

**Are We There Yet?
Joining Kids on the
Journey of Discipleship**
Presenter: Joy Hensley



Are We There Yet?

What does scripture say about discipleship

- Discipleship was at the heart of Jesus and it was His priority.
- Faith means to follow Jesus.
- Characteristics of a disciple:
 - Abides in Christ through scripture and prayer
 - Bears fruit
 - Responds with obedience because of God's love
 - Loves as Christ loved

Discipleship:

- The process of discipleship affirms children as whole spiritual persons.
- Every generation walks the path of discipleship together as equals.
- We are not made disciples, we are becoming disciples.
- Discipleship begins at conversion. It is not a second spiritual experience.

Does this point children closer to Jesus?

- Evaluate to make sure you are biblically and theologically sound.

The Child's Journey:

- Every child's journey is unique and different.
- Don't neglect the moments to point them back to Jesus.

Environment for Discipleship:

- Relational
- Grace-Filled
- Engaging

Our Challenge:

- Journey alongside of children, not in front of them.
- Point kids closer to Jesus.
- Create an environment where healthy discipleship is a possibility.

Resources

Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus,
David Csinos and Ivy Beckwith

The Complete Book of Discipleship, Bill Hull

4 Ways to Partner with Parents

Presenter: Matt Morgan



Why Should We Partner with Parents?

- Parents Have the Greatest Influence
 - *God-given influence*—Deuteronomy 6
 - *Practical Influence*—time spent with the child
 - *Relational influence*—know the child—talents, fears, everything—better than anyone else
- Parents Need Our Help:

A study across a number of US Evangelical Churches [1] found that 96% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were the primary shepherds of their children (11% said the church, 1% said the school). However, 35 % of parents surveyed said they'd not read or discussed the Bible with their children more than a couple of times in the last month. Another 20% said they'd not done it at all in the last month.

- Our children's ministries will be stronger and more effective if we make the effort to partner with parents and equip them to disciple their kids.

How Can We Partner with Parents?

- Provide Resources to Help Them in Their Work
 - What is a parents' work?
 - How can you partner to help parents in their work?

"Family ministry is a process of equipping parents to engage actively in the discipleship of their children." Dr. Timothy Paul Jones

The church can be a community of support and library of resources to help parents disciple their children

- Areas to Focus Resources:

Discipline

- Grace Based Parenting by Tim Kimmel

Family Discipleship

- It Starts At Home by Our & Olivia Bruner
- Parenting by Paul Tripp

Marriage

- The Art of Marriage by FamilyLife
- You and Me Forever by Francis Chan
- Mingling of Souls by Matt Chandler

Provide Resources to Connect Them to Your Teaching

- Family Discipleship Guide
 - Quarterly guide of weekly devotional material that coincides with our curriculum
 - Elements:
 - Family Bible Reading
 - Family Devotional
 - Family Discussion Questions
 - Family Activity

- Table Talk Questions
 - List of questions for families to cut apart, place in a cup and keep on the dining table
 - Fun Questions—How would you spend \$1,000? Would you rather not be able to talk for a whole day or have to sing everything you say for a whole week?
 - Family Questions—Tell about your favorite memory or thought about the person seated on your right. Make a funny face and try to make your parents laugh.
 - Spiritual Questions—What are some reasons you can praise God? How have you see God’s Word help you in a time of conflict or trouble?
- Take-Home Sheets
 - Printed sheet that has talking points, coloring page, and discussion questions for families
 - Make sure the sheets are age appropriate to help parents connect appropriately with their child
- Newsletter, Email, Social Media
 - If you don’t have a social media account, GET ONE!
 - Post pictures, stories, sneak peaks into what God is doing on Sunday/Wednesday
 - A simple post can remind parents to ask what their children are learning and lead to deeper conversations throughout the week

Connect Them in Community with Other Parents

- While kids are in ministry sessions, what are parents doing?
 - Special events for kids and inviting parents to have “coffee talks” with each other or with a trained leader
 - Make a space where parents can hang-out and talk during ministry events
 - Create small groups for parents based around the stage of life
 - Our Small Group Experience

Equip Them for Parenting Stages & Celebrate Milestones with Them

- Parenting Stages
 - Dividing a child’s life into stages helps a parent see how their role changes with their changing child
- Milestones
 - Moments to pause and celebrate with families as the mark key transitions within their child’s spiritual journey
- Milestones & Stages
 - The New Stage - 0-4 Years
 - Parent Role - Instructor
 - Child Dedication
 - Blessing
 - The Growth Stage - 4-8 Years
 - Parent Role: Counselor
 - Bible Presentation
 - Baptism

- The Changing Stage - 8-12 Years
 - Parent Role - Manager
 - Parent/Child Weekend

- The Independent Stage - 13-17 Years
 - Parent Role - Coach
 - Rite of Passage (manhood/womanhood)

- The Launching Stage - 17-19 Years
 - Parent Role - Consultant
 - Senior Year Trainings

Connect with Matt Morgan

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Leadership Trends & Transitions

Presenter: Dr. Shelly Melia, PhD



10 Qualities Your Church Doesn't Need in Order to Grow Young

- A precise **size**
- A **trendy location** or region
- An exact **age**
- A popular **denomination** or lack of **denomination**
- An off-the-charts **cool quotient**
- A big, **modern** building
- A big **budget**
- A “**contemporary**” worship service
- A **watered-down** teaching style
- A **hyper-entertaining** ministry program

5 Actions to Grow Young

1. **Lead** intentionally
2. Live the **mission**
3. **Engage** your community
4. Pursue **generational** competency
5. Value **family** over theatre

1. LEAD INTENTIONALLY

Central Question: Do those we lead **grow** as persons?

Central Focus: Growth of the **individual**
(and not primarily on the growth of the organization/institution)

- Robert Greenleaf

Leader as a Gardner - Tim Elmore

- Environment is **studied**
- **Plans** are made
- Soil is **prepared**
- Seeds and plants are **chosen** and **planted**
- Feed, weed, and **prune**
 - Central theme of garden = **growth** of its **plants**
 - Goal: Growth of volunteers

Necessity of Pruning

- **Focusing** and **prioritizing** the work of individuals
- Evaluating ongoing programs and ministries
 - **Cutting** those programs and ministries that do not bear lasting fruits
 - It takes **courage** to prune
 - Serves both the growth of the individual and the ministry/program

What To Do About Weeds

- What are the weeds in your ministry?
 - Weeds should be pulled out as fast and as clean as possible
 - Weeds left untouched take over the garden, choking out healthy plants
 - Be productive. (Pre-emergent)

2. PURSUE GENERATIONAL COMPETENCY

What is **Generational Competency**?

- The ability to understand, communicate, and to effectively engage with people across generations.

Barriers to Generational Competency

- “Younger generations have been identified as so radically different by the older generations that they are traveling through these milestones alone or with little input and support from previous generations.”
 - Darwin Glassford, *Toward Intergenerational Ministry in a Post-Christian Era*
- **True community necessitates the presence and interaction of three generations.**
 1. *Generation of Memory (wisdom)*
 2. *Generation of the existential present (reality)*
 3. *Generation of vision (passion)*
 - John Westerhoff
- Remember, **Multi-generational** is *not* the same as intergenerational
- **Proximity** doesn't equal relationships

4 Trends - 4 Responses

Trend: Ubiquitous technology-Children are immersed in it

Response: Limit technology at church-Promote Face-time

Trend: Superficial theology-Discipleship is weak

Response: Empower and equip parents-Redeem the time

Trend: Pragmatism trumps Principle: Short term wins are prioritized

Response: Evaluate long-term outcomes and make adjustments

Trend: Franchise Effect: Crowd sourced ministry

Response: Return to spirit-led, convictional leadership

3. LIVE THE MISSION

Follow the leadership example of Jesus

- Servant leaders take up Jesus' towel of servanthood to meet the needs of others. John 13:4-11
 - Your greatest test of leadership may be to wash the feet of those you know may betray you.
 - Remember, it's not always about you.
 - Disciples consistently struggled to follow Jesus' example

Living the Mission

- Keep the mission the main thing
- Make sure teachers know what they do matters

4. VALUE FAMILY OVER THEATRE

Warm is The New Cool

- What makes your church effective with young people?
 - 33% share about "warmth"
 - Twice as many pastors as young people name worship music as a vital factor.

There is a gap between what pastors think young people care about and what they actually care about. “We can hire and buy cool, but we can’t hire-or fake-warmth”.

- Warm is more than superficial community: “Like family” was the most common phrase in expressing effective churches
- What Keeps you involved in church?
 - 1 out of 3 people responded with personal relationships
 - First relationship, then formation
 - First belonging, then belief
- Growing Young, Powell, Mulder and Griffin

Warm intergenerational relationships grow everyone young...

- Two Primary avenues:
 1. Mentoring: One-on-one discipleship, vocational guidance or shared ministry work.
 2. Worship: Involvement in intergenerational worship is more consistently linked with mature faith in both high school and college than any other form of church participation. Faith, after all, is not just passed down. It is passed around.
- This pushes against:
 - Hyper-individualism
 - Generational segregation
- *Growing Young*, Powell, Mulder and Griffin

5. ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

When asked what makes their church effective with young people, nearly **60** percent name service practices, missional practices or generally being outward oriented.

“**Service** is quickly becoming an entry point into Christianity.”

-Ed Stetzer

Adoption, **Fostering**, Human Trafficking, **Special Needs**

Minister to all **families**. Does your church reflect your **community**?

Evaluate Yourself

Lead

Lead Intentionally

- Who am I mentoring?
- Who is blooming where they are planted?
- Who is dying on the vine?

Pursue

Pursue Generational Competency

- Do I understand generational differences?
- How can I connect rather than segregate generations?

Live

Live the Mission

- Am I a servant leader?
- Do I communicate the mission consistently?

Value

Value Family over Theatre

- Do children feel a part of the family of faith?
- Are children fully known and loved?

Engage

Engage Your Community

- Are children encouraged and equipped to serve?
- Does our church look like our community?

Resources:

Growing Young: 6 Essentials Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church,
Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin