our children are always watching and always learning. Children also have many questions. These questions present us with opportunities to teach truth. Always be aware of these “teachable moments” and take advantage of them.

³Patrick Kavanaugh, *Raising Children Who Adore God* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 2003), 75.

What If You Miss a Few Days?

Sometimes we start things well (especially things related to spiritual growth) but become distracted or just get busy and we miss a few days. This is the case with personal devotions and the reason that many people tend to forsake their resolutions to do better in life. Be encouraged, if you miss a day or two, **DO NOT GIVE UP**. Just start where you are. Get back to it. It is challenging to be consistent, but you can do it. Often your children will keep you on schedule because they will be looking forward to the next family worship time.

GETTING STARTED

Basics for Beginning

God Speaks Through His Word

Being a good learner requires listening and listening is not the same as hearing. Most parents know this is true. As we listen to God, we must focus on what He is saying, though you likely will not hear an audible voice. God speaks primarily through his Word and as parents, we are teaching our children the value of listening to God through reading and studying and hearing His Word read.

Begin with a Good Bible

If you are just beginning a family worship time, you should begin by finding a good Bible. There are numerous translations and versions available for purchase nowadays, but the key is using a Bible that does not use gender-neutral language (for this eliminates much of the actual intention of the words) and is understandable and readable for you. Below is a listing of some recommended Bible translations.

- **English Standard Version (ESV)**
- **Christian Standard Bible (CSB)**
- **New American Standard Bible (NASB)**

Here are a few Bibles available for children that could be very useful as you begin your journey into family worship.

- ***Read to Me Bible for Kids*** (B&H)
- ***Following Jesus Bible*** (Crossway)
- ***HCSB Illustrated Study Bible for Kids*** (B&H)
- ***ESV Big Picture Bible*** (Crossway)

Find a Good Bible Storybook

A storybook is different than an actual copy of the Bible. Storybooks are narratives of Bible stories put together in such a way, often with illustrations, as to help young children understand the characters and stories of the Bible. However, many Bible storybooks summarize the facts of a Bible story from Scripture, but then draw a lesson from the story that the biblical author did not intend. There is a tendency to draw moral lessons designed for behavior modification (“do this” or “don’t do that”) from these stories rather than seeing God’s actions in history to rescue humanity. While there is nothing wrong with stories with moral teaching. In fact, these are good. It is a mistake to see the Bible simply as a rule book for behavior change. To present the Bible in this way may lead children to miss the redemptive story of the gospel.

Use Take-Home Pages & Notes from KidTown & KidCity

KidTown is our preschool ministry. KidCity is our children's ministry. When children gather in groups or at KidCity Worship on Sundays, they are taught Bible lessons and are most often given (depending on the age) take-home pages and notes based on their lesson. Our curriculum presents the gospel clearly and these pages and notes are wonderful discussion starters and springboards for families to use in family worship.

Use Crafts/Drama/Coloring Pages, Etc.

The "felt-board" is making a comeback. If you don't know what a felt-board is, don't worry about it. It was a tool used by children's leaders decades ago. Since retro is in, some churches have dusted these off and brought them back. Basically, the intent is to use imagery, video, crafts, coloring, etc. to help children grasp and remember the stories being taught.

If someone in your home records shows on the DIY channel or has a hefty Pinterest account, crafts may be a good option. Just be ready to have a room full of craft foam and glitter. Some families act out the Bible stories with each person in the family playing a role. I know of one family where dad had the honor of playing the donkey in one story. Of course, these elements will be determined by your creativity and the age of your children. The bottom line is that while family worship is serious, it can be fun as well.

Listen to an Audio Bible

The daily nap may be a reality in your home, or some long-forgotten option. Some families have taken advantage of the rest time, even as children are laying down for bed, to play an audio Bible. There are CDs, and downloadable Bibles. Some include Scripture songs where verses are put to music. Check out free podcasts and the Bible apps for options as well.

We Answer God as We Learn Truth

One of the ways we respond to God is by meditating on the truths of his word. As we hide his word in our hearts, we memorize these truths. Yet, memorization is not to be done in order to win a prize or treat. Ensure your children value the Word. One danger in memorization is that children just become mechanical and respond with rote recitations. Scripture memory is not a drill, nor a competition to be won. Teaching children Scripture should never be done in a negative, repressive, or manipulative way. This violates the personality of the child and the nature of God. The truths of God should be taught in an atmosphere of love and special understanding of the child as he/she learns these truths over time.

Scripture Memory

This guide provides recommended Scriptures for you to memorize and study with your child. You will be surprised at how quickly they can pick up these verses and repeat them to you. Some parents will say “But they don’t understand what these verses mean,” as if that should eliminate the need to memorize. As parents you have the great joy of helping them begin to understand.

Learning Doctrine

Doctrine matters. As a church, we hold to the confessional statement known as *The Baptist Faith & Message (2000)*. This statement lays out what we hold to be true, based upon Scripture, regarding God, man, the church, and other things. The “Question and Answer” portion of family worship is designed to help you train your child in the key doctrines of Christianity and the church. Remember, you are setting a foundation that will be set for the remainder of your child’s lives. Doctrine is taught weekly in our small groups, but to be taught continually throughout the week, by the primary influencers of a child allows these truths to better cement themselves within the heart and mind of our children.

We Answer God in Prayer

Another way we respond to God is through prayer.

Pray for Your Children

Teaching and modeling the Christian faith is essential, but remember, only God can transform a heart. Only God can bring conviction upon our children and only He can give them new life in Christ. While it may be years before your child fully grasps this and surrenders to the lordship of Jesus Christ, your prayers are key in providing and protecting them. Ultimately, it is God. Remember that. Yet, God invites you into this incredible journey and gives you a priceless role to play.

Make it a daily focus to pray for your children by name. This may be done in the family worship time but should also be throughout the day.

Set an Alarm

Here's an idea that many have used. Set alarms on my phone that coincide with your children's birth dates. For example, if your child was born on August 17, set an alarm for 8:17, an alarm goes off to remind you to pray for this child. You may want to make these silent alarms that cause the phone to vibrate, depending on your daily schedule. Be sure to choose AM or PM that works best for your schedule.

Pray with Your Children

Praying for your children is essential, but do not forget to pray with them. Lead them in prayer. Show them how to do this by modeling well. In prayer, we show our children that we depend on God, his mercy and protection. Pray your children will grow to love Jesus and trust in Him. Pray they will have godly friends. Pray that if God desires they marry that their spouses will love Him and be passionate for the gospel. Pray your children will be protected from the schemes of the Enemy. Teach them to adore and honor God in their prayers, using the Model Prayer as your template. Teach them to confess their sins and ask God to meet their needs.

Sing or Play Music with Your Children

Music is a gift from God to his children, designed to bring Him glory. Of course, there are various forms of music that have been perverted by the enemy so that God is not honored. Most children sing and are drawn to music.

Some families are gifted musically. Others may not have the talents of playing or singing in tune, but the gift of music is still valuable. With MP3s, CDs and easily accessible music today, utilize these songs during your family worship time.

Sing your favorite hymn or praise choruses about Jesus to your children as you rock them to sleep at night, or when you tuck them into bed. Sing and dance (yes, we said dance...it's mentioned in the Bible) with your children. Make it fun. Fun can be worshipful.

Incorporate songs into your family worship time. Scripture memory songs can help as you teach your children verses from the Bible. Our KidCity Choirs sing songs together that honor God and often these songs are made available for parents to have on CD or MP3. Play them in your car as you travel with your children. Play and sing along with them in your home as you desire.

FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS

Ages Birth – 3

Here is a listing of books and resources for parents of preschoolers up to age three. Most of these resources are available at local bookstores and online stores.

Resource Recommendations

Bible Storybooks for Preschoolers (Infants – Age 2)

- *Baby's First Bible: A CarryAlong Treasury* by Colin MacLean & Moira MacLean (Reader's Digest Books)
- *Noah's Ark – Little Words Matter* (B&H Kids)
- *All God's Creatures* by Karen Hill (Little Simon Publishing)
- *God Made You Just Right* by Jill Roman Lord (Worthy Kids/Ideals)
- *The Baby Bible – Stories About Jesus* (David Cook Publishing)
- *Snuggle Time Psalms* by Glenys Nellist (ZonderKidz)
- *Thank You Lord for Everything* by P.J. Lyons (ZonderKidz)
- *The Special Baby – Jesus* (Shaped Board Books) by Hazel Scrimshire (CF4Kids)
- *The Toddler's ABC Bible Storybook* by Carolyn Larsen & Caron Turk (Crossway)

Bibles for Preschoolers (Ages 2 & 3)

- *Read to Me Toddlers Bible* (B&H)
- *The Big Picture Story Bible* by David R. Helm & Gail Schoonmaker (Crossway)
- *The Bible App for Kids* (YouVersion)

Books for Teaching Christian Truths (Ages 2 & 3)

- *I Love My Bible* by Debby Anderson (Crossway)
- *God Knows My Name* by Debby Anderson (Crossway)
- *God Is Watching Over You* by P.J. Lyons (Zonderkidz)
- *The Plans I Have for You* by Amy Parker (Zonderkidz)
- *I Prayed for You* by Jean Fishcher (Tommy Nelson)
- *Zacchaeus and Jesus* by Dandi Daley Mackall (Tyndale Kids)
- *Would a Worm Go for a Walk* by Hannah C. Hall (Worthy Kids/Ideals)

Music for Preschoolers (Ages 2 & 3)

- *Songs that Jesus Said: Scripture Into Music* by Keith & Kristyn Getty (Getty Music)
- *Worship: KidStyle for Preschoolers* (LifeWay)
- *Cedarwood Kids: Preschool Songs* (Provident Music)
- *Hidden in My Heart: A Lullaby Journey Through Scriptures* (Breakaway Music)

Expectations: Memorize the Word

Scripture Memory (Ages 2 & 3)

Genesis 1:1 (ESV)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Date Completed _____

Psalms 53:3b (ESV)

There is none who does good, not even one.

Date Completed _____

Matthew 22:37 (ESV)

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Date Completed _____

Matthew 22:39b (ESV)

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Date Completed _____

John 17:17b (ESV)

Your word is truth.

Date Completed _____

Acts 16:31a (ESV)

And they said, "Believe in the Lord."

Date Completed _____

Ephesians 6:1 (ESV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Date Completed _____

1 John 4:19 (ESV)

We love because he first loved us.

Date Completed _____

Expectations: Questions & Answers

Questions About God, Humanity, and Sin (1-24)

Ask the question in bold to your child and teach them to respond with the answer in italics that declares the truth of Scripture.

Who made you? God made me,

(Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Acts 17:24-29)

Date Completed _____

What else did God make? God made all things.

(Genesis 1; Acts 14:15; Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16)

Date Completed _____

Why did God make you and all things? For his own glory.

(Psalm 19:1; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Revelation 4:11, 15)

Explanation: God's glory is his goodness and his greatness

Date Completed _____

How can you glorify God? By loving him and doing what he commands.

(Ecclesiastes 12:13; Mark 12:29-31; John 15:8-10; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

Date Completed _____

Why should you glorify God? Because he made me and takes care of me,

(Daniel 4:39; Romans 11:36; Revelation 4:11)

Date Completed _____

Are there more gods than one? No, there is only one true God,

(Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Mark 12:29; Acts 17:22-31)

Date Completed _____

In how many persons does this one true God exist? In three persons.

(Matthew 3:16-17; John 5:23; 10:30; 14:9-10; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:20; 2 John 9; Revelation 1:4-5)

Date Completed _____

Who are they? God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21)

Date Completed _____

A Bible Prayer for Preschoolers

(Ages 2 & 3)

Numbers 6:24 (ESV)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

Explanation: This prayer is a benediction (blessing for the road) to speak when saying good-bye to friends.

Date Completed _____

FOR PRESCHOOLERS & KINDERGARTNERS

Ages 4 & 5

Here is a listing of books and resources for parents of preschoolers ages four and five. Most of these resources are available at local bookstores and online stores.

Resource Recommendations

Bible Storybooks for Preschoolers (Ages 4 & 5)

- *365 Bible Stories for Young Hearts* by Lion Hudson (Crossway)
- *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* by Sally Lloyd-Jones & Jago (ZonderKidz)
- *Bible Stories for Preschoolers* by Monika Kustra, Betty Free Swanberg, & Andrzej Chalecki (Tyndale Kids)
- *The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden* by Kevin DeYoung & Don Clark (Crossway)
- *This is No Fairy Tale* by Dale Tolmasoff & Corbert Gauthier (Crossway)

Bibles for Preschoolers (Ages 4 & 5)

- *Read to Me Toddlers Bible* (B&H)
- *The Big Picture Story Bible* by David R. Helm & Gail Schoonmaker (Crossway)
- *The Bible App for Kids* by YouVersion

Books for Teaching Christian Truths (Ages 4 & 5)

- *Bedtime Devotions with Jesus* (Tommy Nelson)
- *The Plans I Have for You* by Amy Parker (Zonderkidz)
- *A Love Letter from God* by P.K. Hallinan (Worthy Kids/Ideals)
- *I Love My Bible* by Debby Anderson (Crossway)
- *God Knows My Name* by Debby Anderson (Crossway)
- *Made by God – Curious Creatures* (Zonderkidz)
- *I Can* by Kathryn O'Brien (Tyndale Kids)

Music for Preschoolers (Ages 4 & 5)

- *Songs that Jesus Said: Scripture Into Music* by Keith & Kristyn Getty (Getty Music)
- *Worship: KidStyle for Preschoolers* (LifeWay)
- *Cedarhurst Kids: Preschool Songs* (Provident Music)

Expectations: Memorize the Word

General Bible Knowledge (Ages 4 & 5)

Know the name of the first book of the Old Testament – Genesis.

Date Completed _____

Know the names of the first four books of the New Testament – Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.

Date Completed _____

Scripture Memory (Ages 4 & 5)

Genesis 1:31a (ESV)

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

Date Completed _____

Psalms 23:1-3 (ESV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Date Completed _____

Psalms 23:4-6 (ESV)

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Date Completed _____

Psalms 100:3 (ESV)

Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Date Completed _____

Proverbs 3:5a (ESV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Date Completed _____

Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Date Completed _____

Matthew 3:17 (ESV)

And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Date Completed _____

Matthew 16:16 (ESV)

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Date Completed _____

Luke 2:11 (ESV)

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Date Completed _____

Luke 2:52 (ESV)

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Date Completed _____

John 1:1 (ESV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Date Completed _____

John 1:14 (ESV)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Date Completed _____

John 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Date Completed _____

John 20:31 (ESV)

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Date Completed _____

Acts 1:11b (ESV)

This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

Date Completed _____

Acts 16:31 (ESV)

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Date Completed _____

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Date Completed _____

Revelation 1:17b-18a (ESV)

Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore.

Date Completed _____

Expectations: Questions & Answers

Questions About God, Humanity, and Sin (9-25)

Ask the question in bold to your child and teach them to respond with the answer in italics that declares the truth of Scripture.

Who is God? God is Spirit and does not have a body like us,
(John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:17)

Date Completed _____

Where is God? God is everywhere.
(Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Acts 17:27-28)

Date Completed _____

Can you see God? No. I cannot see God, but he always sees me.
(Genesis 16:13; Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:16; Psalm 139:1-5; Proverbs 5:21; Hebrews 4:12-13)

Date Completed _____

Does God know all things? Yes. Nothing can be hidden from God.
(1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Luke 12:6-7; Romans 2:16)

Date Completed _____

Can God do all things? Yes. God can do all his holy will.
(Psalm 147:5; Jeremiah 32:17; Daniel 4:34-35; Ephesians 1:11)

Date Completed _____

Where do you learn how to love and obey God? Only in the Bible.
(Job 11:7; Psalm 119:104; Isaiah 8:20; Matthew 22:29; 2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Date Completed _____

Who wrote the Bible? God wrote the Bible through inspiring holy men.
(1 Peter 1:20-21; Acts 1:16; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:10-11)

Date Completed _____

Can we trust the Bible? Yes. The Bible is all-sufficient and without error.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 22:18-19; Psalm 12:6; Numbers 23:19)
Explanation: "All-sufficient" means that the Bible teaches us all we need to know about God, all we need to know about obeying him, about our sin, and God's way of salvation.

Date Completed _____

Who were our first parents? Adam and Eve.
(Genesis 2:18-25; 3:20; 5:1-2; Acts 17:26; 1 Timothy 2:13)

Date Completed _____

Of what were our first parents made? God made the body of Adam out of the ground and formed Eve from the body of Adam.
(Genesis 2:7, 21-23; 3:19; Psalm 103:14)

Date Completed _____

What did God give Adam and Eve besides bodies? He gave them souls that could never die.
(1 Corinthians 15:45; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1)

Date Completed _____

Have you a soul as well as a body? Yes. The Bible teaches me that I have a soul that can never die.
(Matthew 10:28; Mark 8:34-38; 12:30)

Date Completed _____

In what condition did God make Adam and Eve? He made them holy and happy.
(Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:4-8)

Date Completed _____

Did Adam and Eve stay holy and happy? No. They sinned against God.
(Genesis 3:1-7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Hosea 6:7)

Date Completed _____

What is sin? Sin is anything I say, do, or think in disobedience or transgression of God's law.
(Romans 3:20; James 2:9-10; 1 John 3:4)

Date Completed _____

What is disobedience? Disobedience is not being or doing what God requires.
(James 4:17)

Date Completed _____

What is transgression? Transgression is doing what God forbids.
(1 Samuel 13:8-14; 15:22-23; Hosea 6:7; Romans 1:21-32)

Date Completed _____

A Bible Prayer for Preschoolers *(Ages 4 & 5)*

Psalm 9:1-2 (ESV)

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Explanation: This prayer is a song of praise to the Lord.

Date Completed _____

FOR CHILDREN

Grades 1 & 2

Here is a listing of books and resources for parents of children in grades one and two. Most of these resources are available at local bookstores and online stores.

Resource Recommendations

Bibles for Children (Grades 1 & 2)

- *Read to Me Bible for Kids* (B&H)
- *Following Jesus Bible* (Crossway)
- *HCSB Illustrated Study Bible for Kids* (B&H)
- *ESV Big Picture Bible* (Crossway)
- *The Bible App for Kids* (YouVersion)

Books for Teaching Christian Truths (Grades 1 & 2)

- *Heroes of the Bible Treasury* (Zonderkidz)
- *Peter's Perfect Prayer Place* by Stephen & Alex Kendrick (B&H Kids)
- *It Will Be Okay* by Lisa Terkeurst (Tommy Nelson)
- *Know Your Bible for Kids* by Donna K. Maltese (Barbour)
- *Not a Cloud in the Sky* by Renita Boyle (B&H Kids)
- *The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden* by Kevin DeYoung & Don Clark (Crossway)
- *When Can I?* (B&H)
- *I Believe in Jesus – Leading Your Child to Christ* by John MacArthur (Tommy Nelson)

Music for Children (Grades 1 & 2)

- *Seeds Family Worship Series* (Seeds Family Worship)

Expectations: Memorize the Word

General Bible Knowledge (Grades 1 & 2)

Know the Ten Commandments – Exodus 20:3-5a, 7-8, 12-17

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

Scripture Memory (Grades 1 & 2)

Numbers 23:19 (ESV)

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Date Completed _____

Psalms 23:1-3 (ESV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Date Completed _____

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (ESV)

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Date Completed _____

Psalms 119:9-11 (ESV)

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Date Completed _____

Psalms 119:105 (ESV)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Date Completed _____

Psalm 121 (ESV)

I will lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Date Completed _____

Psalm 145:8 (ESV)

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Date Completed _____

Proverbs 1:8-9 (ESV)

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

Date Completed _____

Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Date Completed _____

Matthew 1:21 (ESV)

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Date Completed _____

Matthew 4:19 (ESV)

And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Date Completed _____

Matthew 5:16 (ESV)

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Date Completed _____

Luke 18:16 (ESV)

But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."

Date Completed _____

Luke 19:10 (ESV)

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Date Completed _____

John 3:30 (ESV)

He must increase, but I must decrease.

Date Completed _____

John 4:24 (ESV)

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

Date Completed _____

John 6:68 (ESV)

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Date Completed _____

John 11:25-26 (ESV)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Date Completed _____

John 14:6 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Date Completed _____

John 14:21 (ESV)

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

Date Completed _____

Romans 3:22-24 (ESV)

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Date Completed _____

Romans 5:6 (ESV)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Date Completed _____

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Date Completed _____

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Date Completed _____

Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Date Completed _____

Expectations: Questions & Answers

Questions About God, Humanity, and Sin (26-47 for 1st Grade)

Ask the question in bold to your child and teach them to respond with the answer in italics that declares the truth of Scripture.

What was the sin of our first parents? Eating the forbidden fruit.

(Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6)

Date Completed _____

Why did they eat the forbidden fruit? Because they did not believe what God had said.

(Genesis 3:1-6; Hebrews 11:6)

Date Completed _____

Who tempted them to this sin? The devil tempted Eve, and she gave the fruit to Adam.

(Genesis 3:1-13; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Revelation 12:9)

Date Completed _____

What happened to our first parents when they sinned? Instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable.

(Genesis 3:14-24; 4:1-24; James 1:14-15)

Date Completed _____

What effect did the sin of Adam have on all humanity? All humanity is born in a state of sin and misery.

(Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12, 18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; 1 John 5:19)

Date Completed _____

What do we inherit from Adam as a result of this original sin? A sinful nature.

(1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 14:2-3; 58:3; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Matthew 15:18-20; John 2:24-25; Romans 8:7)

Date Completed _____

What does every sin deserve? The anger and judgment of God.

(Deuteronomy 27:26; Romans 1:18; 2:2; Galatians 3:10; Ephesians 5:6)

Date Completed _____

Do we know what God requires of us? Yes. He has given us his law both in our hearts and in writing.

(Romans 2:14-15)

Date Completed _____

Can anyone go to heaven with a sinful nature? No. Our hearts must be changed before we can be ready for heaven.

(Romans 8:7; Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 1:12-13; 3:1-10; 1 John 5:1, 4, 18)

Date Completed _____

What is a change of heart called? Regeneration.

(Titus 3:5-6)

Date Completed _____

Who can change a sinner's heart? Only the Holy Spirit.

(John 3:3; Romans 8:6-11; 1 Corinthians 2:9-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Titus 3:5-6)

Date Completed _____

Questions about the Ten Commandments

How many commandments did God give on Mount Sinai? Ten Commandments.

(Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-22)

Date Completed _____

What are the Ten Commandments sometimes called? God's law.

(Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 2:14-15; 10:5)

Date Completed _____

Why should we obey the Ten Commandments? Because God is our Creator, Savior, and King.

(Exodus 20:1-2, 11; Deuteronomy 5:1-6)

Date Completed _____

What do the first four commandments teach? Our duty to God.

(Deuteronomy 6:5-6; 10:12-13)

Date Completed _____

What do the last six commandments teach? Our duty to our neighbor.

(Deuteronomy 10:19; Micah 6:8; Galatians 6:10)

Date Completed _____

What is the sum of the Ten Commandments? To love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself.

(Deuteronomy 6:1-15; 11:1; Matthew 22:35-40; James 2:8)

Date Completed _____

Who is your neighbor? Everyone is my neighbor.
(Luke 6:35; 10:25-37)

Date Completed _____

Is God pleased with those who love and obey him? Yes. He says, “I love them that love me.”
(Proverbs 8:17; Exodus 20:6; 1 John 4:7-16)

Date Completed _____

Is God pleased with those who do not love and obey him? No. “God is angry with the wicked every day.”
(Psalm 7:11; Malachi 2:17; Proverbs 6:16-19; 1 Corinthians 16:22)

Date Completed _____

What is the first commandment? The first commandment is, “You shall have no other gods before me.”
(Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7)

Date Completed _____

What does the first commandment teach us? To worship only God.
(Isaiah 45:5-6; Matthew 4:10; Revelation 22:8-9)

Date Completed _____

Questions About God, Humanity, and Sin (48-69 for 2nd Grade)

Ask the question in bold to your child and teach them to respond with the answer in italics that declares the truth of Scripture.

What is the second commandment? The second commandment is “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them.”
(Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

Date Completed _____

What does the second commandment teach us? To worship God in the right way, and to avoid idolatry.
(Isaiah 44:9-20; 46:5-9; John 4:23-24; Acts 17:29)

Date Completed _____

What is the third commandment? The third commandment is, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”
(Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11)

Date Completed _____

What does the third commandment teach us? To respect God's name, Word, and works.

(Isaiah 8:13; Psalm 29:2; 138:2; Revelation 15:3-4)

Date Completed _____

What is the fourth commandment? Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

(Exodus 20:8-11; 23:12; Deuteronomy 15:3-4)

Date Completed _____

What does the fourth commandment teach us? To rest knowing that God has finished his work and kept his promises in Jesus Christ.

(Genesis 2:2-3; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 4:1-16)

Date Completed _____

How do we rest? In prayer and praise, in hearing and reading God's Word, in doing good to our neighbor, in repenting from sin, and in trusting the Lord. In this way of life, we begin to enter eternal rest..

(Isaiah 58:13-14; 66:23; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Luke 4:16; Matthew 12:10-13)

Date Completed _____

What is the fifth commandment? The fifth commandment is "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

(Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16)

Date Completed _____

What does the fifth commandment teach us? To love and obey our parents.

(Matthew 15:3-6; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20)

Date Completed _____

What is the sixth commandment? The sixth commandment is "You shall not murder."

(Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17)

Date Completed _____

Who does the sixth commandment teach us? To avoid hatred and anger.

(Matthew 5:21-24; 1 John 3:15; James 4:1-3)

Date Completed _____

What is the seventh commandment? The seventh commandment is "You shall not commit adultery."

(Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18)

Date Completed _____

What does the seventh commandment teach us? To be pure in heart, language, and conduct.

(Matthew 5:27-28; Ephesians 5:3-5; Philippians 4:8-9)

Date Completed _____

What is the eighth commandment? The eighth commandment is “You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15, 11; Deuteronomy 5:19)

Date Completed _____

What does the eighth commandment teach us? To be honest and not to take things which belong to others.

(Exodus 23:4; Proverbs 21:6-7; Ephesians 4:28)

Date Completed _____

What is the ninth commandment? The ninth commandment is “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

(Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20)

Date Completed _____

What does the ninth commandment teach us? To tell the truth and not to speak evil about others.

(Psalm 15:1-3; Zechariah 8:16; 1 Corinthians 13:6; James 4:11)

Date Completed _____

What is the tenth commandment? The tenth commandment is “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

(Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21; Romans 7:7)

Date Completed _____

What does the tenth commandment teach us? To be content with what we have.

(Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6-8; Hebrews 13:5)

Date Completed _____

Can anyone keep these Ten Commandments? No one since the fall of Adam, except our Lord Jesus, ever did or can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly.

(Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:19-20; James 2:10; 1 John 1:8, 10)

Date Completed _____

Of what use are the Ten Commandments to us? They teach us our duty, make clear our guilt, and show us our need for the Savior.

(1 Timothy 1:8-11; Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24)

Date Completed _____

Does God condemn all men? No. Though he could justly have done so, he has graciously promised to save many.

(Romans 3:19-20, 23-25; John 17:11-12; Isaiah 53:11)

Date Completed _____

A Bible Prayer for Children
(Grades 1 & 2)

Matthew 6:9b-13 (ESV)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Date Completed _____

FOR CHILDREN

Grades 3 – 5

Here is a listing of books and resources for parents of children, grades one and two. Most of these resources are available at local bookstores and online stores.

Resource Recommendations

Bibles for Children (Grades 3 – 5)

- *Following Jesus Bible* (Crossway)
- *HCSB Illustrated Study Bible for Kids* (B&H)
- *The Bible App* (YouVersion)

Books for Teaching Christian Truths (Grades 3 – 5)

- *Get to Know King David* by Nancy Sanders (Zonderkidz)
- *Get to Know Jesus* by Nancy Sanders (Zonderkidz)
- *Get to Know Apostle Paul* by Nancy Sanders (Zonderkidz)
- *Get to Know Mary* by Nancy Sanders (Zonderkidz)
- *A Kids Guide to the Armor of God* by Tony Evans (Harvest House)
- *A Boys Guide to Discovering His Bible* by Jim George (Harvest House)
- *I'm a Christian – Now What? 100 Devotions for Boys* (B&H Kids)
- *I'm a Christian – Now What? 100 Devotions for Girls* (B&H Kids)
- *I'm a Christian – Now What? 90-Day Devotional for Kids* (B&H Kids)

Music for Children (Grades 3 – 5)

- *Hide the Word CD Collection* (Mark Altrogge – Forever Grateful Music)

Expectations: Memorize the Word

Bible Reading (Grades 3 – 5)

Read Exodus, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ephesians

Date Completed _____

General Bible Knowledge (Grades 3 – 5)

THIRD GRADE: Know the names of the Twelve Apostles

- Simon Peter
- James (Son of Zebedee)
- John (Son of Zebedee)
- Andrew
- Philip
- Bartholomew
- Thomas
- Matthew
- James (Son of Alphaeus)
- Simon the Zealot
- Thaddeus
- Judas Iscariot

Date Completed _____

FOURTH GRADE: Know the books of the Old & New Testaments

OLD TESTAMENT

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

Date Completed _____

NEW TESTAMENT

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John

- Jude
- Revelation

Date Completed _____

FIFTH GRADE: Know God’s plan for salvation

- Acknowledge that we have all have sinned. Sin = missing the mark and falling short of God’s perfect plan. (Romans 3:23)
- The payment for our sin is death. This is not just physical death, but eternal separation from God. (Romans 6:23)
- Due to God’s great love for us, he sent his son, Jesus to die in our place. He died so that we do not have to die. (Romans 5:8)
- God has given us a wonderful gift. This is the gift of life and is available to all through Jesus Christ. We must repent of our sin, believe in our hearts that Jesus is God’s son, that he died on a cross, rose from the dead and is alive today. We must surrender our lives to him. (Romans 10:9-10)
- Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

Date Completed _____

Scripture Memory
(Grades 3 – 5)

Psalm 29:2 (ESV)

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

Date Completed _____

Psalm 100 (ESV)

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

Date Completed _____

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (ESV)

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Date Completed _____

Psalm 119:9-11 (ESV)

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Date Completed _____

Psalm 119:105 (ESV)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Date Completed _____

Psalm 121 (ESV)

I will lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Date Completed _____

Psalm 145:8 (ESV)

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Date Completed _____

Proverbs 1:8-9 (ESV)

Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

Date Completed _____

Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Date Completed _____

Matthew 1:21 (ESV)

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Date Completed _____

Matthew 4:19 (ESV)

And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Date Completed _____

Matthew 5:16 (ESV)

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Date Completed _____

Luke 18:16 (ESV)

But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

Date Completed _____

Luke 19:10 (ESV)

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Date Completed _____

John 3:30 (ESV)

He must increase, but I must decrease.

Date Completed _____

John 4:24 (ESV)

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

Date Completed _____

John 6:68 (ESV)

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Date Completed _____

John 11:25-26 (ESV)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Date Completed _____

John 14:6 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Date Completed _____

John 14:21 (ESV)

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

Date Completed _____

Romans 3:22-24 (ESV)

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Date Completed _____

Romans 5:6 (ESV)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Date Completed _____

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Date Completed _____

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Date Completed _____

Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Date Completed _____

APPENDIX 7

rites of passage experiences

The rites of passage experiences (ROPE) that First Baptist Church of Orange Park promotes are steps for parents to take with their children each year from birth through high school graduation.¹ Some of these ROPE events are meant to be done within the home. Others are to be done with other families within the church, at times being part of a ceremony.

A full description of our ROPE events is available on our website – firstfam.org. Each ROPE event comes with downloadable resources for each year including a developmental guide describing common life-stage designators, a parents’ guide, starter suggestions for the ROPE event and other resource materials. Brief video training clips are also available for parents to view.

Below are the descriptors provided on each year’s ROPE events:

Birth: Invitation to Peace

Anyone who has experienced bringing a newborn home from the hospital knows at some point you ask yourself, “What am I supposed to do with this child on my own?” Maybe you have read every book imaginable on parenting a newborn, maybe you are just naturally gifted to soothe a baby, but regardless where you are on the continuum, we all have moments of stress with a newborn. We want to help you identify a time of peace with your newborn and create a daily rhythm for that time that includes a prayer, song, story, or Scripture. The recommended ROPE for this age is the discovery of those special times and the beginning of a routine of prayer and times of peace between parent and child.

¹The rites of passage experiences have been developed through resources provided by *ParentMinistry.com* with permission.

One Year Old: Birthday Blessing

One of the biggest memories of our children is their first birthday. We remember the cake on the face, the tearing open of presents, and the belly laughs of a child who knows they are the center of attention. What if we took the time to make this day even more special by extending a birthday blessing for our child? This birthday blessing will be one that parents will share at their child's first birthday with friends and family present, so they can truly hear your heart's desire for your child and can partner with you to ensure those dreams become reality.

Two Years Old: Invitation to Prayer

Regardless whether your child talks early or late in life, this year is one filled with words. We want to capitalize on that time by helping you write a simple prayer that you can begin praying over your child daily. If your child has the words now, he/she can begin praying these words as well with you. If not, do not fear. Pray regardless. Eventually you will find your child praying with you.

Three Years Old: Big Kid Bed

Moving from the crib to a "big kid bed" is a big step. A child's bed is the place where dreams, rest, and incredible conversations occur. We want to remember that as this ROPE guides parents through a big kid bed ceremony. The family writes Scriptures on pieces of paper and tucks them under the mattress. Then they invite their big kid to sit in the bed while the family prays for them. This ROPE will help infuse faith into an important transition.

Four Years Old: Invitation to Independence

The year before a preschooler enters kindergarten it is difficult for parents to not continually ask, "Is my child ready?" This baby that was completely dependent upon just a few short years ago is getting ready to venture into a world where he/she will be responsible for doing things independently. How do we know if he/she is ready? What do we need to do to make ensure readiness? ROPE will help families work toward knowing they have done all to prepare the child through an invitation to independence.

Kindergarten: Generosity

Children in kindergarten are beginning to think outside themselves. They are developing empathy. It is a great time to capitalize on that by helping them see they can be generous to those around them. We want to help families carve out three special moments to look at what the Bible says regarding generosity, culminating in a ROPE where a family can serve together.

First Grade: Responsibility

Children in first grade take a huge step in their level of responsibility. They are asked to attend school, complete homework, help out at home, navigate friendships, and join in extracurricular activities. There are a number of

responsibilities in each of these areas. We can help our children navigate all the different pulls on them since this is only the beginning. This ROPE is an intentional discussion regarding responsibility at school, home, and church the culminates with the presentation of a blessing box (described in the parents' guide on our church) with the first grader.

Second Grade: Bible Presentation

Second graders are reading independently, so this is the perfect time to help them engage in the book that will change their lives – the Bible. Many of us, even as adults, struggle with reading the Bible consistently. Our lives and the time we spend in the Bible would probably be different if someone had helped us understand when we were younger that the Bible is personal, prepares us for life, and is true. Therefore, this is the goal of the second grade Rites of Passage Experience. All second graders in our church will receive a children's study Bible as a gift, presented by their parents in a church-wide ceremony. Parents are asked to write a letter to their second grader and to offer a challenge (sample script available on the church website – firstfam.org) as they present a copy of God's Word to their child.

Third Grade: Rhythm

A general theme of families with third graders is that this is the year that life seems to become very busy. Children are beginning to discover talents and participate in more extra-curricular activities than before. This leads to a rushed and, sometimes, chaotic life. Parents are seeking to be wise time managers, developing a healthy rhythm for life where activities are not controlling the calendar. The commitment as a family to better manage time comes with a ROPE of leading children into understanding the value of time and how to not become overwhelmed. This ROPE event includes a presentation at home from parents to the child. The gift could be a watch, an hourglass, a family heirloom, or something else that represents time or time well managed.

Fourth Grade: Friendship

Fourth grade is a peak year for relationships. Many fourth graders are beginning to express interest in the opposite sex. Children are beginning to listen to their peers more. Many at this age develop an intimate relationship with a best friend. Wise parents help their children choose friends well since friends are the biggest influence in the life of a child after parents. To choose friends well, one must be a good friend.

Parents present their child with a piece of art signifying how others view them as a friend. Several of the child's friends and friends' parents and/or family members are to be asked to provide two or three words that describe the child. Using these words, a created piece of art will be developed to display in the child's room. This artwork will be presented by the parents in a ceremony that may include these friends and others. Ideas for the "creatively challenged" are provided in the parents' guide on the church website (firstfam.org).

Fifth Grade: Identity

The emotions of a fifth grader can run the gamut. As they become leaders or at least elders in their elementary schools, the fears of coming junior high or middle school life begins to solidify for many. With increased uncertainty comes the moment when fifth graders begin to ask themselves, “Who am I and where do I fit in?” This is a conversation that will continue to be played in their minds well into their teen years. Parents are led to know fully who they are as they face this ongoing question.

The ROPE event involves asking a few significant people in the child’s life to write a letter or card to him/her with the purpose of telling the child what they see in him/her. Using the questions available on the church’s website (firstfam.org) these individuals are given guides that will help them. Parents then take the letters and cards to see if a similar theme connects them. This theme will be used to determine a symbol to identify the child. Examples are available in the parents’ guide on the church website (firstfam.org). For instance, if people say the child exhibits wisdom or intelligence, the identity symbol could be an owl. If the child puts a ton of time, energy and persistence into a certain sport, maybe a new piece of sports equipment could be the symbol. Parents are encouraged to use their imagination as they read the letters, then choose what the symbol will be. The symbol may be made, bought, engraved, simple, or elaborate. That is up to the parent. The idea is to make this symbol very individualized, something that is extremely unique to the child. Parents will present this symbol to their child at home or perhaps with others from their small group at church.

Sixth Grade: Preparation for Adolescence

The word we want you to keep in mind during this ROPE is *wonder*. Wonder is when we experience something that is unexpected but amazing or that is so thrilling it takes our breath away. Wonder is the moment we remember that our life and purpose come from the beautiful imagination of God the Creator. We want our kids to look at how they are shaped and wired and experience a deep sense of wonder. This ROPE is designed for parents to discuss the physical, emotional, and mental changes that take place during the process of puberty and adolescence. For some students, the entrance into puberty begins sooner. For others, it is later. Regardless when, the conversations must take place and the ROPE can be a moment of celebration, not fear. A unique element of this ROPE is that the parents spend much time listening to their child speak of the changes, fears, and expectations of adolescence. In this case, there is more listening than talking as children are moving into the next stage of life.

Seventh Grade: The Blessing

The father's blessing is something many parents have never experienced themselves and therefore, miss the opportunity to offer. While some families are single-parent households and a father is not present, the power of a significant

male (grandfather, uncle, coach, youth leader, etc.) offering a blessing to a young boy or girl must not be ignored. In these cases where the father is unable or unwilling to offer his blessing, the church as family will stand in the gap. The blessing is very personal but having a gathering with the community of believers at the church where these are presented, maybe in written form in a letter, creates an experience that can impact a child for a lifetime.

Eighth Grade: Purity Weekend

Ever since "True Love Waits" hit the scene in the 1990s, frank discussions in churches with teenagers and parents regarding sexual abstinence have been the norm. The intent is to remain sexually pure until entering into a biblical marriage (one man - one woman, for life.) The purity weekend is not designed to be the first-time parents talk about sex with their children. Nevertheless, "the talk" is often an awkward moment for parents and their teenagers and our desire is to provide handles and resources to help parents do this well and effectively. While the ROPE regarding a frank, biblically-founded, discussion on God's gift of sex will be designed to be one-to-one, a ceremony before the church body featuring the gifting of "purity rings" and charge for purity will be scheduled.

Ninth Grade: Driving Contract

Not every teenager will receive a driver's license. It seems that recently more teenagers are delaying their acquisition of this card. Nevertheless, at some point, students will most likely have driver's licenses and to offer the ROPE of the Driving Contract presents more than just the keys to a car, but an agreement and honest discussion on an incredible step of freedom. The contract is provided on our website (firstfam.org) and gives parents discussion points about key elements of holding such a responsibility as well as providing delineated consequences if the contract is breached. For many in our culture, this has been viewed as an unofficial "rite of passage." The contract legitimizes it and provides for more mature discussions regarding this. If a teenager is younger than others and will not receive his/her license until later, this is still a good year to offer this ROPE and then, when the time comes to receive the license, parents can go over the details once more.

Tenth Grade: Money Matters

In many churches, financial management classes and budget helps are offered to adults. While those courses should still be offered as needed, a preemptive strike regarding money management and finances is wise. This ROPE provides parents with practical information from Scripture and biblical illustrations of how to manage one's wealth. How one views money and possessions will impact how they view God and his generous grace. Parents will discuss eight principles of biblical stewardship and generosity. A symbol representing this ROPE should be provided to the child from the parent. If the child does not have a savings or checking account at the bank, this would be a good time to teach them about that and open up such an account.

Eleventh Grade: Family Tree

This ROPE has the potential to be incredibly emotional and eye-opening. However, this may be a challenge for some families, especially if their family history is not something they desire to revisit or if they have adopted children and have not yet discussed how to deal with family history.

It is apparent that our culture is interested in genealogy. This is evident through websites like ancestry.com and the popularity of television shows revealing the family trees of celebrities.

The church can equip parents to share family history in a helpful and healthy way with their teenagers. This is modeled in Scripture. Just look at Matthew 1, for example.

In this ROPE, the students are to interview family members and discover stories that they have not yet heard. If grandparents are still living, this is an incredible moment. With Skype and FaceTime (and the tried-and-true telephone) even distance is not an excuse for avoiding the interview. Our parents' guide provides incredible ideas for making this happen.

In cases where older family members are no longer alive or other circumstances, such as those listed prior, students may interview coaches, pastors, student leaders, and others may provide for incredible moments on the teaching of legacy.

Twelfth Grade: Manhood/Womanhood Ceremony

In a culture where worldviews now proudly ignore the unique differences in manhood and womanhood, the church must be very clear regarding God's design for each gender. This is a moment of celebration. It is to be done before the church family at a designated gathering. The details of the ceremony may differ each year, but the event must take place.

Parents will take center stage (or designated adult leaders if parents are not present or desire not to be involved) as they bestow biblical manhood and womanhood on their respective sons and daughters. Specific details of what this will entail are available on our website (firstfam.org).

This ceremony precedes the high school graduation recognition held before the church body.

APPENDIX 8
FAMILY-EQUIPPING TEACHING SERIES
CURRICULUM

The family-equipping teaching series curriculum is intended for leading parents and ministry leaders through a biblically-focused understanding of family ministry. Each session builds upon the previous with the final session designed to provide role-play opportunities for families as they seek to understand the dynamics of a family worship time in the home. Each session is designed to be one-hour in length.

FAMILY EQUIPPING DISCIPLESHIP

Partnering with Parents for Effective Ministry

1

SESSION ONE - THE MODEL MATTERS

THE MODEL MATTERS



Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deut 6:4-7 ESV)

Parents have been given a great privilege and responsibility by God to lead their children faithfully and well. In the Old Testament, it is revealed that God prepares and expects fathers to teach their children the precepts of faith. Even prior to the

the key passage in Deuteronomy 6, God had been preparing fathers for this task.¹

In addition to the passage in Deuteronomy, there are numerous other Scripture passages that speak to the role of parents and family regarding the spiritual foundation of their children.



¹Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011).

Overview

This four-session intensive is designed to lead parents and church leaders through a biblical model of discipleship where the home and church partner in the Family Equipping Discipleship (FED) model.

1. The Model Matters

This session presents the biblical basis for FED along with examples of historical models that have been used in churches over the years.

2. Feeding Time

Parents are introduced to milestones and Rites of Passage Experiences (ROPE) for children and teenagers.

3. Spiritual Heroes

This session intends to help lead parents to become the spiritual heroes in their families. Practical steps of living out this biblical role are presented.

4. Church & Family

Learners will discover the joy of understanding that church is family, but also that family is church. Leaders and parents will develop ideas for establishing a weekly family worship time, combining ministry events within the church that will enable families more time together for the purpose of disciple-making.

Models of Ministry

FAMILY BASED

The model of ministry that many in the church are familiar with is the Family Based Ministry model. This model, also known as the programmatic model, centers on each age group having its own ministry, segmented from others. While age-graded ministries are not wrong, in our estimation, the inevitable building of "ministry silos" often develops. Therefore, different ministries find themselves sequestered, almost functioning as smaller "churches within the church" or worse yet, a satellite church that is loosely connected with the full ministry of the local body. In these cases, once a child graduates high school, there seems to be a greater chance for them to fall out of church rather than integrate into adult ministry. The joy of living and worshipping as an intergenerational community is potentially lost.

This model tends to view the church as a factory where the raw material is brought in, resourced and developed and then exported. The raw material in this model would be the infants and the supposed fully-developed end result would be the senior adult who has lived a full life here on earth and steps into eternity as a faithful disciple of Christ's.

Nevertheless, people are not simply raw materials. Not everyone enters into the church body as infants, so multiple entry points are needed.

In the programmatic model, not only have numerous entry points developed, but also numerous exit points. The exit points for students result when the family is unengaged and students either graduate from high school or find that other events and activities overwhelm their calendars. The student ministry (i.e. youth program) in this model may reach many young people, but will discover gaps in the disciple-making process, even with committed, godly student leaders in place.

BENEFITS



Photo credit: PMillera4 via Visual hunt / CC BY-NC-ND

WEAKNESSES

FAMILY INTEGRATED

This model eliminates all age-graded ministries and has all gatherings (worship, small groups, etc.) as inter-generational.

FAMILY EQUIPPING

The model of ministry that we are implementing is not just for preschool, children's and student ministries. It is church-wide emphasis and focused called Family Equipping Discipleship (FED). While this model does not eliminate the age-graded and specific ministries of the church, it does focus on integrating each ministry to champion the roles of parents as lead disciple-makers of their children.

Family-equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children.²

– Jay Strother
Brentwood Baptist Church
Station Camp Campus & Teaching Pastor
Brentwood, TN

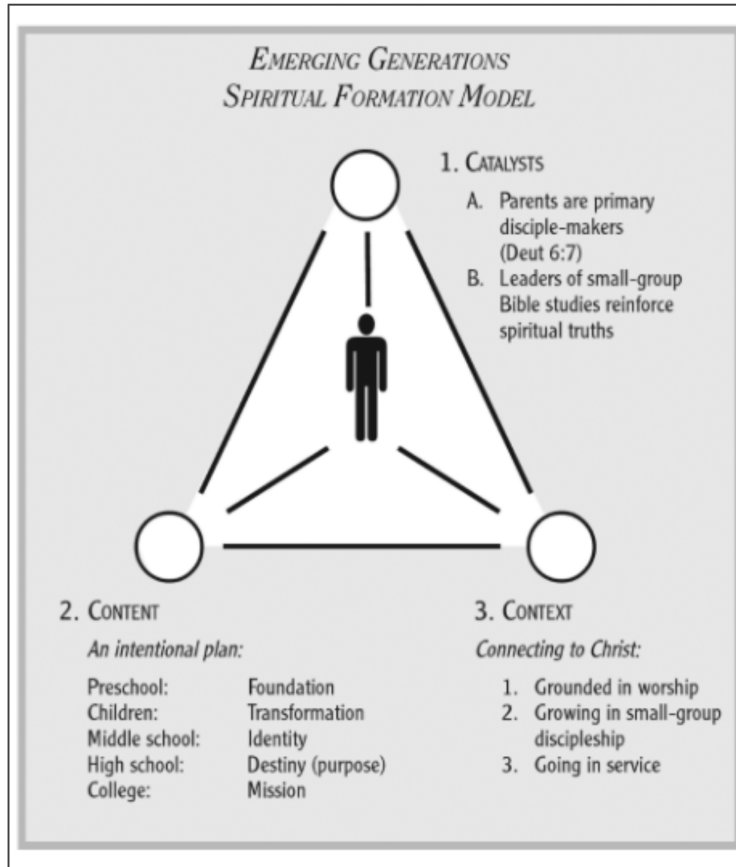
²Timothy Paul Jones, ed. *Perspectives in Family Ministry: 3 Views*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2009), 144.

Family Equipping Discipleship

Jay Strother, Campus and Teaching Pastor at The Church at Station Hill, a campus of Brentwood Baptist Church in Tennessee has developed a "Spiritual Formation Model for Emerging Generations" based on the principle of equipping parents and families to be central to faith development of children.

This model identifies three primary areas of lasting influence on children's spiritual development.³ These three areas, labeled "catalysts, content, and context" by Strother, are founded on Scripture. The model reveals parents as lead catalysts for faith development. An intentional disciple-making plan exists to equip parents to fulfill their roles while offering practical steps for engaging as part of the local body in the church.

Prior to implementing a model of discipleship, we must understand the value of such. Many parents in the church acknowledge their biblical role as lead disciple-makers and faith developers of their children. However, practical, step-by-step handles for parents to grab and utilize have often been found missing. Over the next few weeks we will discuss practical ways parents can engage as faith-developers within their homes with the church and our ministry leaders positioned to come alongside them for the glory of God and the sake of the gospel.



³Jones, *Perspectives in Family Ministry: 3 Views*, 148-9.

Bibliography

Haynes, Brian. *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2009.

Jones, Timothy Paul. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011.

Jones, Timothy Paul, ed. *Perspectives in Family Ministry: 3 Views*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2009.

Stinson, Randy and Timothy Paul Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011.

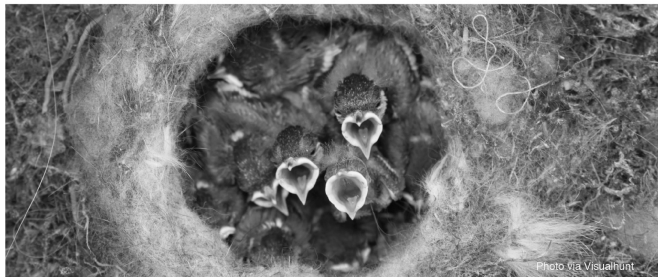
FAMILY EQUIPPING DISCIPLESHIP

Partnering with Parents for Effective Ministry

2

SESSION TWO - FEEDING TIME

FEEDING TIME



Feed the Good Wolf

There is an old Native American parable that speaks of two warring natures within man.

A grandfather was talking with his grandson and told the young man that there were two wolves inside each of us that are always at war with each other. One of the wolves is good and represents things like kindness, bravery, and honor. The other is bad and symbolizes things like greed, hatred, and fear.

The grandson stops and thinks about this concept for a moment. He then asks his grandfather,



"Which one wins?"

The wise grandfather responds, "The one you feed."

This is not to say that one ministry model or another is evil, but we do believe that models do matter (see Session One) and the church must have a philosophy of such.

Therefore, as we move to a Family Equipping Discipleship model, each ministry and ministry leader must individually and collectively "feed" that model.

Our Rites of Passage Experiences (ROPE) feed this model, equipping and enabling parents to be lead disciplers of their children, with the church supporting.

Lexicon

Family Equipping Discipleship (FED) -

This is the model of family ministry that cultivates a congregational culture that coordinates every ministry to champion the role of the parents as the primary faith-trainers in their children's lives.⁴

Rites of Passage Experiences (ROPE) -

These are promoted and at times coordinated events for families of children and students in the church. These experiences create moments of celebration as children mature into adulthood. ROPE events may just be for the immediate family, but often are congregation-wide, allowing the community of faith to play a significant supportive role to parents as lead disciple-makers.

Milestones - These specific moments are significant in the life of a child as he/she matures into adulthood. Each milestone is a moment of celebration for the church as a marker along the spiritual formation journey.⁵ Milestones are integrated into our ROPE events.

⁴Stinson, *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspectives*, 27.

⁵Brian Haynes, *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2009), 42.

Rites of Passage Experiences (ROPE)

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. (1 Cor 13:11 ESV)

Parent Ministry

Our church has partnered with **ParentMinistry.net**, founded by Jeremy Lee to offer practical rite of passage experiences and resources to parents of children ages birth through high school graduation.

Video links and age-specific resources and guides for parents are available on the Rites of Passage page on our website - firstfam.org

Why ROPE?

Systematic and calendared events for our families provide structure and helps eliminate the missing of significant moments in our children's lives. In our culture, rites of passage into adulthood are "unofficial" at best. When asked "When does a boy become a man?" many answers are offered. Some say at age 16 when he can drive. Others say age 18 when he can vote. Still others say 21 when he can legally drink alcoholic beverages. These answers reveal a gap in our understanding of maturity and adulthood.

Here are brief explanations of ROPE events for each year in the age of your child.

Birth Year - Invitation to Peace

Most of the preschool ROPE events seem to center more on the parents than the child. This is not accidental. The

first year of your child's life is very special. It begins with a church-wide Parent/Child Dedication before the church body during a worship service. Our Generations Ministry provides the required training and resources during these events which are held twice a

year. There are three specific times between parents and baby that are vital this year and are considered ROPE events. These are "cuddle time," "bath time" and "sleep time." What may see routine are vital for connecting and providing moments of peace with parents for children.



1 Year Old - Birthday Blessing

You only get one "first birthday." While it may seem strange, the first ROPE involves mom and dad writing out a birthday blessing and reading it to their child at the first birthday party. Since this event will likely include close friends and relatives, the blessing is a verbal statement featuring 2-3 characteristics parents the parents want to develop in their child. They will then state why those are important and how they plan to parent in order to teach these.

While the one-year-old is sitting there covered from head to toe in cake, this blessing is offered. It is recommended that this blessing be written, perhaps framed and hung in the home as a reference to go back to throughout the child's young years.

2 Years Old - Invitation to Prayer

Parents should not wait for the second birthday to begin praying for their child, but at this age, it is recommended that parents not only pray over their child, but with them. This ROPE leads the child to join mom and dad in praying. Simple prayers are offered on our website that use words children can understand and build, or accentuate, the repetition and rhythm of prayer into the family's life.

3 Years Old - Big Kid Bed

Moving from a baby or toddler bed to a big kid bed is a really big event. If the family can make this move at this time, it is encouraged that the move be celebrated as a step of maturation.

Options such as writing prayers on the slats of the bed or writing prayers or scripture verses on slips of paper to be tucked under the mattress will lead children into seeing that even while sleeping God watches over them and loves them.

4 Years Old - Invitation to Independence

Even as a four-year-old, children are in need of some age-appropriate independence. For many, pre-kindergarten may an option. For others, the preparation for kindergarten the following year begins. Every child develops differently, and

this ROPE is designed to celebrate the fact the preschooler is growing and almost ready to step into the next chapter of life - school (whether public, private, or homeschool.)

Kindergarten - Generosity

This ROPE is best done if the entire family participates. A tangible, outward-focused serving project should be focusing on helping others, outside the family, generously. A photo showing or letter describing the project should be presented to the child from the parents as a memento of the service project.

1st Grade - Responsibility

Responsibilities for the child at home, school, and with friendships are taught. A "Blessing Box" is presented to the child by parents at a family ceremony. Within this box are letters written to the child from individuals representing these areas (e.g. a teacher, parent of child's friends, parent, older sibling, someone at church, etc.) that state ways they have seen the child being responsible. These steps of responsibility are evidence of becoming a "big kid."

2nd Grade - The Bible

This ROPE takes place at the church, during a worship service. Parents and their second grade children stand before the church body and parents are given a Bible to present as a gift to their child. After an introduction, parents kneel down, present the Bible while sharing of the importance of the Word of God. Parents have a printed letter they read and present to their children. Parents pray with their children and the pastor prays a blessing over the families as the church affirms the ROPE and step of maturation represented by this event.

3rd Grade - Rhythm

One of the biggest challenges families face, and children as well, is that of time management. With sports, school activities, church activities and other events, families can be stretched trying to do everything. Children feel the stress and this ROPE leads toward a teaching moment focused on keeping a daily "God time" as a priority. The teaching that every "NO" must be backed by a larger "YES" is offered. A gift, such as a watch, clock, hourglass, or something else representing time should be presented to the child in a family ceremony.

Rites of Passage Experiences (ROPE)

4th Grade - Friendship

Friendships are vital, and sometimes difficult. Parents will ask several of their child's friends (of their own age, and perhaps older friends and even significant adults) to provide two or three words that describe the child. These words are to be used to create a piece of art to be presented to the child. Utilize personal talents or friends or maybe professional services online to create an art piece to present.

5th Grade - Identity

Parents discover through their own observation and by talking to significant people in their child's life some things that are unique about their child regarding likes and interests. The gift at this ROPE will symbolize this unique identity, while affirming God's design upon the child. The identity symbol presentation should be a family event, celebrating the giftedness and design of the child as God's image-bearer.

6th Grade - Preparation for Adolescence

The journey from a child, to what is termed a preteen is a challenging step. For this ROPE, the parents are focused as much on listening to their child as in speaking to them. One parent should set aside 10-15 minutes a day for five days to sit with the preteen for a time of deeper discussion. These can be a time for questions the preteen has had, but never asked. Leading discussion starters allow for a natural, conversation. These discussions can become catalysts for life-long conversations of faith and life.

7th Grade - The Blessing

The father's blessing is something that many parents have never experienced themselves and therefore, miss an opportunity to offer. While some families are single-parent households and a father is not present, the power of a significant male (grandfather, uncle, coach, youth leader, etc.) offering a blessing to a young boy or girl must not be ignored. In these cases where the father is unable or unwilling to offer his blessing, the church as family will stand in the gap.

The blessing is very personal, but having a gathering with the community of believers at the church where these are presented, maybe in written form in a letter, creates an experience that can impact a child for a lifetime.

8th Grade - Purity Weekend

Ever since "True Love Waits" hit the scene in the 1990s, frank discussions in churches with teenagers and parents regarding sexual abstinence have been the norm. The intent is to remain sexually pure until entering into a biblical marriage (one man - one woman, for life.) The purity weekend is not designed to be

the first time parents talk about sex with their children. Years ago, when Dr. Phil Briggs was teaching youth ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he would remind new student pastors that sex education begins at potty training. Nevertheless, "the talk" is often an awkward moment for parents and their teenagers

and our desire is to provide handles and resources to help parents do this well and effectively.

While the ROPE regarding a frank, biblically-founded, discussion on God's gift of sex will be designed to be one-to-one, a ceremony before the church body featuring the gifting of "purity rings" and charge for purity will be scheduled.



9th Grade - Driving Contract

Not every teenager will receive a driver's license. It seems that recently more teenagers are delaying their acquisition of this card. Nevertheless, at some point, your students will most likely, eventually have driver's licenses and to offer the ROPE of the Driving Contract presents more than just the keys to a car, but an agreement and honest discussion on an incredible step of freedom. The contract is provided on our website and gives parents discussion points about key elements of holding such a responsibility as well as providing delineated consequences if the contract is breached. For many in our culture, this has been viewed as an unofficial "rite of passage." The contract legitimizes it and provides for more mature discussions regarding this. If a teenager is younger than others and will not receive his/her license until later, this is still a good year to offer this ROPE and then, when the time comes to receive the license, parents can go over the details once more.



Rites of Passage (con't)

10th Grade - Money Matters

In many churches, financial management classes and budget helps are offered to adults. While those courses should still be offered as needed, a pre-emptive strike regarding money management and finances is wise. This ROPE provides parents with practical information from Scripture and biblical illustrations of how to manage one's wealth. How one views money and possessions will impact how they view God and his generous grace.



11th Grade - Family Tree

This has the potential to be incredibly emotional and eye-opening. However, this may be a challenge for some families, especially if their family history is not something they desire to revisit or if they have adopted children and have not yet discussed how to deal with family

history.

It is apparent that our culture is interested in genealogy, and it is not just the Mormons. Websites like ancestry.com and television shows revealing the family trees of celebrities are popular and trending. Apparently, there's a desire to know more.

The church can equip parents to share family history in a helpful and healthy way with their teenagers. This is modeled in Scripture. Just look at Matthew 1, for example.

In this ROPE, the students are to interview family members and discover stories that they have not yet heard. If grandparents are still living, this is an incredible moment. With Skype and FaceTime (and the tried-and-true telephone) even

distance is not an excuse for avoiding the interview. Our parents guide provides incredible ideas for making this happen.

In cases where older family members are no longer alive or other circumstances, such as those listed prior, students may interview

coaches, pastors, student leaders, and others may provide for incredible moments on the teaching of legacy.

12th Grade - Manhood/Womanhood Ceremony

In a culture where worldviews now proudly ignore the unique differences in manhood and womanhood, the church must be very clear regarding God's design for each gender. This is a moment of celebration. It is to be done before the church family at a designated gathering. The details of the ceremony may differ each year, but the event must take place.

Parents will take center stage (or designated adult leaders if parents are not present or desire not to be involved) as they bestow biblical manhood and womanhood on their respective sons and daughters. Specific details of what this will entail are available on our website - firstfam.org.



Bibliography

Haynes, Brian. *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2009.

Jones, Timothy Paul. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011.

Jones, Timothy Paul, ed. *Perspectives in Family Ministry: 3 Views*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2009.

Stinson, Randy and Timothy Paul Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011.



1140 Kingsley Avenue
Orange Park, FL 32073
David Tarkington, Lead Pastor
firstfam.org

8

FAMILY EQUIPPING DISCIPLESHIP

Partnering with Parents for Effective Ministry

SESSION THREE - SPIRITUAL HEROES

SPIRITUAL HEROES



Photo credit: Eneas via Visualhunt.com / CC BY

We desire that parents be viewed as spiritual heroes by their children. The natural inclination of a child is to look up to mom and dad and revere them. While parents seem to be more intentional with their children today, strategic involvement in areas of spiritual development often are left undone.

In some cases, it is due to the schedule that families face. Busyness in school, activities, sports, and even church often leave families fatigued and rushed. These issues must be considered when shifting to a Family Equipping Discipleship model of ministry. More will be discussed about this in Session 4.

While ROPE events are helpful and provide hands-on tools for parents to use at milestone moments, a continual equipping of parents as lead disciplers in the home will help affirm them as the spiritual heroes in the lives of their children. In other words, we desire that our children view their parents as the primary spiritual voice

and authority under God. God has given parents a unique and specific role and student leaders must not intentionally seek to replace them in that position.

In our Family Equipping Discipleship model, we must be intentional in not only showing support for parents in this area, but communicating with parents, offering prayer and support and ministry helps.

In other words, Family Equipping Ministry is truly "parent equipping ministry."



Photo credit: Nick Kenrick via Visualhunt.com / CC BY-NC-SA

Heroes

"My Daddy was my hero. He was always there for me when I needed him. He listened to me and taught me so many things. But most of all he was fun."

- Bindi Irwin

"My heroes are and were my parents. I can't see having anyone else as my heroes."

- Michael Jordan

"I respect my dad, and he's amazing. He's my hero. He's the Beatles, man—or one of them."

- James McCartney

"When I was a kid, I wanted to walk with my dad's limp—my dad was my hero—but that infuriated him, and he would make me walk back and forth in the living room until I walked without it."

- David Alan Grier

"My heroes always are mostly my parents—my father especially, and my mom, who's passed on already."

- Dikembe Mutombo

"Your Ma and I have prayed, every day..."

- Jonathan Kent

"A hero can be anyone, even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat around a little boy's shoulder to let him know that the world hadn't ended."

- Bruce Wayne

FAMILY EQUIPPING DISCIPLESHIP

Partnering with Parents for Effective Ministry

SESSION FOUR - CHURCH & FAMILY

4

CHURCH & FAMILY



The Church As Family

The church is a multi-generational family of believers. The name of our network of ministries and campuses is "First Family" and that is intentional. A challenge that has arisen stems from the word "family." There are actually some who believe that when the term "family" is used, it is exclusive and omits their participation. These comments have come from single adults and those whose children are grown and out of the house. The honest question has been "How does family ministry involve me?"

When our nation was more agrarian, the extended family tended to live in the same region for generations. These questions did not arise within the church then because, in most cases, they were irrelevant. No more.

For the church to express family well, leadership must strategically engage all who are believers and members of the church. We are then able to gather as family—the family of God.

The Family As Church

An additional question to be addressed, and likely more vital for the implementation of an effective family equipping discipleship model is "How is my family like a church?"

Families in the congregation function as little churches within their homes. Family worship is a lost art (if ever in existence) for some and the apprehension and fear that develops when this is promoted is real.

When parents are lead disciple-makers, "church happens" in the home throughout the week. These are often scheduled times of prayer and questions. They likely do not look like a mini-church service. At times, they may occur in the car on the way to school or ball practice. Yet, the family is church in these instances.

When "Church as Family" and "Family as Church" come together, we have a comprehensive family ministry. Wise church leaders seek to enable families for this without over-scheduling them.

Too Busy!

Look at your calendar for the past month. Are there church activities of different ministries that may be causing stress in your family due to over-scheduling? What about non-church activities? How do you determine what is vital and what is not important when it comes to time?

What activities could be merged with other activities, perhaps in partnership with another ministry in the church?

How might some activities and events look different if you reshaped each one not only to engage a particular age-group but also to develop intergenerational relationships and equip children or youth to engage with their parents?

With Christian parents in the church functioning as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives and in the lives of children whose parents aren't believers, which church activities might become unnecessary?

How might the church redevelop existing activities to equip parents?⁶



⁶Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*, (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 105.

Visualize the Shift

Brainstorm ideas as groups to determine how current ministry events can be changed. Keep in mind that we are seeking not to add more things to an already full church calendar (it would be good to remove some things) but to synchronize and combine items.

What do church activities look like now? (Current family events & activities)	What conflicts and challenges exist with these events and activities?	What could be done to streamline ministry activities while equipping families?

Bibliography

Haynes, Brian. *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2009.

Jones, Timothy Paul. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011.

Jones, Timothy Paul, ed. *Perspectives in Family Ministry: 3 Views*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2009.

Stinson, Randy and Timothy Paul Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anthony, Michael, and Michelle Anthony. *A Theology for Family Ministries*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011.
- Arnold, Clinton E. *Ephesians*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- Avildsen, John G., dir. *The Karate Kid*. Columbia Pictures, 1984. DVD. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005.
- Baucham, Voddie. *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007.
- _____. *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2011.
- Baxter, Richard. *The Godly Home*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- Bernstine, Karen Jones. *Church and Family Together: A Congregational Manual for Black Family Ministry*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996.
- Best, Ernest. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.
- Briggs, Charles A., and Emilie Grace Briggs. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906.
- Broyles, Craig C. *Psalms*. New International Biblical Commentary, Vol. 11. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Burns, Jim, and Mark DeVries. *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003.
- Cairns, Ian. *Word and Presence: A Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Calvin, Jean. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Vol. 2. Translated by James Anderson. Middletown, DE: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.
- Chapell, Bryan. *Ephesians*. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009.

- Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 6a. Dallas: Word Books, 1991.
- Clark, Chap. *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Clifford, Richard J. *Proverbs: A Commentary*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1999.
- Cope, Henry Frederick. *Religious Education in the Family*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915.
- Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Crotts, John. *Mighty Men: The Starters Guide to Leading Your Family*. Sand Springs, OK: Grace and Truth Books, 2004.
- Csinos, David M. *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013.
- Currid, John D. *A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy*. Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2006.
- Davis, Eric. *Raising Men: Lessons Navy SEALs Learned from Their Training and Taught to Their Sons*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016.
- Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- DeVries, Mark. *Family-Based Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Dillard, Raymond B., and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Driver, S. R. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902.
- Erb, Frank Otis. *The Development of the Young People's Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917.
- Faber, Reimer. "Martin Luther on Reformed Education." *Clarion: The Canadian Reformed Magazine*. August 7, 1998, 376-379.
- Ferguson, Edmund Morris. *Church-School Administration*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922.
- Firth, David G., and Philip Johnston. *Interpreting Deuteronomy: Issues and Approaches*. Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, 2012.
- Fowl, Stephen E. *Ephesians: A Commentary*. The New Testament Commentary. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2012.

- Fox, Michael V. *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.
- _____. *Proverbs 10-31*. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, Vol. 18b. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Garland, Diana S. Richmond. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.
- Garrett, Duane A. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. The New American Commentary, Vol. 14. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993.
- Gillespie, Richard. *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Goldingay, John. *Psalms: Psalms 42-89*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Grogan, Geoffrey. *Psalms*. The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Hildebrandt, Ted. "Proverbs 22:6a: Train Up a Child?" *Grace Theological Journal* 9 (1988): 3-19.
- Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.
- James, Stephen, and David Thomas. *Wild Things: The Art of Nurturing Boys*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009.
- Joiner, Reggie, and Cary Nieuwhof. *Parenting beyond Your Capacity: Connect Your Family to a Wider Community*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.
- Jones, Timothy Paul. "Equipping the Generations: Developing Family Ministry Curriculum for Your Church." *The Journal of Family Ministry* 2, no. 1 (September 2011): 64-73.
- _____. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011.
- Jones, Timothy Paul, Paul Renfro, Brandon Shields, Randy Stinson, and Jay Strother. *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2009.
- Kavanaugh, Patrick. *Raising Children Who Adore God*. Grand Rapids: Chosen, 2003.
- Kidner, Derek. *Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.

- _____. *Psalms 73-150: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J., and David W Jones. *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- Kraus, Hans-Joachim. *Psalms 60-150*. A Continental Commentary. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.
- Lewis, Robert. *Men's Fraternity: The Quest for Authentic Manhood*. Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2005.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 42. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.
- Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *An Exposition of Ephesians*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- Longman, Tremper, III. *Proverbs*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1996.
- Marsden, George M. *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Mason, Eric. *Manhood Restored: How the Gospel Makes Men Whole*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013.
- Mays, James Luther. *Psalms*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy*. The New American Commentary, Vol. 4. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Miller, Patrick D. *Deuteronomy*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990.
- Murphy, Roland E. *Proverbs*. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 22. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.
- Nettles, Tom *Living by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*. Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2013.
- Olson, Dennis T. *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Perdue, Leo G. *Proverbs*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2000.
- Piper, John, and Wayne A. Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991.

- Reeder, Caryn A. *The Enemy in the Household: Family Violence in Deuteronomy and Beyond*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Rice, Wayne. *Reinventing Youth Ministry (Again): From Bells and Whistles to Flesh and Blood*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010.
- Roberts, Alexander, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950.
- Robinson, C. Jeffrey, Sr. "The Home is an Earthly Kingdom. Family Discipleship Among Reformers and Puritans." *The Journal of Discipleship & Family Ministry* 3, no. 1 (2012): 18-26.
- Santayana, George. *The Life of Reason: Or the Phases of Human Progress*, Vol. 1. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920.
- Senter, Mark H., and Chap Clark. *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Sing Along Songs—The Bare Necessities*. Walt Disney Pictures, 1994. DVD. Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2006.
- Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "How Do You Do Family Worship?" Honest Answers #32. YouTube Video, 6:06. August 16, 2017. Accessed January 5, 2018. <https://youtu.be/v9SUYZSLmrE>.
- Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. "The Kind of Revival We Need." *The Spurgeon Archive*. accessed August 3, 2017. <http://archive.spurgeon.org/revival.php>.
- Steenburg, W. Ryan, and Timothy Paul Jones. "Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes." *The Journal of Discipleship & Family Ministry* 2, no. 2 (2012): 71–73.
- Stinson, Randy, Dan Dumas, and Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. *A Guide to Biblical Manhood*. Louisville, KY: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in association with CBMW (Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood), 2011.
- Stinson, Randy, and Timothy Paul Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011.
- Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England: 1500-1800*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
- Tate, Marvin E. *Psalms 51-100*. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 20. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.
- Thielman, Frank. *Ephesians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Thompson, J. A. *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Vol. 5. London: InterVarsity Press, 1974.

- Tigay, Jeffrey. *Deuteronomy*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996.
- Trevathan, Melissa, and Sissy Goff. *Modern Parents, Vintage Values: Instilling Character in Today's Kids*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010.
- _____. *Raising Girls*. Annotated ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Trumbull, Charles Gallaudet. *The Development of the Sunday School*. Boston: Fort Hill Press, 1905.
- Van Egan, Abram C. *Sympathetic Puritans: Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Waltke, Bruce K. *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15-31*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Ware, Bruce A. "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: The Trinity as Theological Foundation for Family Ministry." *The Journal of Family Ministry* 1, no. 2 (2011): 6–13.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible Series. New York: Doubleday, 1991.
- Weiser, Artur. *The Psalms: A Commentary*. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.
- Whybray, R. N. *The Book of Proverbs*. The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible. Cambridge: University Press, 1972.
- Wilson, Rodney, Selma Wilson, and Scott McConnell. *The Parent Adventure: Preparing Your Children for a Lifetime with God*. Nashville: B & H, 2008.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *Deuteronomy*. New International Biblical Commentary, Vol. 4. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.
- Wright, Steve, and Chris Graves. *reThink: Is Student Ministry Working?* Wake Forest, NC: InQuest Publishing, 2007.

ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING FAMILIES OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA, FOR DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME

David Keith Tarkington, D.Ed.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Faculty Supervisor: Shane W. Parker

The purpose of this project was to equip families of First Baptist Church of Orange Park, Florida (FBCOP), for discipleship in their homes. The project assesses current discipleship practices and perceptions of such by parents of preschoolers, children, and teenagers at FBCOP.

Chapter 1 presents details regarding the history and ministry context of FBCOP as well as rationale and goals for this project. Chapter 2 provides biblical exegesis to reveal how God's expectations of family roles lead to an understanding of parents as the lead disciple-makers within the home. Chapter 3 offers historical, theoretical, and cultural information regarding the roles of fathers and mothers within the home leading to effective disciple-making. Chapter 4 presents the methodology of the project introduction as a tool for family discipleship. Chapter 5 reveals the progression of implementation of a family-equipping model of discipleship at FBCOP throughout the duration of this project and subsequent long-term strategy development.

VITA

David Keith Tarkington

EDUCATION

B.B.A., University of North Texas, 1990

M.A.(R.E.), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Minister of Youth and Education, Davis Boulevard Baptist Church, North
Richland Hills, Texas, 1989-1993

Student Pastor, First Baptist Church, Orange Park, Florida, 1994-2002

Single & Young Married Adult Pastor, First Baptist Church, Orange Park,
Florida, 2002-2005

Lead Pastor, First Baptist Church, Orange Park, Florida, 2005-