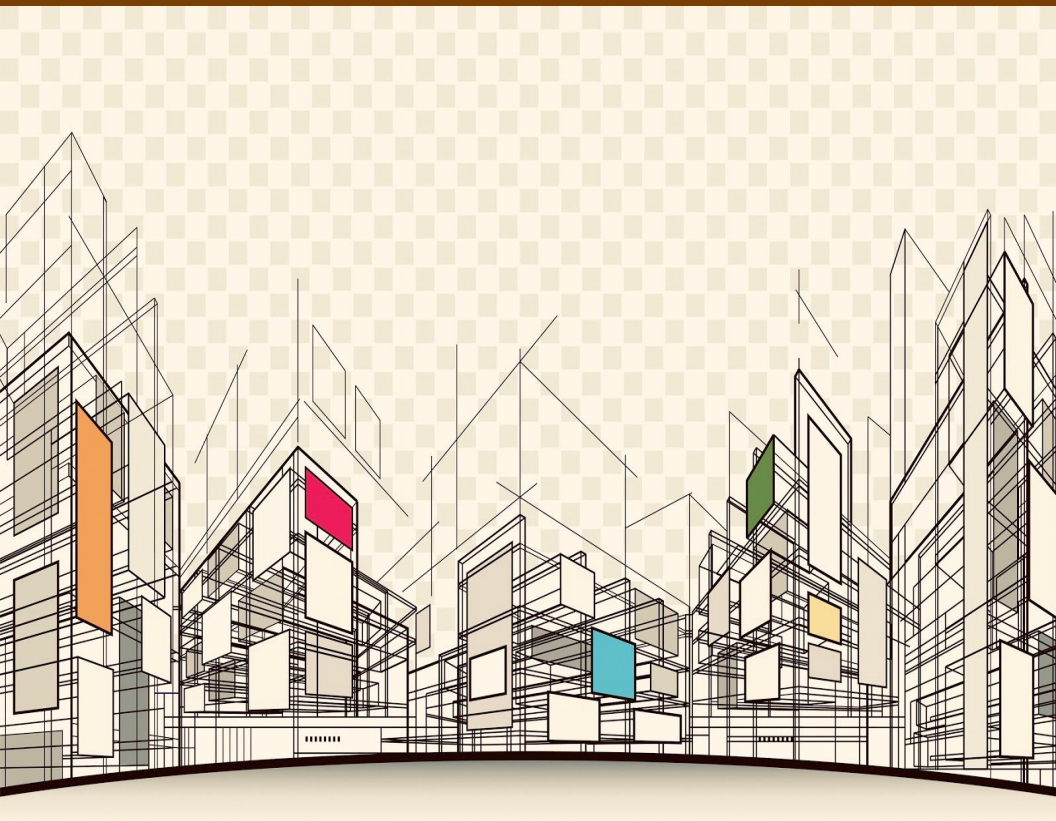

Discipleship Begins @ Home Blueprint

Pastor's Edition

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Discipleship Begins @ Home

Pastor's Edition

The purpose of this blueprint is to help Pastors of all types, Sr. Pastors, Youth Pastors & Children's Pastors, connect with parents of children and youth in a meaningful way to help families create a substantive discipleship plan for their children and youth.

Having been a Youth Minister for nearly 20 years, I understand the challenges related to connecting with parents concerning the discipleship of their children. What complicates matters is that many of us have been trained to disciple children and youth, but we haven't been trained to equip parents to do the same. At the same time, there is a longing from pastors to see parents become the disciplers of their children as God commands them to do (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:1-4).

That is why these blueprints have been created! They are here to help you as pastors bridge the gap between parents and their children in the realm of discipleship. Along with this blueprint that is specifically geared for pastors, there are two other blueprints for parents of children & teens. The Discipleship for Life Blueprint is for parents of young children beginning the discipleship process 5th grade and under (from birth) and taking them through the High School years. The 5 Year Plan is for parents of older children & youth who are beginning the discipleship process 6th grade or later (even into their young adult years), as well as parents themselves.

It is our sincere prayer that these blueprints will be the beginning of building stronger families in the Lord and a stronger future for the church because of your efforts.

Why this blueprint is needed

For the last 20 years, the statistics of youth leaving the faith by the time they exit college has hovered between 70-88%. Every Pastor, Youth Minister and Children's Director wants to be the person who sees that situation change. I know that I did.

So from the time I entered the ministry back in 2001, I worked hard at all the things I was taught in Bible College that told me that I was qualified to lead youth. Our youth group grew numerically from 7 youth, at our lowest point, to 45 youth at our most "successful", in a church of about 160-200 people.

I put "successful" in quotation marks because if I was only concerned about attendance, then I had arrived. I had good adult leaders. I had a great student leadership team that I trained on a weekly basis. I had an engaging atmosphere for youth to bring their friends.

However, because I have been committed for the long haul in ministry, I also saw that many of the youth who had attended our youth group, even as leaders, had grown lukewarm or wandered away from the faith altogether during their college years and beyond. It turned out, my ministry wasn't any different than all the statistics that I had been reading about for the first dozen years of ministry.

Like my other youth pastor friends, I lamented the lack of parental involvement, from solid Christians, in the spiritual development of their children. I think that we all pay lip service to the idea that parents are the disciplers of their children (Eph. 6:1-4; Ps. 78:1-8; Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21). But if I had to be honest, I spent so much time with the students trying to outreach and build them up in Christ, that I had very little time for the parents.

As a matter of fact, I know that paradigm still exists as I asked an online youth pastor network of over 18,000 youth pastors: What do you do to reach out to parents of youth to equip them to disciple their teens?

The number one response that I received was that they were so busy trying to reach students, especially those who had just begun coming to church or youth group, that they really didn't have time for parents.

As a Sr. Pastor, Youth Pastor or Children's Pastor, ask yourself, when was the last time you spent time with families or specifically parents equipping them for the lofty task of discipling their children in the Lord? Or asking parents how they are doing in discipling their children? If you are like me, most of your interactions with parents revolve around their personal relationship with Christ or ministries they are doing inside and outside the church. We may ask about their children, but we really never ask how they are doing in the discipleship of their children, nor giving them tools for the discipleship of their children.

The reason that we do not ask is because we have made the church and the church programs the default discipling tool for parents for the last 70 years.

The Rise and Faults of Age Appropriate Ministry

In the 1950s the outreach success of Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru), Young Life, Youth for Christ and InterVarsity launched a paradigm shift in how churches would begin to view youth & children's ministry. Over the next 20 years, there would be a movement within the church toward age appropriate ministry, as youth groups and children's ministries exploded. Because of the initial success of this age appropriate model in gathering large groups of like aged people, this model was expanded throughout the church.

Today, our modern American churches continue to reflect the influence of this age appropriate ministry model. If you go to almost any church in America, large or small, you will see children and youth divided into classes reflecting their age. Sunday Schools and Children Church programs are segregated according to their educational level at school either broadly at smaller churches, grouping all the Elementary

age level children together, or more specifically at large churches, for example, grouping all 3rd grade aged children in one or multiple classes. Youth in smaller churches are defined as both Jr. High and High School aged, whereas, youth in larger churches are separated in Jr. High and High School categories, with Sunday School classes even more specific, separating them into their school age grade level.

The rise of the age appropriated ministries has made the ministries more popular than ever. Over time, these ministries have morphed into peer-to-peer outreaches. Large numbers of children and youth invite their friends to church in a ministry geared specifically to those age groups.

On the Bible College and Seminary level, degreed programs focus on how to maximize the impact of children & youth ministry. Strategies are conceived on how to reach the most youth & children through programming, mentoring, training & outreach events. Specific ministry degrees are now given as Children Director or Minister and Youth Pastor or Minister. (I have one myself.)

On the surface, all of the popularity of Children's and Youth Ministries would tend to proclaim the relative success of such ministries. However, as stated before, the dropout rate is around 70-88%, a statistic that has remained static my entire 20 years of ministry.

This new model unintentionally, but effectively, replaced parents as the primary faith developers of their children and placed that burden on the church. The church has responded to this challenge by constructing programs that resemble the school system that parents take their children and youth to every week with the subject being Faith Development.

However, the great fault of age appropriate ministry in the church is: ***We adopted the language of the school system, but none of its practices.*** This has led to a number of misunderstandings that have actually hindered the discipleship process for our children and youth within the church.

Misunderstanding #1: There is no set learning metric for any child's age within the church.

If I was moving from Georgia to New Mexico and my three children were in 10th, 6th and 3rd grade, respectively, when we arrived in New Mexico, I would enroll our children in the same grades. The reason is simple: There are agreed upon national standards of what a 10th, 6th and 3rd grader ought to be learning at that age.

However, when it comes to the church, we have no such metric. We weren't taught it in Bible College or Seminary. Our focus on the age appropriate model has been fixated upon outreach and not discipleship.

If I were to ask you what a child, who grew up in the church, should know at 3rd, 6th or 10th grade, could you answer it? For many years, I couldn't because I was never taught it. I am guessing that if I couldn't, you probably can't either. And if you cannot answer it, how could you encourage or hold parents accountable to a standard you are not even aware of?

Misunderstanding #2: We give parents the false impression that their children/youth are learning at an age appropriate level.

Labels make a difference. When we adopted the language of the school system in our ministry settings, we unintentionally conveyed a message we couldn't foresee. Because our Children's and Youth ministries have no metrics, labeling a Sunday School class for 3rd grade students conveys something completely different for staff and volunteers than it does to parents.

For church staff and volunteers, a 3rd grade Sunday School class is a place where children 8-9 years old gather. That is the only thing that these 8-9 year olds have in common, their age and the school grade they attend.

A parent, however, sees a 3rd grade Sunday School class and assumes that their 8-9 year old child will be learning about Jesus at an age appropriate level that will continue to grow them into maturity, as they progress from 3rd through 12th grade. The same labels apply for Jr. High & High School Youth Ministries, as well.

For a parent, their experience in the school system has taught them to understand that 2nd grade History, Math, English, etc. are subjects taught to their children in a meaningful way at that age. When the church adopted the language of the school system, the assumptions that came with it concerning faith were also adopted by many faithful parents.

As Children's and Youth Ministry became more specialized and the focus of ministry was squarely upon the students, parents in the church did what parents in the school system did: They faded into the background and took on a support role instead of a leading one concerning matters of faith. After all, many parents don't know how to do Algebra or Trigonometry. In the same way, parents also felt that they didn't have a Bible degree and their children would learn better from those who had been trained to teach them in faith. So the really good parents made sure that their students came to every Children's Church and Youth event in hopes that their children would be discipled at an age appropriate level.

However, there is a fundamental problem with how learning takes place within the church that hinders discipleship for any child. Because there are no metrics for learning and the only thing that children and youth have in common in their classes is their age, we put teachers and pastors at a severe disadvantage trying to teach students who have a widely varying array of knowledge concerning Jesus.

Unlike the school system, someone in a 3rd grade class doesn't have to have a certain proficiency in the subject they are learning to advance to the next grade level, they simply have to get older. As a matter of fact, a brand new visitor to the church who has an 11th grader who has never been to church before and knows nothing about Jesus

goes to the exact same class as the 11th grader who has gone to church all of their lives, has a strong relationship with Christ and has read through the Bible 2 or 3 times. How is a teacher or pastor supposed to teach such a class in any meaningful way?

Because of these disparities that happen in every class within the church, teachers and pastors have been forced to teach in only one of two ways.

1) *They must teach only the foundations of the Christian faith so that new people will not become lost.*
2) *They must teach topically without a foundation of faith to keep things relevant.*

Neither of these plans are ideal, nor are they a proving ground for making disciples. The first way continues to teach only on the elementary things of Christ so that newcomers can learn about the Christian faith. This makes faith pretty boring and unchallenging for the youth who grew up in a Christian home and hears the same message over and over again until they graduate. But the lack of a strong understanding of how their faith affects all areas of life is exposed as they are confronted with more mature arguments against their faith in High School, College, the internet and the workplace, disillusioning many. The second way provides interesting and compelling ways in which faith interacts with real life. However, without the foundation as to why the Bible is authoritative for the Christian, how to rightly divide the Word of Truth or why Christ's resurrection can be believed as an historical event with personal implications, the lessons taught are seen only through the lens of interesting teachings that can be set aside when a new more interesting teaching is presented in school or among friends, which is exactly what is happening.

Barna has been tracking those who have a biblical worldview by generation for the last 20 years. In 2018, they posted the following findings: Of church attending Boomers, only 10% had a biblical worldview. Those of the Gen X generation, only 7% had a biblical worldview (my generation). Only 6% of Millennials had a biblical

worldview. And only 4% of those of Gen Z have a biblical worldview (our current children and youth).
(Source:https://www.impact360institute.org/articles/4-percent-gen-z-biblical-worldview/)

The thing that *all* of these generations have in common is that they have *all* been trained by the age appropriate model outlined above.

Misunderstanding #3: Pastors do not meet with parents for the purpose of making discipleship of their children more effective.

In the school system, parents and teachers meet 2-4 times per year. The purpose of that meeting is to see how students are progressing in fulfilling their goals based on the metrics of learning for their grade level. If their son or daughter is excelling, they celebrate together.

However, if they are behind, in Science for example, the parents are informed and concerns are raised. Teachers only know what they have taught in the classroom and rely upon parents to make sure their children are diligent and understand what they are being taught. A parent who has a child who comes home and only spends 10 minutes on homework before vegging out on movies and video games will have a markedly different response than a parent whose child struggles with Science homework for an hour or two every night and still doesn't understand it. For the first child, the parents will most likely punish their child, taking away freedoms, until they are focusing on their subjects. However, the second child will probably get some type of tutoring or referral to a remedial class until they can understand the subject they are struggling with. The meetings with the parents are an invaluable part of the learning process because they provide a means of accountability.

This means of accountability is largely absent in the church. Without a metric and a clear expectation of what standards are expected by students or parents in faith development, pastors do not even know what to ask, how to encourage or how to provide tools to parents who wish to see their children and youth grow in the Lord.

Most interactions with parents are relegated to large meetings talking about the format of Children's Church or Youth Group and the encouragement to get involved and keep the lines of communication open. Serious conversations with parents are often only focused on issues of sin in their child/youth or encouragement toward ministry for their child/youth. Rarely, if ever, do pastors simply ask how they are doing in the discipleship of their children or offer tools for which to help parents in this task.

This lack of communication has only served to further distance parents from their God given role of discipling their children (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Ps. 78:1-8; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4), as they have relied more and more on the church and professional staff to disciple their children and youth for them.

These blueprints aim to correct the misunderstandings created by the age appropriate model providing attainable, yet challenging, standards of biblical faith development for parents of children of any age. The purpose is to effectively hand the discipleship of children and youth back to their parents while providing a tangible means of equipping and accountability to pastors.

Who Does the Age Appropriate Model Hurt Most?

The irony of the age appropriate model is that it hurts the children of a majority of faithful families most by offering them the promise of a robust discipleship and delivering an inferior form of it. In return for their faithfulness to attending every event and meeting time, this model has given them a faith that is strong on foundational truths but not very deep OR a subject oriented faith devoid of a foundation. As a result, lifelong students within our Children's and Youth Ministries have no biblical worldview developed when they exit our programs, as evidenced by all the research over the last 20 years.

The above paragraph seems harsh, however, the success of our discipleship efforts as Children's & Youth Ministers is not proven with the number of students in attendance to our programs, but rather those students who grow to be adults still faithful to Jesus. This is what every faithful Christian parent wants for the children and youth they entrust to our care. Every Children's & Youth Minister I know wants the same thing, as well.

Especially as it pertains to Youth Ministry, the age appropriate model and the natural focus on outreach that many youth programs are geared toward often lends to an atmosphere where the youth from a faithful Christian family is overlooked by the Youth Minister in favor of the non-Christian friend who attends or the youth who has professed Christ but has no Christian family support at home. All of this is done so that no one "falls through the cracks". However, what is unknowingly happening when a Youth Minister commits to the outreach ministry as the primary focus of their efforts is they do it at the expense of discipleship efforts geared toward faithful families and their youth.

A Much Needed Paradigm Shift

Speaking on Youth Ministry, Voddie Baucham in his videos and his book Family Driven Faith shares his conviction to abolish Youth & Children's Ministry altogether. Using the example of a minister's youth, he demonstrates the commitment churches have as using the age appropriate model as the default discipleship model. If a minister were to keep his youth out of the youth group because their family already disciples their children, they would still be shamed for their youth not attending. This, he argues, shows that the church is committed to treating youth and children's programs in the church as not only the outreach arm of the church, but the discipleship arm, as well. (Source:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZddfeDuOLrU&t=847s, especially 5:05 to 11:19)

While I disagree that there is no place in the church for Children's or Youth Ministry, I do agree that these ministries need a solid biblical foundation for their justification and operation. However, to do so will require a paradigm shift on the focus of these ministries, their ultimate goals and a reevaluation of the importance we have placed on the attendance to these ministries, if we are committed to seeing children and youth grow into mature disciples, led by their parents.

Ephesians 4:11-13 states: *It was He (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.*

As a Pastor (whether Sr., Youth or Children's), according to this passage of Scripture, it is our job to equip the saints for their works of service. As it pertains to youth and children, it is our job to equip those whose work of service is the discipleship of youth and children, namely parents. Throughout this blueprint, we have emphasized the biblical command to parents by God to raise their children in the Lord (Deut.

6:4-9; 11:13-21; Ps. 78:1-8; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4). Every pastor I know agrees with this biblical mandate. However, the programs that we have created in the church do not provide an atmosphere conducive to equipping parents. As a matter of fact, most of them largely ignore parents altogether.

In order to correct this and build a theologically correct framework for Youth and Children's Ministry, there are a number of things we must be willing to change. Overall, this may not change the look of your ministry for those looking from the outside. As I implemented these changes within our ministry 5 years ago, I can honestly say that our Youth and Children's meeting times and material taught within these ministries have largely gone unchanged. However, the philosophical underpinnings of these ministries changed drastically.

First, we must make Youth and Children's Ministries' primary goal to equip parents to disciple their children.

This is a monumental shift. This means that an emphasis needs to be placed on reaching parents for the purpose of equipping them for the task that God has called them to do.

You will find, as I did, that most Christian parents in the church *want* to disciple their children in the Lord, but have no idea how to do it. They don't know when their child should start reading the Bible for themselves or how to have their child read it in such a way that they will understand it. They don't know how to teach their children to pray. They don't know when or how to involve their children in outreach or serving within the church. They don't know how to explain to their children the importance of the gathering of believers, communion or baptism.

As mentioned earlier in this blueprint, most of us, as ministers also don't know the answer to these questions, as it pertains to benchmarks of learning. This is why these blueprints have been created. They are a starting point for you as you guide parents and for the parents as they guide their children.

Our blueprints focus on six disciplines of the faith at age appropriate levels: ***Bible Reading, Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving.*** These blueprints give step by step instructions on how to implement each of these disciplines in increasing measure as children and youth are growing. The expectations for these disciplines found in the Discipleship for Life Edition, as well as, the 5 Year Plan are included in this blueprint.

The Discipleship for Life Edition is designed for parents with younger children (birth to 5th Grade) beginning the discipleship process and walking them through High School.

The 5 Year Plan is designed for parents and their older children (6th Grade and above) beginning the discipleship process.

In order to put the power of discipleship back in the parents' hands, we have to make time for parents. We have to set expectations for parents (based on the biblical command) and have tools to give to parents to help them fulfill their God given task. Finally, we must be willing to keep parents accountable to these expectations by following up with them periodically to see how they are progressing with their children and youth.

Second, we must be willing to de-emphasize Children's & Youth Ministry for parents who are taking discipleship seriously.

One of the biggest complaints among Youth Pastors and Children's workers is the commitment that parents often place on extracurricular activities for their children, even at the expense of coming to church activities. However, by placing the power of discipleship back in the hands of parents, then the Youth and Children's programs become less important to the faith development of their children.

As a Youth Pastor, even for the most committed of students, I will only have about 2-4 hours per week with that student. Those hours are only available within the timeframe of my schedule. Parents, on the

other hand, live with their children and can adjust time of discipleship to fit the family's schedule, which will take into account their child's activities, which may or may not conflict with Youth or Children's programs within the church.

One of the hardest things to do for pastors is to be content with parents discipling their children and youth at the expense of attendance and participation in the programs that we have created in the church. However, we must recognize that this is the natural result of parents taking their call to disciple their children seriously.

If I knew that a parent was committed to training their children in the Lord, was walking them through the Word of God, was actively reaching out to others with the gospel of Christ and was growing in the disciplines, I wouldn't worry about whether or not those children and youth were involved in either the Children's or Youth Ministry because they were involved in biblical discipleship through their parents. Of course, I would love such children and youth to be involved in these ministries! They would be a great example for other youth and children. However, to bemoan their lack of involvement or insist that their involvement is needed is to pit a Children's or Youth Ministry against the rightful ministry of the parents in the discipleship of their children.

The natural consequence of de-emphasizing Youth and Children's Ministry is to see an initial and possibly profound shrinkage of children & youth involved in those ministries. *This will affect the Youth Ministry at a greater proportion*. This is exactly what I saw. As mentioned earlier, at our peak our Youth Group was around 45 people. Today, our youth group hovers around 15-20 youth. You may experience the same. The difference is that now I have met with almost every one of the parents who have children involved in our church, not just youth group, and equipped them for the discipling of their children.

I can honestly say, I wouldn't trade this reality for a larger youth group. Now our youth both in and out of our youth group, and "graduates" of the youth group are now discipling others on their own

apart from our programs, reaching their friends more effectively with the gospel of Christ than my programs ever did.

Finally, we must communicate honestly with parents about the limits of Children's & Youth Ministry.

I remember a few years ago as we were doing a teacher training for our Children's Church program (nursery-5th grade), there was some dissatisfaction with the fact that we only had three classes for this large age range of students: Birth-3 yrs old, 3-5 yrs. old and K-5th grade. *(Remember we are a small church of 160-200 about 30 of which fall in this age category.)*

Of particular concern was the K-5th grade age range. *(By this time, I had been reaching out to many of the parents of our church and giving them the tools of this blueprint for their own families.)* However, there was still a perceived problem with having such a wide range of ages to teach within a class. They worried over teaching too mature for the Kindergarteners and too immature for the 5th graders.

That's when I shocked my teachers by saying that the children in our care would not be learning any more than the basics from us, for that was all that our curriculum focused on. As they initially objected, I stated the problems stated above: We either have to teach foundationally continuing with basic bible stories or we have to teach subject oriented without this foundation. We had chosen to teach on the basics of the faith and it is all that we can effectively do. We were relying upon parents to disciple their children.

I could see that some of them still didn't understand the implication of what was being said. So I explained using an example. I chose a teacher who was also a great parent committed to discipling their children, so I knew that their children, though young, had a good start. At the time, their youngest was in Kindergarten and I explained that a new family who had never been to church with a 5th grader would have less bible knowledge than his Kindergartener. So while that parent was worried about his Kindergartener being lost through teaching that was

too deep, his child was actually much more knowledgeable than a new 5th grader coming into the class...*and every class is like this in the church!* It makes it impossible for teachers to teach any other way.

We had to learn to be content knowing that our Children's & Youth Ministries were not going to be the places where children and youth were going to be challenged in their faith, but merely introduced to it. As a matter of fact, we encouraged our teachers who were worried about other parents' similar concerns to convey to the parents these truths:

1) That we recognize that our Children's & Youth programs will not disciple their children & youth.
2) That it was the parents' responsibility to disciple their children & youth.
3) That we had materials for parents to help them with that task.

Whether through individual meetings with parents or in a larger group with the teachers of the church, I believe that it is extremely important to share these important limitations with our parents and teachers. By doing so, we give parents the invaluable information that church programs to not equal discipleship *and* discipleship is still theirs to do.

A Final Question: What About Those Without Christian Families?

The biggest concern for Pastors considering the change of philosophy are those youth and children who do not have a Christian family to go home to, but our ministries have the privilege serving them and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many ministries, including mine in the past, have been primarily filled with students whose families do not attend our churches and are not involved outside our youth and children's gatherings.

At the height of our numerical growth our youth group had 45 involved. Of those 45, only 15 participated in our Sunday morning service. Almost all of those 15 were from families who were heavily involved in the ministry of our church.

To those who worry about the potential drop off of those who do not have Christian families, I would ask to prayerfully consider these three factors:

1) ***Most of the children & youth who only attend our children's and youth programs apart from their family do not stay faithful to Jesus.***

I wholeheartedly believe that most of our 70-88% drop off from the faith sited by most statistics fall into the category of those who are only involved within our programs in these age appropriate ministries and not through a personal commitment with Christ and commitment to the greater body of the church.

I can remember numerous youth over the years whom I spent time outreaching to at their schools, their workplaces, in personal discipleship, creating events for, chasing down so they would remain involved in our youth group, only to see them never become connected to the church and falling away from Jesus shortly after leaving the youth

group (through graduation or moving). If you are in ministry under the age appropriate model, I am sure that you have many similar stories.

Many of our children's and youth ministries have become what I call "chasing ministries". We get excited when the new person shows at our ministry and do our best to get them plugged in. When they become disgruntled or stop showing up, we chase them down in hopes of getting them plugged in again. This is beyond merely ministering to children and teens in tough circumstances, through immaturity or following up because of a couple of weeks absence. This is an unhealthy investment in a child or youth who truly has shown no interest in Christ. However, we hope with our next connection or planting of seed that will change.

We never see Jesus chase after someone who didn't want Him. He let the rich young ruler walk away (Matt. 19:16-30). He let most of those who only wanted to make Him king by force walk away (John 6:15, 22-71). These weren't insignificant numbers or people, but Jesus never chased after them at the expense of those who actually *wanted* Him. I had to learn to stop making this mistake. You may have to, as well.

By focusing more of our time and effort on faithful families who actually want to see their children discipled in the faith, we both increase the chance of their faithfulness beyond High School, but also increase the chance of them reaching their friends for Christ in a more meaningful way than we ever could (more on that in #3).

2) ***For those who truly want a deeper relationship with Jesus, these blueprints provide the perfect discipleship tool.***

Not every child or youth whom we outreach to falls into the "chasing" category. Some families are reached for Jesus through our efforts in Children's & Youth Ministry. Some youth truly give their lives to Christ and wish to grow up in Him, even if they have unbelieving parents.

For those families who are reached for Jesus, we can introduce parents to our discipleship plans for them and their children (see the next section "Where to Begin with Parents"). This effectively puts them on the same footing as all the other families within the church.

For those youth who are reached for Jesus, we or our other adult volunteers can mentor them by walking them through the 5 Year Plan. However, instead of the parents keeping youth accountable for their growth in Christ, it will be the volunteer or the Youth Pastor themselves.

The challenges of this are that if there is no accountability, there will be little or no growth, except for the most self motivated youth. Also, as volunteers and pastors, time is a limited resource. Therefore, those who wish to be most effective may wish to combine serious youth with volunteers or pastors in some sort of accountability class or small group, instead of one-on-one discipleship. But note, the larger each of the groups, the less accountability takes place.

However, despite these challenges, this provides a real way to continue authentic discipleship to those youth whom our ministries have reached for Jesus. By finding out which students are serious about their relationship with Christ, these blueprints provide the perfect tool for yourself and your leaders to gauge their growth and commitment through accountability.

3) As faithful families and youth are discipled through the blueprint, they become equipped to disciple others.

The beauty of the blueprint is that once a parent, child or youth has walked through the blueprint (or a majority of it), they will be equipped to disciple *anybody* by simply walking them through the same blueprint. This means that faithful families will be able to reach out to their children's friends and their families, without it needing to be a youth or children's event. Youth will be able to reach out to their friends, introduce Christ and even walk with them to maturity, without ever having the friend show up at youth group.

What may be lost initially from focusing our efforts on our core families and only serious youth, instead of those uninterested on the fringe, we gain back as those families and youth become mature disciples capable of discipling others.

Honestly, isn't *this* the goal we always dreamed of as we got into ministry to begin with.

A Personal Testimony

In my first 14 years of ministry, I counted 14 total youth who read through the entire Word of God once. This included my 3 children. However, since making the philosophical shift to equip families within the church, I have seen a dramatic increase in biblical literacy. When you add the focus of the other disciplines included in these blueprints of Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving, it naturally leads to more committed and mature disciples from our families and their children in the church. And this result happens *no matter their involvement* in the children's & youth ministry.

At this time, our youth group runs about 20 people. Of the 20 youth who attend, all but four have families faithfully involved at the church. Currently, a dozen of our youth have read through the entire Bible at least once, including two of the last three who entered into youth group at 6th grade. A number of our leaders, both past and present, are currently discipling others themselves, apart from any youth activity. A few of our faithful families of the church have youth who are not involved in our youth ministry, but are actively overseeing the discipleship of their youth. I love where we are!

However, this shift philosophically takes time and commitment. I would say that it took the better part of 2-3 years to begin seeing the tangible results of the foundation being built. Having walked through to the other side, I can honestly say it is worth the time, effort and wait!

Where to Begin with Parents

As I made the philosophical shift from a traditional understanding of Children's & Youth Ministry to our current blueprint model that emphasizes the need for active discipleship by parents, one of the things that helped was being able to articulate the shortfalls and challenges of age appropriate ministry, as presented in this blueprint. I have found it to be a good way to help parents understand why just taking their children and youth to church will never be enough. From there I introduced to them the blueprints and walked them through their unique features. Parents, who themselves need discipling, I encouraged to walk through The 5 Year Plan either with their children or in conjunction with their children going through the Discipleship for Life Plan.

All of our blueprints are available for free (in PDF form). They were created for the dual purpose of helping pastors connect with parents and as a tool to bring both parents and their children to maturity in Christ. So feel free to request and familiarize yourself with all of our blueprints.

On the following pages, our Discipleship for Life Edition and The 5 Year Plan are reproduced in their entirety for your convenience, so that you may utilize this blueprint in conjunction with either of those editions.

We pray that these resources will be a blessing to you in your ministry, as together, we strive to make disciples of all nations together beginning in the household of faith (Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 6:10).

Lord bless you all.



Discipleship Begins @ Home Blueprint

Discipleship for Life Edition

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Discipleship Begins @ Home Blueprint

Our prayer is that this blueprint will help make the discipleship of your children in the Lord attainable through a systematic step-by-step process that strives to grow at the same rate as your children do. We do this through a focus on 6 disciplines throughout the life of your child: Bible Reading, Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving.

This blueprint includes the Discipleship for Life Plan geared for parents who are beginning the discipleship process from birth to 5th grade. This plan focuses on implementing the knowledge of the Word of God and the participation in the disciplines of the faith at a rate equal to their maturity. This plan is perfect for parents with young children wishing to build a proper foundation of faith from the very beginning. The Discipleship for Life plan begins at birth and walks you through a discipleship process that takes you all the way through High School.

For those who are beginning the discipleship process of their children at an older age (6th grade and older) or for parents who themselves are in need of discipleship so they may teach their children, we recommend the Discipleship Begins @ Home Blueprint--5 Year Plan. This plan will help build the foundation for you or your older child at a rate appropriate to your and their level of learning.

Focus on the Bible

A majority of this blueprint fixes its attention on your and your children's knowledge of the Bible. Of all the six disciplines listed above, in my experience, Bible Reading is the most neglected. However, of all the disciplines, Bible Reading is the most important.

Let me explain why.

It is through our Bible Reading that all of our disciplines are informed. It is through the witness found in the Word of God that we learn about God, His and our nature, the life, death & resurrection of Jesus and the implications those things have for us. It is through the Word that we are not just informed about each disciplines' importance, but also the correct way to practice those disciplines. Consider the following passages on each of these disciplines:

Bible Reading (Ps. 119:9-16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12-13)
Prayer (Matt. 5:43-45; Matt. 6:5-15)
Fellowship (John 13:34-35; Phil. 2:1-11; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 John 1:5-10)
Outreach/Service (Luke 6:27-35; Luke 10:25-37; Gal. 6:9-10)
Discipleship (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 12:28-34; John 13:34-35)
Giving (Matt. 6:1-4; Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 8-9)

As you and your children gain a proper understanding of the Word of God, they will also be gaining a proper understanding of the importance of these disciplines.

Our focus on six disciplines is two-fold. First, it is to help create an understanding that living out faith in Christ isn't something just done on Sunday mornings or Wednesday nights. Second, it is to provide practical ideas for opportunities to work out these six disciplines of the Christian life producing a more well-rounded faith in your youth or young adult as they grow.

The Discipleship Plan included is for parents of children birth to 5th grade and any knowledge level of the Scriptures. It is specific enough to give real direction to parents desiring to raise their children in the Lord and varied enough not to fall in the realm of legalism. Our goal is to see a faith produced in your children that is intellectually stimulating and practically fulfilling at an age appropriate level, thereby training them to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength (Mark 12:30).

How to Study the Bible

The goal of this section is simple: To make reading the Bible and understanding it attainable to the reader or the parent who is trying to instill a knowledge of the Word of God to their children. I would like to be the first to say, *You can do this, even if you have never done this before! You can teach your children, even if, before reading this blueprint, you have never read through the Bible yourself!*

Let's face it. The Bible can seem to be an intimidating and confusing book. Consider the fact that the Bible is not one book, but a collection of books covering two covenants (or promises) of God, that have their fulfillment in Jesus and it is easy to see how people get confused. When we add to that foreign, ancient practices, such as sacrifices, and rules listed in the Bible that followers of Jesus no longer practice, such as the prohibition of tattoos (many believers have them today), it can seem that the Bible is too barbaric or too contradictory to understand. Other sections, such as prophecy, seem too mystical or fantastical to ever have the hope of understanding it.

Overwhelmed? Don't be! The purpose of this blueprint is to provide a practical way to break down the Bible in understandable portions in a three phase process that will help you understand how to read the Word of God for the rest of your life. It will also instruct you on how to use that knowledge to teach your children to do the same at a very early age.

So where do we begin?

A Word about Translations

I believe that the best place to begin is the type of Bible you or your youth use. When talking about the type of Bible, I am speaking of translation. Many people believe that any translation of the Bible you use is just as good as another, just as long as you are in the Word of God. Sadly, this is not true.

There are a few factors that must be considered when searching for an appropriate translation. One is the consideration of the age or reading level of the reader. The second is the reliability of the translation, especially for the maturing reader.

When I was about 10 years old, I visited my grandmother who gave me my first Bible. It was an imitation leather black covered Bible. I loved that Bible and appreciate it even more now, as I wasn't a Christian when it was given to me (that would be another 10 years).

However, there was one thing wrong with the Bible my grandmother gifted me: it was a King James Version Bible (KJV). The King James Version is written in Old English dating back to 1610...the time of Shakespeare. I sure didn't understand the language being used in it at the age of 10! In my case, Bible translation became a barrier to understanding the Bible at an early age.

The good news is that today there are many translations that can help maturing readers get the most out of their Bible.

Without going into too much detail, I would like to describe the different types of translations.

The first type of translation is known as an essentially literal translation. This is a word-for-word rendering of the original text. This is the best type of translation for those in High School and adults. An essentially literal translation ensures that the words you are reading are the Word of God and not an interpretation of the Word of God. These

include the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the English Standard Version (ESV) and the New King James Version (NKJV).

The second type of translation is known as a dynamic equivalent translation. The New International Version (NIV) and the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) fall into this category. These are known as thought-for-thought translations. There is a spectrum for these types of translations. Some, like the NIV and HCSB, draw closer to the word-for-word translations than others. These can be good translations for those growing into Jr. or Mid High. However, the further away the translation gets from a literal translation, the more opportunity there is for misinterpretation of the original text, which is why I do not recommend the dynamic equivalent translations for those in High School or for adults.

The third type of translation are the reader's version translations. The NIrV falls into this category. These are great Bible for those learning English as a second language or the growing reader in the 3rd to 5th grade range. These Bibles break down large words and concepts for the beginning reader. It is a great encouragement to child and parent alike because it allows children at a very young age to really read the Bible for themselves.

Finally, there is the "translation" known as a paraphrase Bible. This is usually one man's or a group's opinion of the ideas God was trying to get across in His Word. The Message Bible (MSG) and the Living Bible (LB) fall into this category. However, the paraphrase changes the text of the Bible so dramatically that it is often unrecognizable from the original text. To understand what I mean, go online to biblegateway.com or to a bookstore and compare the Message to one of the more literal translations. You will find that many well known passages become something entirely different in the paraphrase edition. This is why I believe this type of "Bible" isn't a Bible at all. Therefore, I do not recommend it under any circumstances.

A Few Words about Study Bibles

If this is your or your child's or first time through the Bible, I do not recommend a Study Bible. Going through the three phase reading plan in this blueprint will give both you and them a proper understanding of the Word of God and prepare them for the deeper insight that a Study Bible will offer them, as they grow. The most important thing needed the first time through is familiarity with the Word of God itself.

For those who are Jr. or Mid High and older, who have gone through the three phase reading plan, I recommend having a good Study Bible from one of the translations mentioned in the previous section. A Study Bible can unlock the meaning of people groups, places, cultures and customs not known by modern day readers. The introduction given before each book of the Bible can help set the timeframe of when the book was written, the circumstances leading to its writing and other things of cultural and historical importance.

When you hear a good sermon, it often unlocks meaning from within the text of God's word that you never understood before. The pastor or teacher has taken the time to study the passage fully and bring out many things from the Scripture that may not have been apparent from a straightforward reading of the text. A good Study Bible can have the same effect. I encourage getting one with lots of notes and articles to be of the best benefit for you or your youth.

However, be wary of the marketing of "Teen Study Bibles". Many of these Bibles through their title give the impression that there is a lot of information being shared. But the truth is that many of these "Teen Study Bibles" have very few notes or articles. There are some good ones out there if you look hard, though. But don't be afraid of buying a regular Study Bible for your teen.

A word of caution concerning Study Bibles needs to be said here. The Word of God is the actual inspired text, not the notes or the articles. While I believe that a Study Bible is a useful tool, it is in no

way a replacement for the Word of God itself. A man can become mature in his faith reading just the Word of God alone, without the benefit of any notes or articles. However, a man cannot become mature if he only regarded the notes and articles at the expense of God's Word.

There are many in today's society both believers in Christ and opponents of Christ who know a lot of random verses of God's Word through hearsay, YouTube, the Internet, Instagram, movies, TV and what they hear from family and friends. However, many of these same people don't know what the actual Word of God says, in context. An adult or youth who is tempted by any of these mearns to shortcut their knowledge of the Word of God would be better served by purchasing a Bible without the notes first. As their personal knowledge increases concerning their understanding of God's Word, then they can purchase a Study Bible to further this understanding.

The Three Phase Reading Plan

Now that we have looked at Bible translations and Study Bibles, it's time to dive into the three phase reading plan that will help anyone learn how to read the Word of God and understand it.

Phase 1--The New Testament

The best place to begin studying the Word of God is the New Testament. The New Testament is broken up into 5 sections, consisting of 27 books. The first section comprises four books called the Gospels. These books are about the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The next section has only one book in it, Acts. Acts chronicles the life of the early church after Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven. The third section consists of the letters of Paul. This section spans from the book of Romans to the book of Philemon. Hebrews is sometimes placed with the Pauline epistles because the style of writing is similar to Paul's. However, the writer of Hebrews is unknown, so oftentimes it is placed within the next section of the New Testament known as the General Epistles. These stretch from Hebrews to Jude. They are called "general" because they were written by different people from the early church and their authors are often identified in the book title. The final section consists of only one book, Revelation. Revelation deals with the prophecy of the end times, when Jesus judges the earth and finally, victoriously reigns as King.

Jesus' last words recorded in Matthew give us a good idea where someone should begin in the New Testament. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20). In this passage, Jesus says that in order for us to be made a disciple (follower), we are to observe (or obey) all He commanded us.

So the obvious question becomes: Where can we learn about what Jesus has commanded us to do? Answer: In the Gospels. It is in the Gospels that we learn about the life, death and resurrection and the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also the best place to begin our study of the Word of God.

The Reading Plan for the New Testament included in this blueprint begins with the Gospels of Luke & John and continues through a majority of the New Testament. These plans do not go in the book order of the Bible. Rather, they are arranged to be read in a way that brings the most understanding for the reader.

Understanding the Old Testament becomes our next goal after Phase 1 is complete.

Phase 2--Overview of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is broken up into 5 sections, consisting of 39 books. The first section is known as the Pentateuch or the Books of Moses. These are the first five books of the Old Testament and cover the history of the beginning of the world to the birth of the nation of Israel. The second section is the History of Israel which spans from the book of Joshua to the book of Esther. The third section is known as the Writings or the Wisdom Literature which cover the books of Job through the Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon). These writings cover prose, poetry, songs & wisdom literature bringing glory to God, remembering His promises, recounting Israel's history and pondering life's deep questions. The next section is the Major Prophets. The Major Prophets include the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. Through these prophets we see a bold proclamation calling the people of Israel back to the God whom they have promised to serve. Finally, the last section is the Minor Prophets. The Minor Prophets begin in Hosea and end in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. Like the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets called the people of Israel back to faith in the living God through warnings and encouragements based upon the covenant the people of Israel made with God.

One thing to note about the sections of the Old Testament. Each section is more or less in chronological order. For example, Genesis begins the Books of Moses, whereas Deuteronomy ends this section chronologically. Joshua picks up where Moses left off and the History of Israel is traced from Joshua until Esther in chronological order (with a slight repeat happening in 1 & 2 Chronicles). These first two sections represent the chronological history of humanity and God's chosen people Israel.

The Writings and the Major and Minor Prophets are also in chronological order respectively. However, the chronology of each of the books in these sections may intersect with the history of Israel at different points. If we think of the Pentateuch and the History of Israel as a timeline from the start to the finish of the Old Testament, we can see better how they interact with the other sections of the Old Testament.

Gen-Deut, Jos, Jud, 1&2 Sa, 1&2 K, Ez, Neh, Es ***Pentateuch/History***
1 & 2 Chron.

Job, P s a l m s, Pr-Song ***Wisdom Literature***

Is, Jer/Ez, Dan ***Major Prophets***

Hos-Zep Hag-Mal ***Minor Prophets***

In our blueprint, we read our outline of the Old Testament through these sections, combining the Major and Minor Prophets into one section. As with the New Testament, the readings are arranged in a way that will make the most sense. In this, our first run through, we skip through much of the family tree of the tribes of Israel, many of the ceremonial & sacrificial laws and the harder to understand prophets. We read enough to understand their importance, but not so much that we are overwhelmed with these details the first time through. Our goal is to gain an understanding of the Old Testament's makeup and how it points to Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of God.

After we have completed the outline of the Old Testament, we will be ready to read the whole Bible.

Phase 3--The Whole Bible Chronologically

This blueprint recommends "The Daily Bible" by F. LaGard Smith to read the Bible chronologically. In this unique edition, the Bible is chronologically read in 365 daily selections. Because of the background given in Phase 1 & 2 of the reading plan, the reader will more easily understand as the Daily Bible weaves from the history of King David to the Psalms that he wrote, the history of King Solomon and the Proverbs he wrote, the downfall of Israel and Judah and the warnings of the Prophets living during that time, the life of Jesus as a unified whole, and, the early church and the letters of Paul. Beyond the chronological approach, there is commentary in appropriate spots in the readings that help explain the background or history of a section just read or about to be read and how it connects the story of the Bible as a unified whole.

After having read the Daily Bible, the reader will be able to enjoy the Word of God for the rest of their lives.

The Discipleship for Life Reading Plan

The Discipleship for Life Reading Plan begins at 3rd grade (but can also be the starting point for a 4th or 5th grader). In this plan, Phase 1 is completed in year 1, Phase 2 is completed in year 2 and Phase 3 is completed in year 3. An introduction to each section can be found at the beginning of each part of the reading plan to bring more context and background for the growing reader. This plan is constructed for growing children at a pace and reading level that will be challenging without being overwhelming.

Some Final Pieces of Advice...and Encouragement

Bible Reading is not like a "pass or fail" class in school. However, a lot of people unknowingly treat it that way. This attitude has defeated many in their attempt and desire to study God's Word. Phases 1 & 2 provide a lot of leeway for missed days by only having readings 5 days a week, some weeks even less than that. This makes catching up easy, if you find that you or your teen is falling behind schedule. However, Phase 3 is a 365 day devotional. Many who undertake this endeavor will have every intention of finishing Phase 3 in 365 days, a very doable effort. But what if you or your child miss a day because of sickness, busyness or forgetfulness? In the mind of the parent or teen who has made this goal, they now have twice the reading to do. A daily reading that was between 3-4 chapters is now 7-8 in the mind of the person who has fallen behind. What if that day turned into a week because of vacation or sickness or something unexpected? Now that same person feels that they need to "make up" the equivalent of 28 chapters (or the length of the Gospel of Matthew) to get "caught up" with where they are "supposed" to be! The response for many who fall into that situation is to give up reading the Word of God altogether because the task has become overwhelming.

I'd like to free you from those feelings of helplessness and stress before they ever crop up. Setting a goal for reading, which this blueprint attempts to do, is a good thing. However, the real purpose of our Bible

Reading is to grow to know God more so that we and our children may follow Him better. Missing a day or even a week happens at times. I've been a Christian nearly 30 years and I still have inconsistencies in my Bible Reading. When we miss that time, we have to avoid the attitude that we have to catch up. Remember our ultimate goal is to read the Word of God, not the arbitrary time frame we have set in our mind to do it. When we or our children miss a day (or many days), the next time we remember our devotional time, we read one day's worth of devotions, not two or three or 10. Treating your Bible study this way will help ease the pressure we sometimes put on ourselves or our teens, especially when our intention is to honor God through these actions.

For those who may still be struggling with this concept, let me put it another way. Which do you think is more God honoring: A person who set up a plan to read the Bible all the way through but falls behind after 3 months and never completes their study because they began to see the task as too laborious OR A person who makes it their priority to finish reading the Word of God, and though they hoped to complete the task in a year, they continued to pick up where they left off, one day at a time, until finally, after 19 months, they celebrated reading the final verse of Revelation? You see, the first person lost sight of their goal confusing their timetable with their actual task of reading the Bible, the last person never gave up. Remember the goal is not the time frame, getting yourself and your child into and completing our reading of the Word of God is. I truly pray keeping this perspective in studying your Bible will free both your mind and heart, and by extension, the mind and heart of your child, from false guilt and expectations we place on our devotion to God, as we seek to honor Him.

Discipleship for Life Plan (Pre-Reading)

This part of the plan is designed for the new parent or the parent with young children (those younger than 3rd grade). The purpose of this plan is to begin to construct the building blocks of faith at an early age. During this time, the six disciplines are on an introductory level through example leading to participation. This part of the plan is formatted so that parents may immediately jump to their child's age and begin the plan.

It is strongly encouraged that parents leading their children through the Discipleship for Life Plan are themselves going through the Discipleship Begins @ Home--5 Year Plan. This will help equip parents for the future questions your children will have as they grow into readers and beyond.

Birth to 1 Year Old

Pray for your child every day. Ask God for wisdom in raising your child in the way he/she should go. This is something that you will be doing the rest of your child's life.

Play music that glorifies God for your child to hear.

As they approach the age of talking, begin reading beginner Christian books with simple words.

2 Years Old

As your child's knowledge of words grows, so will their ability to pay attention to longer books. Find good Christian children's books with simple stories to sit down and read with your child.

Begin to teach your child to pray. Model prayers at meals and other times.

Continue playing music that glorifies God.

Limit screen time via TVs, tablets, computers or smartphones, ideally less than 30 minutes a day.

3 Years Old

As your child continues to grow, their vocabulary and attention span grow too. Continue to find Christian books that are longer. Look for a preschool Bible for your child that has many Bible stories introducing many of the characters in the Bible. Begin to find a consistent time to read these Bible stories to your children.

Teach your children some simple prayers that they can recite, especially at meal times and whenever you read their Bible. Continue to model prayer to your children.

Continue playing music that glorifies God for your children. At this age, they should be able to learn some simple songs.

Limit screen time via TVs, tablets, computers or smartphones, ideally less than 45 minutes a day. However, if this medium is used, find some good Christian programming that will reinforce the stories you are reading them.

4-5 Years Old

Find a Children's Bible that is more advanced for your child. Stories within the Bible should have questions that help you as a parent understand what your child is catching from the stories. Find a consistent time to read those Bible stories.

Teach your child to pray on their own. Have family times of prayer involving all children. Allow the child to go first and then go to the next oldest child until everyone has prayed. This allows your 4-5 year old to learn how to pray and for older family members to model prayer without being "embarrassed" that they didn't pray "good" enough. Be proactive in pointing out times to pray for others.

At church, begin to point out the importance and meaning behind worship, communion, baptism, testimony, Sunday School/Children's Church and sermon.

Continue playing music that glorifies God. At this age, your child should be able to learn many songs. They should also be able to learn many choruses from Christian radio or worship at church. Encourage them to be active participants in your church's worship time.

Include them in simple service projects, such as visitation to members of your church or outreach to your neighbors.

Limit screen time to, ideally, 45 minutes a day. However, if this medium is used, find some good Christan programming that will reinforce what they are learning in the Children's Bible.

Kindergarten Expectations

Begin reading to your child from an NIrV Bible. Begin with the New Testament, specifically the Gospels. Spend about 10 minutes a day reading to them. (It can even be their assigned reading time for homework, if they have one for school.)

Continue to have family prayers times, allowing the youngest child to go first then progressing to the next oldest until everyone has prayed. This allows your Kindergartener to learn how to pray and for older members to model prayer. Be proactive in pointing out times to pray for others, as well as, praising them when they have remembered to pray for someone or something important.

Continue playing music that glorifies God. Have your child active in worshiping at church (either with the children or with the adults depending upon your congregation). As much as possible, do not have children distracted during worship with coloring books. They will learn more about corporate worship if they are involved. Ask often about what they are learning in their classes at church or from the sermon and if they have any questions.

Begin to talk to your children about why people need Jesus. Be prepared to talk about why they also need Jesus. Explain to your child, in more detail, what communion is and what baptism is. Use those opportunities of celebration to share with your child their need for Jesus, as well. Concepts such as sin, punishment, hell, heaven and who Jesus is and what He has done for us, need to be explained in such a way that your child understands. Don't be afraid to speak to your minister or pastor on how to do this.

Kindergarten Expectations cont.

Continue to include them in simple service projects, such as, visitation to members of your church or outreach to your neighbors. As you serve, let your children know why you serve. Let them know that it is Jesus who wants us to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ and those in need.

Limit screen time to, ideally, 45 minutes a day. Especially now that they are in school, continue to use good Christian programming that will reinforce what they are learning in God's Word.

1st Grade Expectations

For their Bible Reading, read from the NIrV, but increase the amount being read to 15-20 minutes a day. (Again, it can be their assigned reading that you do for them at school.) Stay primarily in the Gospels and Acts during this time. This will help them become even more familiar with the life of Jesus.

Begin or continue to talk to your children about why people need Jesus. Be prepared to talk about why they also need Jesus. Explain to your child, in more detail, what communion is and what baptism is. Use those opportunities of celebration to share with your child their need for Jesus, as well. Concepts such as sin, punishment, hell, heaven and who Jesus is and what He has done for us, need to be explained in such a way that your child understands. Don't be afraid to speak to your minister or pastor on how to do this.

Continue to have family prayer times, allowing the youngest child to go first then progressing to the next oldest until everyone has prayed. This allows your Kindergartener to learn how to pray and for older members to model prayer. Be proactive in pointing out times to pray for others, as well as, praising them when they have remembered to pray for someone or something important. Encourage your child to pray for their classmates, their family and needs they see around them.

Continue playing music that glorifies God. Have your child active in worshiping at church (either with the children or with the adults depending upon your congregation). As much as possible, do not have children distracted during worship with coloring books, tablets or smartphones. They will learn more about corporate worship if they are involved. Ask often about what they are learning in their classes at church or from the sermon and if they have any questions.

1st Grade Expectations cont.

Continue to include them in simple service projects, such as visitation to members of your church or outreach to your neighbors. Consider taking them to a place of greater need, such as a nursing home or soup kitchen or homeless shelter. As you serve, let your children know why you serve. Let them know that it is Jesus who wants us to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ and those in need.

Limit screen time to, ideally, 45 minutes a day. Especially now that they are in school, continue to use good Christian programming that will reinforce what they are learning in God's Word.

2nd Grade Expectations

Continue reading from the NIrV, but increase the amount of time read to 20-30 minutes a day. (Again, it can be their assigned reading that you do for them at school). Continue reading through the Gospels and Acts during this time. This will help them become even more familiar with the life of Jesus.

Begin or continue to talk to your children about why people need Jesus. Be prepared to talk about why they also need Jesus. Explain to your child, in more detail, what communion is and what baptism is. Use those opportunities of celebration to share with your child their need for Jesus, as well. Concepts such as sin, punishment, hell, heaven and who Jesus is and what He has done for us, need to be explained in such a way that your child understands. Don't be afraid to speak to your minister or pastor on how to do this.

Continue to have family prayer times, allowing the youngest child to go first then progressing to the next oldest until everyone has prayed. This allows your Kindergartener to learn how to pray and for older members to model prayer. Be proactive in pointing out times to pray for others, as well as, praising them when they have remembered to pray for someone or something important. Encourage your child to pray for their classmates, their family and needs they see around them.

Continue playing music that glorifies God. Have your child active in worshiping at church (either with the children or with the adults depending upon your congregation). By this age, they should be able to participate by knowing the songs that your church worships with or learning those songs in a short period of time. Ask often about what they are learning in their classes at church or from the sermon and if they have any questions.

2nd Grade Expectations cont.

Continue to include them in simple service projects, such as visitation to members of your church or outreach to your neighbors. Consider taking them to a place of greater need, such as a nursing home or soup kitchen or homeless shelter. As you serve, let your children know why you serve. Let them know that it is Jesus who wants us to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ and those in need.

Limit screen time to, ideally, 45 minutes a day. Especially now that they are in school, continue to use good Christian programming that will reinforce what they are learning in God's Word.

The Beginning Reading Years

As your child reaches the 3rd, 4th & 5th grade, they also begin to read chapter books in their subjects at school and do so from books from the library for entertainment, as well. It is important to grow their knowledge in their reading of the Word of God at a rate that is equivalent to their growth at school.

These three years of reading build the foundation for Bible understanding for your child. As such, these years are not noted as 3rd, 4th or 5th grade, but rather Elementary Reading Year 1, 2 & 3. Therefore, it is important that even if you are just beginning the discipleship process in 4th or 5th grade, you should begin in Year 1 followed by Year 2, then Year 3. After these three years are completed, parents can then fast forward to the appropriate age of the child's spiritual development, whether 6th, 7th or 8th grade. However, the foundation in the Word of God is the most important discipline to build in your child at this age. Their knowledge of the Word (and continued knowledge of it) will inform all of the other disciplines that they will be practicing and adopting for the rest of their lives.

Therefore, if you begin the reading process at 3rd grade for your child it will look like this:

Year 1 ⇒ Year 2 ⇒ Year 3⇒ 6th Grade Expectations

If in 4th or 5th Grade:

Year 1 ⇒ Year 2 ⇒ Year 3 ⇒ 7th-8th Grade Expectations

The Reading Plans for Year 1 & 2 (Phase 1 & 2) are included in this blueprint following the 11th-12th Grade Expectations.

Elementary Reading Year 1

Complete Phase 1 (The New Testament) utilizing the reading plan in this blueprint. Your child will be reading 1 chapter a day, 5 days a week. During this time, they should gain an understanding of the makeup of the New Testament: the Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles & Revelation.

Have daily discussions concerning the passages read to make sure your children have an understanding of what they read.

Be prepared as a parent to answer questions that will come through their Bible Reading. Feel free to contact your Pastor concerning questions you are unsure of and also ask for resources that will help you as a parent continue to minister to your child as they grow in their knowledge of God's Word.

Begin or continue to talk to your children about why people need Jesus. Be prepared to talk about why they also need Jesus. Explain to your child, in more detail, what communion is and what baptism is. Use those opportunities of celebration to share with your child their need for Jesus, as well. Concepts such as sin, punishment, hell, heaven and who Jesus is and what He has done for us, need to be explained in such a way that your child understands. Don't be afraid to speak to your minister or pastor on how to do this.

Continue to have family prayer times, allowing the youngest child to go first then progressing to the next oldest until everyone has prayed. This allows your Kindergartener to learn how to pray and for older members to model prayer. Be proactive in pointing out times to pray for others, as well as, praising them when they have remembered to pray for someone or something important. Encourage your child to pray for their classmates, their family and needs they see around them.

Elementary Reading Year 1 cont.

Continue playing music that glorifies God. Have your child active in worshiping at church (either with the children or with the adults depending upon your congregation). Now that your child can read, they should be able to participate by knowing the songs that your church worships with or learning those songs in a short period of time. Ask often about what they are learning in their classes at church or from the sermon and if they have any questions.

Continue to include them in simple service projects, such as visitation to members of your church or outreach to your neighbors. Consider taking them to a place of greater need, such as a nursing home or soup kitchen or homeless shelter. As you serve, let your children know why you serve. Let them know that it is Jesus who wants us to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ and those in need.

Limit screen time to, ideally, 45 minutes a day. Especially now that they are in school, continue to use good Christian programming that will reinforce what they are learning in God's Word.

Elementary Reading Year 2

Complete Phase 2 (The Old Testament Survey) utilizing the reading plan in this blueprint. Your child will be reading approximately 2 chapters a day, 5 days a week. During this time, they should gain an understanding of the makeup of the Old Testament: the Pentateuch, the Histories, the Wisdom Literature & the Major & Minor Prophets.

Have daily discussions concerning the passages read to make sure your children have an understanding of what they read.

Be prepared as a parent to answer questions that will come through their Bible Reading. Feel free to contact your Pastor concerning questions you are unsure of and also ask for resources that will help you as a parent continue to minister to your child as they grow in their knowledge of God's Word.

Begin or continue to talk to your children about why people need Jesus. Be prepared to talk about why they also need Jesus. Explain to your child, in more detail, what communion is and what baptism is. Use those opportunities of celebration to share with your child their need for Jesus, as well. Concepts such as sin, punishment, hell, heaven and who Jesus is and what He has done for us, need to be explained in such a way that your child understands. Don't be afraid to speak to your minister or pastor on how to do this.

Continue to have family prayer times, allowing the youngest child to go first then progressing to the next oldest until everyone has prayed. This allows your Kindergartener to learn how to pray and for older members to model prayer. Be proactive in pointing out times to pray for others, as well as, praising them when they have remembered to pray for someone or something important. Encourage your child to pray for their classmates, their family and needs they see around them.

Elementary Reading Year 2 cont.

Continue playing music that glorifies God. Have your child active in worshiping at church (either with the children or with the adults depending upon your congregation). Now that your child can read, they should be able to participate by knowing the songs that your church worships with or learning those songs in a short period of time. Ask often about what they are learning in their classes at church or from the sermon and if they have any questions.

Continue to include them in simple service projects, such as visitation to members of your church or outreach to your neighbors. Consider taking them to a place of greater need, such as a nursing home or soup kitchen or homeless shelter. As you serve, let your children know why you serve. Let them know that it is Jesus who wants us to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ and those in need.

Limit screen time to, ideally, 45 minutes a day. Especially now that they are in school, continue to use good Christian programming that will reinforce what they are learning in God's Word.

Elementary Reading Year 3

Complete Phase 3 (read through the entire Bible chronologically) this year using "The Daily Bible" by F. LaGard Smith. Understand how each of the sections of Scripture, both Old & New Testaments, interact with each other.

In this unique edition, the Bible is chronologically read in 365 daily selections. Because of the background given in Phase 1 & 2 of the reading plan, your child will more easily understand as the Daily Bible weaves from the history of King David to the Psalms that he wrote, the history of King Solomon and the Proverbs he wrote, the downfall of Israel and Judah and the warnings of the Prophets living during that time, the life of Jesus as a unified whole, and, the early church and the letters of Paul. Beyond the chronological approach, there is commentary in appropriate spots in the readings that help explain the background or history of a section just read or about to be read and how it connects the story of the Bible as a unified whole.

Because "The Daily Bible" is a 365 day reading plan, it doesn't have the flexibility of missed days as the other plans have. If your child is ready for a daily commitment in reading the Word of God, great! However, it can be tailored to the same reading regimen as the other plans, if so desired, to provide more flexibility (5 days a week vs. 7 days a week). Either way, you must not stress over "missed days" and have your child commit to reading one entry a day, even if they miss a day or two or even a week. The 5 day a week plan will take about ½ year longer to complete reading the Bible. Remember, the goal is to read the Bible, not complete some task in a certain timeframe.

Have daily discussions concerning the passages read to make sure your children have an understanding of what they read.

Elementary Reading Year 3 cont.

Be prepared as a parent to answer questions that will come through their Bible Reading. Feel free to contact your Pastor concerning questions you are unsure of and also ask for resources that will help you as a parent continue to minister to your child as they grow in their knowledge of God's Word.

Begin or continue to talk to your children about why people need Jesus. Be prepared to talk about why they also need Jesus. Explain to your child, in more detail, what communion is and what baptism is. Use those opportunities of celebration to share with your child their need for Jesus, as well. Concepts such as sin, punishment, hell, heaven and who Jesus is and what He has done for us, need to be explained in such a way that your child understands. Don't be afraid to speak to your minister or pastor on how to do this.

Continue to have family prayer times, allowing the youngest child to go first then progressing to the next oldest until everyone has prayed. This allows your Kindergartener to learn how to pray and for older members to model prayer. Be proactive in pointing out times to pray for others, as well as, praising them when they have remembered to pray for someone or something important. Encourage your child to pray for their classmates, their family and needs they see around them.

Continue playing music that glorifies God. Have your child active in worshiping at church (either with the children or with the adults depending upon your congregation). Now that your child can read, they should be able to participate by knowing the songs that your church worships with or learning those songs in a short period of time. Ask often about what they are learning in their classes at church or from the sermon and if they have any questions.

Elementary Reading Year 3 cont.

Continue to include them in simple service projects, such as visitation to members of your church or outreach to your neighbors. Consider taking them to a place of greater need, such as a nursing home or soup kitchen or homeless shelter. As you serve, let your children know why you serve. Let them know that it is Jesus who wants us to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ and those in need.

Limit screen time to, ideally, 45 minutes a day. Especially now that they are in school, continue to use good Christian programming that will reinforce what they are learning in God's Word.

6th Grade Expectations

Purchase a good study Bible (ESV) with LOTS of notes for your youth (see "A Few Words About Study Bibles" section). Begin to teach your children the responsibility of reading the Bible on their own: 2-3 chapters a day beginning with the New Testament. Now that they have read the Bible once and have an understanding of its makeup, they will find that the study Bible will open up deep understanding into the Scriptures. They will also find that reading the Bible is much easier to understand with this basic knowledge underneath their belt.

Ask often concerning where they are in the Bible, what they are learning and when the last time they read their Bible was. Discuss what you are reading in the Bible and what you are learning in your daily walk.

Treat their commitment to their Christian disciplines: Bible Reading, Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving, the same as you treat the disciplines in their school of attendance, homework and good grades.

Treat their attendance in church as non-negotiable. Interact with them concerning what they heard in the sermon and how the sermon impacted/challenged you, as well.

If they choose to be involved in Youth Group, Worship Team or any other serving activity in the church, then treat it the same as you would a commitment they make at school (running for student president, joining an athletic sport or other extra curricular activity): Have them there when they meet, practice or train. Make sure they fulfill their commitment for the year, season or semester before withdrawing them, if they choose not to do that activity the next semester or year. Communicate with the leaders if there is a choice of withdrawal and the date it will take effect.

7th-8th Grade Expectations

If you haven't already, purchase a good study Bible (ESV) with LOTS of notes for your youth (see "A Few Words About Study Bibles" section). Begin to teach your children the responsibility of reading the Bible on their own: 2-3 chapters a day beginning with the New Testament. Now that they have read the Bible once and have an understanding of its makeup, they will find that the study Bible will open up deep understanding into the Scriptures. They will also find that reading the Bible is much easier to understand with this basic knowledge underneath their belt.

Ask often concerning where they are in the Bible, what they are learning and when the last time they read their Bible was. Discuss what you are reading in the Bible and what you are learning in your daily walk.

Treat their commitment to their Christian disciplines: Bible Reading, Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving, the same as you treat the disciplines in their school of attendance, homework and good grades.

Treat their attendance in church as non-negotiable. Interact with them concerning what they heard in the sermon and how the sermon impacted/challenged you, as well.

If they choose to be involved in Youth Group, Worship Team or any other serving activity in the church, then treat it the same as you would a commitment they make at school (running for student president, joining an athletic sport or other extra curricular activity): Have them there when they meet, practice or train. Make sure they fulfill their commitment for the year, season or semester before withdrawing them, if they choose not to do that activity the next semester or year. Communicate with the leaders if there is a choice of withdrawal and the date it will take effect.

7th-8th Grade Expectations cont.

Youth should consider going to conferences or camps during these years to encourage their growth in the faith and build stronger relationships with those in your church and/or family. The conferences or camps may be age oriented, such as, Jr. High Camp or may be group or subject oriented, such as a Men's or Women's Conference or a Worship or Apologetics Conference. Investing in their faith this way will help them grow in their relationship with God and their understanding of the Word and how it applies to their life. It will also create lasting memories with those in your congregation and family who also desire to draw closer to Christ. It is also strongly encouraged, if possible, that parents be a part of these conferences and camps, going as a sponsor, leader or participant.

Begin to introduce Christian book reading for the purpose of personal discipleship. Have them read one chapter a day, five days a week. The goal is to have them read 4-5 Christian books per year. As with the Bible Reading, ask often where they are, what they are learning and when the last time they read their book was. Discuss what you are reading/studying and what you are learning through your studies, as well.

Include in your Christian book reading some books on Apologetics. Subjects such as creation/evolution, biblical sexuality (including biblical views on premarital sex, living together, homosexuality, gender, homsexuality, transgenderism & abortion), practical Christian living books, etc. need to be included during this time, as your children will be wrestling with these ideas among their peers and in their school environment.

There is a list of Suggested Books toward the end of this blueprint. Also, do not be afraid to consult your minister or pastor concerning resources in this area.

7th-8th Grade Expectations cont.

Also, introduce to your child podcasts and teachings from faithful pastors concerning the book subjects listed on the previous page. This will help them become more familiar with these subjects from a biblical worldview.

By the end of your child's 8th grade year, your child should have read through the Word of God twice and read between 8-10 Christian books.

9th-10th Grade Expectations

Introduce your children to Bible study tools such as, commentaries, Bible dictionaries & concordances. Of course, in today's day and age, all of these materials can be found online or in digital format, as well as, print.

Teach your children the differences between Conservative/Historic, Moderate and Liberal /Progressive interpretations of the Bible and of the faith. These differences represent a profound contrast on how the Bible is viewed and how the gospel is treated. A Conservative/Historic view holds the Bible and its teaching as inerrant, the content of the Bible historical and the Jesus of the Bible as real. From the Conservative/Historic standpoint, the Word of God is used to evaluate the culture in which we live *(This is our view)*. Whereas, Moderate views of the Bible hold the Bible in less regard. The Bible is often contextualized within the framework of current scientific theory and veins to see some of the miraculous passages as allegorical rather than literal. These changes have a profound impact on faith and doctrine. Moderate views often morph, over time, to Liberal/Progressive ones. Liberal/Progressive views of the Bible hold the Word of God as guidelines to be seen through the lens of the culture. Culture is used to define the Word of God within the Liberal/Progressive context. Liberal/Progressive views often morph into atheism over time.

Keep current on cultural issues and teach your children to interpret those issues through the lens of Scripture. Have your children continue to read books and articles growing them in their Christian faith at a greater capacity. They should be reading 4-5 books a year. Continue to have them listen to podcasts and teachings from faithful pastors & teachers to further their understanding of these subjects from a biblical worldview.

9th-10th Grade Expectations cont.

Begin to introduce some debates between Christians & others (whether atheists or Progressive Christians), in addition to their podcasts and teachings, for the purpose of understanding the differences between worldviews and how the Christian worldview has nothing to fear in the marketplace of ideas.

Have conversations concerning what they have read, listened to or watched (including Bible Reading) and what is going on in their lives from a biblical point of view. Be ready to answer challenging questions your youth may be facing from their friends or life situations. Don't be afraid to consult your minister or pastor for resources and biblical advice in these areas.

At this age, your children should be using their gifts of service in the local church. Whether they can play an instrument, sing, help with Sunday School or Children's Church, clean, serve the less fortunate or visit the elderly within the body of Christ, their inclusion within the function of the fellowship of believers is invaluable toward keeping them in the faith. (These can be done at earlier ages, but needs to be done by the time your child reaches High School age.)

Now that your youth have read through the Bible twice and read through a survey of the Bible once, consider stretching them by having them help those teaching within the classrooms of younger children. Being in a classroom environment as a helper or co-teacher will help them articulate their faith to those who are younger in simplified terms. This time of teaching will be really helpful in their times of outreach to those who do not know Christ.

If they have been involved in your Youth Ministry, consider having them approach the Youth Minister or Leader about consideration for leadership within the youth group. Being an example to peers, as they continue to grow in Christ, is a great way to both remain accountable and spur them on to further growth.

9th-10th Grade Expectations cont.

As with any responsibility, hold your child accountable to the commitments that they make at church. Youth group, Sunday School helper, serving in the kitchen, visiting the elderly, etc. should be held in the same regard as you would treat an equal responsibility at school: be there on time, be committed throughout the season of ministry, go even when it is hard or inconvenient, etc.

Youth should consider going to conferences or camps during these years to encourage their growth in the faith and build stronger relationships with those in your church and/or family. The conferences or camps may be age oriented, such as, High School Camp or may be group or subject oriented, such as a Men's or Women's Conference or a Worship or Apologetics Conference. Investing in their faith this way will help them grow in their relationship with God and their understanding of the Word and how it applies to their life. It will also create lasting memories with those in your congregation and family who also desire to draw closer to Christ. It is also strongly encouraged, if possible, that parents be a part of these conferences and camps, going as a sponsor, leader or participant.

Keep attendance at church a non-negotiable. However, give the biblical reasons for attendance (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12-14; Romans 12: Heb. 10:23-25), so that your children understand that it is obedience to Christ and not to your rule that is important.

Continue to have them read 4-5 Christian books each of these years.

Continue to keep your children accountable in the areas of Christian discipline: Bible Reading (2-3 chapters a day), Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship and Giving. Treat them as you would their school disciplines of attendance, homework and good grades. Ask often how they are doing in each of these areas and how you can help them if they are struggling.

11th-12th Grade Expectations

In our current culture, the age 16 is an important coming of age time for our children. They often get their driver's license and their first job at this age. Similar milestones need to happen within the context of their faith, as they are preparing for adulthood.

If your church participates in small groups, it is important to have youth at the age of 16 become a part of an adult small group. As youth are beginning to break out of their "youth age only" shell, it is important that the church also encourages and fosters this growth. This will also make the transition from youth to adult in the church a much easier one.

During these two years, continue to reinforce the important disciplines of Bible Reading (2-3 chapters a day), Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship and Giving. Ask often about their Bible Reading and Christian book reading. They should still be reading 4-5 Christian books a year. In areas such as Outreach/Service and Giving, encourage your children in these disciplines without your direct involvement. Allow God to burden them to the needs they see and encourage them to meet those needs, as God leads.

Youth should consider stretching themselves through an outreach sponsored by your church. It could be as simple as feeding the homeless or visiting those in nursing homes or can be as challenging as taking a mission trip with your church.

During these years, it is important to help them understand the importance of finances. Have your children enroll in a Christian Financial Ministry Class, such as Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University. This will teach them the proper way to handle money, now that they will be earning money on their own. It will teach them the importance of tithing and savings.

11th-12th Grade Expectations cont.

As they get their first job, teach your children the importance of making faith a priority by making sure that Sunday worship and small group meetings or Bible studies remain free. Jobs will not protect their faith, so we must teach them to make faith a priority. This includes any service that they have committed to in the church. The use of their gifts in the church is one of the greatest factors in continued faithfulness beyond High School.

Youth should continue to read a chapter a day, five days a week on books from the Suggested Reading book list. Focus more on the Evangelism/Apologetics books these years. They will be a great help in answering questions they or their friends might have concerning their faith. I would suggest that for these years, every other book they read should be from this category. Again, by doing this, they should be able to read at least 4-5 books by the end of each of these years.

Youth should consider going to conferences or camps during these years to encourage their growth in the faith and build stronger relationships with those in your church and/or family. The conferences or camps may be age oriented, such as, High School Camp or may be group or subject oriented, such as a Men's or Women's Conference or a Worship or Apologetics Conference. Investing in their faith this way will help them grow in their relationship with God and their understanding of the Word and how it applies to their life. It will also create lasting memories with those in your congregation and family who also desire to draw closer to Christ. It is also strongly encouraged, if possible, that parents be a part of these conferences and camps, going as a sponsor, leader or participant.

11th-12th Grade Expectations cont.

Continue to have them listen to some debates between Christians & others (whether atheists or Progressive Christians), in addition to their podcasts and teachings, for the purpose of understanding the differences between worldviews and how the Christian worldview has nothing to fear in the marketplace of ideas.

Have conversations concerning what they have read, listened to or watched (including Bible Reading) and what is going on in their lives from a biblical point of view. Be ready to answer challenging questions your youth may be facing from their friends or life situations. Don't be afraid to consult your minister or pastor for resources and biblical advice in these areas.

As with any responsibility, hold your children accountable to the commitments that they make at church. Youth group, Sunday School helper, serving in the kitchen, visiting the elderly, etc. should be held in the same regard as you would treat an equal responsibility at school: be there on time, be committed throughout the season of ministry, go even when it is hard or inconvenient, etc.

Keep attendance at church a non-negotiable. However, give the biblical reasons for attendance (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12-14; Romans 12; Heb. 10:23-25), so that your children understand that it is obedience to Christ and not to your rule that is important.

At the end of their senior year of High School, your child should have read through the Word of God three times and have read between 25-30 Christian books.

Phase 1
New Testament

Elementary Reading Year 1

The Gospel of Luke Introduction

Each of the Gospels are about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus here on earth. Because each of the Gospels are written by a different person, they each have a slightly different account. All the facts are there, but Matthew remembers different things about some of the stories than Mark or Luke do. John was written after the first three were well known to add new stories about Jesus that people didn't know about.

Luke is a different Gospel because he begins telling his story by telling the person he is writing to, Theophilus, that he has studied carefully everything about Jesus' life.

Luke is the Gospel most interested in details. This is why many who study the past have started with Luke. You will find many of the same stories in Matthew, Mark and Luke. This is why they are called the Synoptic Gospels. (Just like synonyms are words that mean similar things, these gospels share similar stories.)

The Gospel of Luke Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 Luke 1
Day 2 Luke 2
Day 3 Luke 3
Day 4 Luke 4
Day 5 Luke 5

Week 2

Day 1 Luke 6
Day 2 Luke 7
Day 3 Luke 8
Day 4 Luke 9
Day 5 Luke 10

Week 3

Day 1 Luke 11
Day 2 Luke 12
Day 3 Luke 13
Day 4 Luke 14
Day 5 Luke 15

Week 4

Day 1 Luke 16
Day 2 Luke 17
Day 3 Luke 18
Day 4 Luke 19
Day 5 Luke 20

Week 5

Day 1 Luke 21
Day 2 Luke 22
Day 3 Luke 23
Day 4 Luke 24

The Gospel of John Introduction

Each of the Gospels are about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus here on earth. Because each of the Gospels are written by a different person, they each have a slightly different account. All the facts are there, but Matthew remembers different things about some of the stories than Mark or Luke do. John was written after the first three were well known to add new stories about Jesus that people didn't know about.

John is a different Gospel because he begins telling his story at the very beginning of time, showing from the first words of his Gospel that Jesus is indeed God.

John is the Gospel most interested in showing that Jesus is God. You will find many of the same stories in Matthew, Mark and Luke, this is why they are called the Synoptic Gospels. However, John tells different stories about the life of Jesus. A good place to begin, if you have never read the Bible before, is one of the Synoptic Gospels followed by the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 John 1
Day 2 John 2
Day 3 John 3
Day 4 John 4
Day 5 John 5

Week 2

Day 1 John 6
Day 2 John 7
Day 3 John 8
Day 4 John 9
Day 5 John 10

Week 3

Day 1 John 11
Day 2 John 12
Day 3 John 13
Day 4 John 14
Day 5 John 15

Week 4

Day 1 John 16
Day 2 John 17
Day 3 John 18
Day 4 John 19
Day 5 John 20

Week 5

Day 1 John 21

The Acts of the Apostles Introduction

Acts begins where the Gospels end. This book was written by Luke to the same person that he wrote to the first time, Theophilus. Just like in his Gospel account, Luke is very detailed in the things that he describes.

The book of Acts is about the disciples of Jesus. Now they are called apostles. Now that Jesus has risen from the dead and gone to be with the Father, He has given them the command to tell everyone about Him.

The first part of the book of Acts follows the early church and its leader, Peter. The second part of the book begins to follow Paul and how God used him to spread the "good news" of Jesus to many other places.

The book of Acts is a reminder to us, as believers, how the Gospel is supposed to change us and how we are supposed to spread the Gospel, like Jesus tells us to.

The Acts of the Apostles Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 Acts 1
Day 2 Acts 2
Day 3 Acts 3
Day 4 Acts 4
Day 5 Acts 5

Week 2

Day 1 Acts 6
Day 2 Acts 7
Day 3 Acts 8
Day 4 Acts 9
Day 5 Acts 10

Week 3

Day 1 Acts 11
Day 2 Acts 12
Day 3 Acts 13
Day 4 Acts 14
Day 5 Acts 15

Week 4

Day 1 Acts 16
Day 2 Acts 17
Day 3 Acts 18
Day 4 Acts 19
Day 5 Acts 20

Week 5

Day 1 Acts 21
Day 2 Acts 22
Day 3 Acts 23
Day 4 Acts 24
Day 5 Acts 25

Week 6

Day 1 Acts 26
Day 2 Acts 27
Day 3 Acts 28

Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians Introduction

Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians are letters written by the Apostle Paul. Paul was the disciple who was converted on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. He became a strong believer in Christ and wrote most of the letters (known as epistles) of the New Testament.

These three letters were written to three different churches in three different cities. The name given to each of the letters comes from the cities he was writing to.

In these three letters, Paul focuses on two things. The first half of each letter is focused on what God has done for us through Jesus. The second half of each letter then tells us how we should act as believers knowing what God has done for us through Jesus. Just like the Synoptic Gospels, Paul mentions similar things to each of the churches in these cities because following Jesus will lead to the same lifestyle, no matter where you live.

Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 Ephesians 1
Day 2 Ephesians 2
Day 3 Ephesians 3
Day 4 Ephesians 4
Day 5 Ephesians 5

Week 2

Day 1 Ephesians 6
Day 2 Philippians 1
Day 3 Philippians 2
Day 4 Philippians 3
Day 5 Philippians 4

Week 3

Day 1 Colossians 1
Day 2 Colossians 2
Day 3 Colossians 3
Day 4 Colossians 4

General Epistles Introduction
(James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John and Jude)

Together these letters are called the General Epistles. They are different from the letters written by Paul. With Paul, we knew the people or places he was writing to because the title of his epistles tell that information. However, with these letters, we do not know exactly who they were writing to. But we do know who wrote each of these letters and that is why each letter bears the name of the one who wrote them.

Peter and John were disciples of Jesus. They were the same ones mentioned in the Gospels and Acts. James and Jude were both half-brothers of Jesus. All of them were leaders in the early church.

As leaders in the church, they wanted to teach and encourage the Christians under their care. Their letters cover a lot of different subjects, which is part of the reason they are called General Epistles. They were concerned with the believers understanding how they were supposed to live as Christians in a world that didn't like them very much (1 Peter). They were also concerned with false teachings that were entering the church (2 Peter, 1 & 2 John, Jude). They were also concerned with how Christian were supposed to treat one another (James, 3 John).

General Epistles Reading Plan
(James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John and Jude)

Week 1

Day 1 James 1
Day 2 James 2
Day 3 James 3
Day 4 James 4
Day 5 James 5

Week 2

Day 1 1 Peter 1
Day 2 1 Peter 2
Day 3 1 Peter 3
Day 4 1 Peter 4
Day 5 1 Peter 5

Week 3

Day 1 2 Peter 1
Day 2 2 Peter 2
Day 3 2 Peter 3
Day 4 1 John 1
Day 5 1 John 2

Week 4

Day 1 1 John 3
Day 2 1 John 4
Day 3 1 John 5
Day 4 2 John
Day 5 3 John

Week 5

Day 1 Jude

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus & Philemon Introduction

Each of these letters were written by the Apostle Paul. Paul was the disciple who was converted on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. He became a strong believer in Christ and wrote most of the letters (known as epistles) of the New Testament.

Timothy and Titus were people who ministered with Paul, telling others about the good news of Jesus Christ. They had ministered with Paul for many years. When Paul wrote these letters, they were ministering in a different place than Paul was. In 1 Timothy and Titus, Paul was writing them to help them to be the best leaders they could be for their churches.

Philemon was another believer in Christ that Paul knew and ministered together. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus who sought Paul out and became a believer, as well. This letter was written so that Philemon and Onesimus might forgive one another and realize that both of them were now fellow believers in Christ.

Finally, 2 Timothy was written near the end of Paul's life. In this letter, we learn that Paul is imprisoned and would soon die. This letter contains some of the last, and therefore, most important words Paul wanted Timothy to remember.

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus & Philemon Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 1 Timothy 1
Day 2 1 Timothy 2
Day 3 1 Timothy 3
Day 4 1 Timothy 4
Day 5 1 Timothy 5

Week 2

Day 1 1 Timothy 6
Day 2 2 Timothy 1
Day 3 2 Timothy 2
Day 4 2 Timothy 3
Day 5 2 Timothy 4

Week 3

Day 1 Titus 1
Day 2 Titus 2
Day 3 Titus 3
Day 4 Philemon

1 & 2 Corinthians Introduction

1 & 2 Corinthians are letters written by the Apostle Paul. Paul was the disciples who was converted on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. He became a strong believer in Christ and wrote most of the letters (known as epistles) of the New Testament.

These two letters were written to one church that Paul helped create in the city of Corinth. Paul spent a year and a half building this church and God gave him great success in this city (Acts 18:1-17).

When Paul wrote this letter, he had been away from the city for a number of years. He wrote because the people there had asked him about certain matters (1 Cor. 7:1) and he had heard other things that he feels he should address (1 Cor. 1:11).

These letters remind us that the church has never been a place for perfect people, but for broken people learning what it means to be the people of God. It also reminds us that one of the ways we grow to be more like Jesus is to have someone who cares about us tell us when we are wrong and how to be made right again.

1 & 2 Corinthians Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 1 Corinthians 1
Day 2 1 Corinthians 2
Day 3 1 Corinthians 3
Day 4 1 Corinthians 4
Day 5 1 Corinthians 5

Week 2

Day 1 1 Corinthians 6
Day 2 1 Corinthians 7
Day 3 1 Corinthians 8
Day 4 1 Corinthians 9
Day 5 1 Corinthians 10

Week 3

Day 1 1 Corinthians 11
Day 2 1 Corinthians 12
Day 3 1 Corinthians 13
Day 4 1 Corinthians 14
Day 5 1 Corinthians 15

Week 4

Day 1 1 Corinthians 16
Day 2 2 Corinthians 1
Day 3 2 Corinthians 2
Day 4 2 Corinthians 3
Day 5 2 Corinthians 4

Week 5

Day 1 2 Corinthians 5
Day 2 2 Corinthians 6
Day 3 2 Corinthians 7
Day 4 2 Corinthians 8
Day 5 2 Corinthians 9

Week 6

Day 1 2 Corinthians 10
Day 2 2 Corinthians 11
Day 3 2 Corinthians 12
Day 4 2 Corinthians 13

1 & 2 Thessalonians and Galatians Introduction

1 & 2 Thessalonians and Galatians are letters written by the Apostle Paul. Paul was the disciple who was converted on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. He became a strong believer in Christ and wrote most of the letters (known as epistles) of the New Testament.

In 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Paul is writing to a church that he helped establish (Acts 17:1-10). The believers in this church were under a lot of persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ. So Paul wrote the first letter to encourage them, that despite their hardship, God was still with them. He wrote the second letter to help them understand how hard it was going to be to be a believer before Jesus returns. Because Jesus has already won victory over death and sin, they should stay strong in their faith and work hard all the days of their lives.

In Galatians, Paul is writing to another church that he helped establish. The believers in that church were being told that Jesus' death wasn't enough for them to be forgiven. Paul wrote to those believers to remind them that the Old Testament Law couldn't save, but pointed to the need for our Savior Jesus.

1 & 2 Thessalonians and Galatians Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 1 Thessalonians 1
Day 2 1 Thessalonians 2
Day 3 1 Thessalonians 3
Day 4 1 Thessalonians 4
Day 5 1 Thessalonians 5

Week 2

Day 1 2 Thessalonians 1
Day 2 2 Thessalonians 2
Day 3 2 Thessalonians 3
Day 4 Galatians 1
Day 5 Galatians 2

Week 3

Day 1 Galatians 3
Day 2 Galatians 4
Day 3 Galatians 5
Day 4 Galatians 6

Romans Introduction

Romans was written by the Apostle Paul. Paul was the disciple who was converted on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. He became a strong believer in Christ and wrote most of the letters (known as epistles) of the New Testament.

In all the other letters that Paul wrote, he either knew the people was writing (like with Timothy or Titus) or helped establish the church he was writing (like the people of Corinth or Ephesus). However, the church in Rome was different. It was neither established by Paul, nor did Paul necessarily know anyone from the church there.

Because Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire, it was Paul's desire to know that the church located in its heart was prepared to understand and share the good news of Jesus Christ. So Paul takes his time in explaining the origin of their mutual faith and how it should affect their lives.

In Romans (as in Hebrews and Revelation), Paul references many Old Testament stories and helps us understand why the stories and promises are important to our faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 Romans 1
Day 2 Romans 2
Day 3 Romans 3
Day 4 Romans 4
Day 5 Romans 5

Week 2

Day 1 Romans 6
Day 2 Romans 7
Day 3 Romans 8
Day 4 Romans 9
Day 5 Romans 10

Week 3

Day 1 Romans 11
Day 2 Romans 12
Day 3 Romans 13
Day 4 Romans 14
Day 5 Romans 15

Week 4

Day 1 Romans 16

Hebrews Introduction

The book of Hebrews was written to the Jews who wanted to understand more about Jesus. We do not know who wrote the letter to the Hebrews, but we do know that they had a love for Jesus that they hoped every Jew would understand.

The book of Hebrews takes many of the Old Testament passages and customs and demonstrates how each of these pointed to Jesus, as the fulfillment of these customs practiced. In Hebrews, we see that Jesus is the High Priest promised to replace the line of Aaron. He is the acceptable sacrifice for sins that was represented through their offerings of goats and bulls. He is the One in whom the faithful men of old were putting their faith in by doing the things God told them to in the Old Testament. By understanding that Jesus is the answer, we can better understand the customs and sacrifices found in the Old Testament when we read it.

Through this letter, we find that Jesus is greater than Moses (who gave the Jews the Old Testament Law) and greater than the angels. He is the Son of God who has taken the sins of the world, so that everyone (Jew or Gentile) might draw close to God.

Hebrews Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 Hebrews 1
Day 2 Hebrews 2
Day 3 Hebrews 3
Day 4 Hebrews 4
Day 5 Hebrews 5

Week 2

Day 1 Hebrews 6
Day 2 Hebrews 7
Day 3 Hebrews 8
Day 4 Hebrews 9
Day 5 Hebrews 10

Week 3

Day 1 Hebrews 11
Day 2 Hebrews 12
Day 3 Hebrews 13

Revelation Introduction

Revelation is the only Prophetic book found in the New Testament. In the book of Revelation, Jesus gave His disciple John a vision of heaven and a vision of the future.

Revelation can be a hard book to understand and sometimes a scary book to read. There are many images that seem hard to understand and can seem frightening. However, we need to understand that when this letter was written, it was a scary time for believers.

Jesus gave John this vision of the future to encourage people who follow Him. He wanted to let them know that no matter what might happen here on Earth, in the end, He wins and we will be with Him forever in a place where there will be no more suffering or pain or sickness or death (Rev. 21:4).

Many of the promises mentioned in the book of Revelation are things that were repeated from the promises of God in the Old Testament Major & Minor Prophets. Through this book, we are reminded of two important things. First, God always keeps His promises. And second, in the end, Jesus wins. So no matter how bad things get here on Earth, we will have Jesus forever in eternity.

Revelation Reading Plan

Week 1

Day 1 Revelation 1
Day 2 Revelation 2
Day 3 Revelation 3
Day 4 Revelation 4
Day 5 Revelation 5

Week 2

Day 1 Revelation 6
Day 2 Revelation 7
Day 3 Revelation 8
Day 4 Revelation 9
Day 5 Revelation 10

Week 3

Day 1 Revelation 11
Day 2 Revelation 12
Day 3 Revelation 13
Day 4 Revelation 14
Day 5 Revelation 15

Week 4

Day 1 Revelation 16
Day 2 Revelation 17
Day 3 Revelation 18
Day 4 Revelation 19
Day 5 Revelation 20

Week 5

Day 1 Revelation 21
Day 2 Revelation 22

Phase 2
Old Testament

Elementary Reading Year 2

The Pentateuch Introduction

The first 5 books of the Bible are known as the Pentateuch. They are also known as the books of Moses, as Moses is the author of these books.

Genesis is all about beginnings. The beginning of the universe, the beginning of life, the beginning of humanity, the beginning of sin, the beginning of redemption, the beginning of nations and the beginning of God's special people Israel.

Exodus is about the Israelites escape from Egypt by the hand of God to become a people of their own. The ten commandments are given to the people and the tabernacle is constructed so the people can worship God.

Leviticus is about the sacrifices and festivals that the people of God were supposed to observe. Sacrifices were done for both sin and for praise. Because Jesus is the fulfillment of the sacrificial system, we do not sacrifice today. However, by learning some of these sacrifices we understand the way of life the the Israelites better and see how Jesus fulfilled what they practiced.

Numbers is about the time of wandering in the desert for 40 years before entering the land of promise. The males of every household were counted at the beginning of the journey (in chapter 1) and near the end of the journey (in chapter 26), hence the name Numbers given to the book.

Deuteronomy is the second telling of the law of God and a retelling of Israel's 40 years of wandering right before they were to enter the land of promise. There were the rules which the people of Israel agreed to live by to be called the people of God.

The Pentateuch Readling Plan

Genesis

Week 1

Day 1 Genesis 1-2
Day 2 Genesis 3-4
Day 3 Genesis 5-6
Day 4 Genesis 7-8
Day 5 Genesis 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 Genesis 11-12
Day 2 Genesis 13-14
Day 3 Genesis 15-16
Day 4 Genesis 17-18
Day 5 Genesis 19-20

Week 3

Day 1 Genesis 21-22
Day 2 Genesis 23-24
Day 3 Genesis 25-26
Day 4 Genesis 27-28
Day 5 Genesis 29-30

Week 4

Day 1 Genesis 31-32
Day 2 Genesis 33-34
Day 3 Genesis 35-36
Day 4 Genesis 37-38
Day 5 Genesis 39-40

Week 5

Day 1 Genesis 41-42
Day 2 Genesis 43-44
Day 3 Genesis 45-46
Day 4 Genesis 47-48
Day 5 Genesis 49-50

The Pentateuch Reading Plan cont.

Exodus

Week 1

Day 1 Exodus 1-2
Day 2 Exodus 3-4
Day 3 Exodus 5-6
Day 4 Exodus 7-8
Day 5 Exodus 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 Exodus 11-12
Day 2 Exodus 13-14
Day 3 Exodus 15-16
Day 4 Exodus 17-18
Day 5 Exodus 19-20

Week 3

Day 1 Exodus 31-32
Day 2 Exodus 33-34
Day 3 Exodus 35, 40

Leviticus & Numbers

Week 1

Day 1 Leviticus 16, 19
Day 2 Leviticus 23, 25
Day 3 Leviticus 26-27
Day 4 Numbers 11-12
Day 5 Numbers 13-14

Week 2

Day 1 Numbers 16-17
Day 2 Numbers 20-21
Day 3 Numbers 22-23
Day 4 Numbers 24-25

The Pentateuch Reading Plan cont.

Deuteronomy

Week 1

Day 1 Deuteronomy 1-2
Day 2 Deuteronomy 3-4
Day 3 Deuteronomy 5-6
Day 4 Deuteronomy 7-8
Day 5 Deuteronomy 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 Deuteronomy 11-12
Day 2 Deuteronomy 13-14
Day 3 Deuteronomy 15-16
Day 4 Deuteronomy 17-18
Day 5 Deuteronomy 19-20

Week 3

Day 1 Deuteronomy 21-22
Day 2 Deuteronomy 23-24
Day 3 Deuteronomy 25-26
Day 4 Deuteronomy 27-28
Day 5 Deuteronomy 29-30

Week 4

Day 1 Deuteronomy 31-32
Day 2 Deuteronomy 33-34

The History of Israel Introduction

The books of **Joshua-Esther** tell the history of the people of Israel from the entry of the Promised Land to their eventual exile and finally return to the land God had promised them.

In these books you will learn of the Israelites entry into the Land of Promise **(Joshua)**, the faulty leadership of the judges in conquering the land **(Judges)**, the rise of the kingship **(1 Samuel)**, the king after God's own heart **(2 Samuel)**, the wisest of all kings and the splitting of the kingdom in two: Israel and Judah **(1 Kings)**, the path of destruction by both of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah that would lead the people of Israel to exile away from the Land of Promise **(2 Kings)**.

However, we also see the faithfulness of God in the return of His people Israel to the Land of Promise, as they return to God **(Nehemiah)**.

While we will not read every book in the history of Israel, we will read enough to understand the special relationship God had with His people Israel, and wants to have with us today through His Son, Jesus.

The History of Israel Reading Plan

Joshua & Judges

Week 1

Day 1 Joshua 1-2
Day 2 Joshua 3-4
Day 3 Joshua 5-6
Day 4 Joshua 7-8
Day 5 Joshua 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 Joshua 11, 22
Day 2 Joshua 23-24
Day 3 Judges 1-2
Day 4 Judges 3-4
Day 5 Judges 5-6

Week 3

Day 1 Judges 7-8
Day 2 Judges 9-10
Day 3 Judges 11-12
Day 4 Judges 13-14
Day 5 Judges 15-16

Week 4

Day 1 Judges 17-18
Day 2 Judges 19-20
Day 3 Judges 21

The History of Israel Reading Plan cont.

1 & 2 Samuel

Week 1

Day 1 1 Samuel 1-2
Day 2 1 Samuel 3-4
Day 3 1 Samuel 5-6
Day 4 1 Samuel 7-8
Day 5 1 Samuel 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 1 Samuel 11-12
Day 2 1 Samuel 13-14
Day 3 1 Samuel 15-16
Day 4 1 Samuel 17-18
Day 5 1 Samuel 19-20

Week 3

Day 1 1 Samuel 21-22
Day 2 1 Samuel 23-24
Day 3 1 Samuel 25-26
Day 4 1 Samuel 27-28
Day 5 1 Samuel 29-30

Week 4

Day 1 1 Sam. 31; 2 Sam. 1
Day 2 2 Samuel 2-3
Day 3 2 Samuel 4-5
Day 4 2 Samuel 6-7
Day 5 2 Samuel 8-9

Week 5

Day 1 2 Samuel 10-11
Day 2 2 Samuel 12-13
Day 3 2 Samuel 14-15
Day 4 2 Samuel 16-17
Day 5 2 Samuel 18-19

Week 6

Day 1 2 Samuel 20-21
Day 2 2 Samuel 22-23
Day 3 2 Samuel 24

The History of Israel Reading Plan cont.

1 & 2 Kings

Week 1

Day 1 1 Kings 1-2
Day 2 1 Kings 3-4
Day 3 1 Kings 5-6
Day 4 1 Kings 7-8
Day 5 1 Kings 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 1 Kings 11-12
Day 2 1 Kings 13-14
Day 3 1 Kings 15-16
Day 4 1 Kings 17-18
Day 5 1 Kings 19-20

Week 3

Day 1 1 Kings 21-22
Day 2 2 Kings 1-2
Day 3 2 Kings 3-4
Day 4 2 Kings 5-6
Day 5 2 Kings 7-8

Week 4

Day 1 2 Kings 9-10
Day 2 2 Kings 11-12
Day 3 2 Kings 13-14
Day 4 2 Kings 15-16
Day 5 2 Kings 17-18

Week 5

Day 1 2 Kings 19-20
Day 2 2 Kings 21-22
Day 3 2 Kings 23-24
Day 4 2 Kings 25

Nehemiah

Week 1

Day 1 Nehemiah 1-2
Day 2 Nehemiah 3-4
Day 3 Nehemiah 5-6
Day 4 Nehemiah 7-8
Day 5 Nehemiah 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 Nehemiah 11-12
Day 2 Nehemiah 13

Wisdom Literature Introduction

The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament includes poetry, songs and proverbs. As with the other sections of the Old Testament, the oldest writing is first **(Job)**, while the latest writing is last **(Song of Songs,** *also known as*, **Song of Solomon)**.

Job is a book that ponders the problem of suffering.

Psalms are songs that were written by men through the influence of the Holy Spirit. There are many prophecies about Jesus that are found in the Psalms.

Proverbs are wise sayings that are founded in "the fear of the Lord" (Proverbs 1:7). It is good to remember that they are general truths and not promises of God.

Ecclesiastes is a book that explores the idea of what makes life meaningful and comes to the conclusion that without God, everything is meaningless.

Song of Songs looks at the beauty of the intimacy of marriage.

In our readings, we will focus on **Psalms, Proverbs & Ecclesiastes**. Through the writings, we begin to understand why faithful men have always praised God.

The Wisdom Literature Reading Plan

Psalms

Week 1

Day 1 Psalm 1-3
Day 2 Psalm 4-6
Day 3 Psalm 7-8
Day 4 Psalm 9-10
Day 5 Psalm 11-14

Week 2

Day 1 Psalm 15-17
Day 2 Psalm 18-19
Day 3 Psalm 20-22
Day 4 Psalm 23-25
Day 5 Psalm 31-32

Week 3

Day 1 Psalm 36-37
Day 2 Psalm 40-41
Day 3 Psalm 42-43
Day 4 Psalm 45-46
Day 5 Psalm 50-51

Week 4

Day 1 Psalm 61-63
Day 2 Psalm 69-70
Day 3 Psalm 77-78
Day 4 Psalm 84-86
Day 5 Psalm 89-90

Week 5

Day 1 Psalm 91-93
Day 2 Psalm 95-97
Day 3 Psalm 103-104
Day 4 Psalm 106-107
Day 5 Psalm 115-118

Week 6

Day 1 Psalm 119:1-32
Day 2 Psalm 119:33-72
Day 3 Psalm 119:73-104
Day 4 Psalm 119:105-144
Day 5 Psalm 119:145-176

Week 7

Day 1 Psalm 120-122
Day 2 Psalm 127-130
Day 3 Psalm 139-140
Day 4 Psalm 145-146
Day 5 Psalm 147-150

The Wisdom Literature Reading Plan cont.

Proverbs

Week 1

Day 1 Proverbs 1-2
Day 2 Proverbs 3-4
Day 3 Proverbs 5-7
Day 4 Proverbs 8-9
Day 5 Proverbs 10-11

Week 2

Day 1 Proverbs 12-13
Day 2 Proverbs 14-15
Day 3 Proverbs 16-17
Day 4 Proverbs 18-19
Day 5 Proverbs 20-21

Week 3

Day 1 Proverbs 22-23
Day 2 Proverbs 24-25
Day 3 Proverbs 26-27
Day 4 Proverbs 28-29
Day 5 Proverbs 30-31

Ecclesiastes

Week 1

Day 1 Ecclesiastes 1-3
Day 2 Ecclesiastes 4-6
Day 3 Ecclesiastes 7-8
Day 4 Ecclesiastes 9-10
Day 5 Ecclesiastes 11-12

The Prophets Introduction

Prophets were men of God who were given special messages to the people of Israel. Prophets often pointed back to the Law (found in the Pentateuch) to remind the people of Israel of the promise they made to God to follow Him. Prophets often warned the people of the consequences of disobedience to the Law of God and how their disobedience would bring judgment.

Prophets also were given visions about the future. Most importantly, they were given information of the One who was to come as Messiah, Jesus. They would tell when He was supposed to come (Daniel 2), where He was going to be born (Micah 5), who was going to come before Him (Malachi 4) and what His mission was (Isaiah 42-61).

The Prophets are broken up into two groups in your Bible: ***The Major Prophets*** **(Isaiah-Daniel)** ***& the Minor Prophets*** **(Hosea-Malachi)**. The only difference between the Major and Minor Prophets is the amount they wrote. Major Prophets wrote more than the Minor Prophets. However, both are equally important, because in the writings of the prophets, we have the Word of God.

Each of these sections are in order with the earliest Major or Minor Prophet first and the latest Major or Minor Prophet last.

Though we will not read all the Prophets, through them we will hear of God's relationship to His people Israel and the promise of the One who was to come to be the Savior of the whole world...Jesus.

The Major Prophets Reading Plan

Isaiah

Week 1

Day 1 Isaiah 1-2
Day 2 Isaiah 3-4
Day 3 Isaiah 5-6
Day 4 Isaiah 7-8
Day 5 Isaiah 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 Isaiah 11-12
Day 2 Isaiah 36-37
Day 3 Isaiah 38-39
Day 4 Isaiah 40-41
Day 5 Isaiah 42-43

Week 3

Day 1 Isaiah 44-45
Day 2 Isaiah 46-48
Day 3 Isaiah 49-50
Day 4 Isaiah 51-53
Day 5 Isaiah 54-55

Week 4

Day 1 Isaiah 56-57
Day 2 Isaiah 58-59
Day 3 Isaiah 60-61
Day 4 Isaiah 62-64
Day 5 Isaiah 65-66

Jeremiah

Week 1

Day 1 Jeremiah 1-2
Day 2 Jeremiah 3-4
Day 3 Jeremiah 5-6
Day 4 Jeremiah 7-8
Day 5 Jeremiah 9-10

Week 2

Day 1 Jeremiah 11-12
Day 2 Jeremiah 13-14
Day 3 Jeremiah 15-16
Day 4 Jeremiah 17-18
Day 5 Jeremiah 19-20

Week 3

Day 1 Jeremiah 39-40
Day 2 Jeremiah 41-42
Day 3 Jeremiah 43-44
Day 4 Jeremiah 30-31

Daniel

Week 1

Day 1 Daniel 1-2
Day 2 Daniel 3-4
Day 3 Daniel 5-6

The Minor Prophets Reading Plan

Jonah & Micah

Week 1

Day 1 Jonah 1-2
Day 2 Jonah 3-4
Day 3 Micah 1-3
Day 4 Micah 4-5
Day 5 Micah 6-7

Nahum, Haggai & Malachi

Week 1

Day 1 Nahum 1-2
Day 2 Nahum 3
Day 3 Haggai 1-2
Day 4 Malachi 1-2
Day 5 Malachi 3-4

Phase 3
The Whole Bible Chronologically

Elementary Reading Year 3

This blueprint recommends "The Daily Bible" by F. LaGard Smith to read the Bible chronologically. In this unique edition, the Bible is chronologically read in 365 daily selections. Because of the background given in Phase 1 & 2 of the reading plan, the reader will more easily understand as the Daily Bible weaves from the history of King David to the Psalms that he wrote, the history of King Solomon and the Proverbs he wrote, the downfall of Israel and Judah and the warnings of the Prophets living during that time, the life of Jesus as a unified whole, and, the early church and the letters of Paul. Beyond the chronological approach, there is commentary in appropriate spots in the readings that help explain the background or history of a section just read or about to be read and how it connects the story of the Bible as a unified whole.

Because "The Daily Bible" is a 365 day reading plan, it doesn't have the flexibility of missed days as the other plans have. If you are ready for a daily commitment in reading the Word of God, great! However, it can be tailored to the same reading regimen as the other plans, if so desired, to provide more flexibility (5 days a week vs. 7 days a week). Either way, you must not stress over "missed days" and commit to reading one entry a day, even if you miss a day or two or even a week. The 5 day a week plan will take about ½ year longer to complete reading the Bible. Remember, the goal is to read the Bible, not complete some task in a certain timeframe.

After having read the Daily Bible, the reader will be able to enjoy the Word of God for the rest of their lives.

Suggested Reading Lists & Additional Resources

In this blueprint, we have included suggested reading lists for your growing child. We have tried to account for their reading level and the subjects that would be appropriate at their age and maturity level. These lists are by no means exhaustive, but they are a good place for your child to begin to grow in important areas of discipleship. Our goal was to give a number of reliable books of many different subjects and genres, enough to give variety but not to overwhelm with too many choices.

Our "Suggested Reading Lists" include one for 7th-8th Grade, one for 9th-10th Grade, one for 11th-12th Grade and one for Parents. Each list has 17 suggestions, therefore, the unused portion of the 7th-8th Grade list can be used by a 9th-10th Grader and both the unused portions of the 7th-8th Grade & 9th-10th Grade lists can be used by 11th-12th Graders. However, since the lists are constructed to challenge students at their level of maturity, it is highly recommended that most of their book selections take place within their assigned reading age.

Our blueprint recommends 4-5 books per year. Of course, for the voracious reader, more could be done, if desired. After the completion of their senior year in High School, your youth should have read between 25-30 books, leaving another 20-25 books for them to explore as young adults.

Our "Additional Resources" page includes a number of podcasts, websites, YouTube channels and other media that provide a wide range of resources that will help your child (and you) grow in their faith in Jesus Christ.

Finally is our "Suggested Reading for Parents" page mainly geared toward parenting. For further discipleship, we recommend parents also use the reading lists for students, as well as, the other additional resources provided.

7th-8th Grade Suggested Reading

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis

Quit Church by Chris Sonksen

The Kingdom Series by Chuck Black

The Christian Atheist by Craig Groeshel

Weird by Craig Groeshel

7 Men by Eric Metaxas

7 Women by Eric Metaxas

Not God's Type by Holly Ordway

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire by Jim Cymbala

Refuting Evolution by Jonathan Sarfati

Coffee House Chronicles by Josh McDowell & Dave Sterrett

More than a Carpenter by Josh McDowell

Not a Fan by Kyle Idleman

The Case for Miracles by Lee Strobel

One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven by Mark Cahill

Which None Can Shut by Rhema Goode

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

9th-10th Grade Suggested Reading

Surprised by Faith by Dr. Don Bierle

Letters to the Church by Francis Chan

The Prophet by Frank Peretti

Ask Me Anything by J. Budziszewski

Ask Me Anything 2 by J. Budziszewski

Respectable Sins by Jerry Bridges

Fresh Faith by Jim Cymbala

Fresh Power by Jim Cymbala

The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel

The Case for Faith by Lee Strobel

The Case for the Real Jesus by Lee Strobel

Relational Apologetics by Michael Sherrard

Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus by Nabeel Quershi

Ethix by Sean McDowell

The Circle Series by Ted Dekker

Dreams & Visions by Tom Doyle

I am n by Voice of the Martyrs

11th-12th Grade Suggested Reading

The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer

Another Gospel by Alisa Childers

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis

The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

Stealing from God by Frank Turek

Tactics by Gregory Koukl

The Hobbit/The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

Cold Case Christianity by J. Warner Wallace

Forensic Faith by J. Warner Wallace

Giving Wisely by Jonathan Martin

Evidence for Christianity by Josh McDowell

The Unholy Trinity by Matt Walsh

The Case for a Creator by Lee Strobel

Defeating Darwinism by Phillip E. Johnson

Killing Christians by Tom Doyle

Family Driven Faith by Voddie Baucham

Additional Resources

Adventures in Odyssey--adventuresinodyssey.com

It is an award-winning audio drama series created for ages 8-12 and enjoyed by the whole family. Episodes often start with the grandfatherly Mr. Whittaker ("Whit"), who runs an ice cream shop called Whit's End. They last an average of twenty-five minutes and bring biblical principles to life, through a balance of fun, faith and imagination.

Alisa Childers--alisachilders.com

Alisa Childers is a writer/speaker who covers topics of Apologetics, Theology, Culture & Worship in her blogs, podcasts & books. Her specialty revolves around the danger of Progressive Christianity, how to recognize, defend against it and engage those who are caught in its web. An absolute must for the parent or High School teen navigating these waters.

The Bible Recap--thebiblerecap.com

Have you ever closed your Bible and thought, *"What did I just read?"*

The Bible Recap is here to help! It's a short daily podcast (about 8 minutes) hosted by Tara-Leigh Cobble. She has read through the Bible many times chronologically, and she'll highlight and summarize that day's Bible reading in a casual, easy to understand way. The Bible Recap will not only help you read Scripture but help you love reading it!

Cooper Stuff--johnlcooper.com

Lead singer of the Christian hard rock band "Skillet". He takes on the issues of the culture found in social media. Like his band's music, his observations and teachings are bold and full of biblical truth. His site includes links to his podcasts, his videos, his blogs, as well as, his other social media connections (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & YouTube).

Cross Examined--crossexamined.org

Cross Examined exists to address the problem that 3-out-of-4 Christian youth leave church while in college, many because they are intellectually skeptical. Cross Examined is an apologetic ministry designed to defend the Christian faith and address topics faced by young people today through speaking, blogs, podcasts & videos.

Focus on the Family--focusonthefamily.com

Focus on the Family is a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families thrive. They support families through a number of resources designed to help families teach their children about God and His beautiful design for the family, protect themselves from harmful influences of the culture and equip themselves to make a greater difference in the lives of those around them.

They also have ministries focused on evaluating media content from a biblical perspective (Plugged In) and a ministry specifically aimed toward young adults (Boundless).

Krista Bontrager--theologymom.com

Krista is a theologian with a mother's heart. This makes her especially effective in conveying theological truths and applying them to real life situations. Her Facebook page is filled with great articles from a number of topics helpful for the growing teen or parent wishing to guide their teen to a better understanding of Christian faith in a fallen world. She has a podcast with Monique Duson called "All the Things" which is a weekly conversation about cultural issues of the day through the lens of the historic Christian worldview. Highly recommended for parents & High Schoolers.

Natasha Crain--natashacrain.com

She is a speaker, author, podcaster and blogger whose passion is to equip Christian parents to raise kids with an understanding of how to make a case for and defend their faith in an increasingly secular world. Whether you have young kids, teens, adult kids or grandkids, you'll find the resources here to better equip you for the challenges of discipleship today.

One Minute Apologist--oneminuteapologist.com

Bobby Conway is the One Minute Apologist. He provides quick, credible answers to apologetic questions that resource people with a hunger to defend their Christian faith. These brief videos (often less than 5 minutes) are meant to be a starting point to dig deeper into the various topics discussed. His interviews are with many of the well known, leading Christian apologists. These are great introductory videos for youth and adults of all ages.

The Next Generation Ministries--thenextgenerationministries.com

The Next Generation Ministries exists to equip parents to help them disciple their children into mature believers in Christ. The Next Generation Facebook page is designed to provide reliable resources in the form of trusted blogs, articles & videos for the purpose of equipping parents to disciple their children. The Next Generation's "Discipleship Begins @ Home" podcast gives practical advice and resources to parents with children of all ages to help them on this journey to discipleship.

Unbelievable? Podcast--premierchristianradio.com

Each Saturday, Justin Brierley asks questions like: Is there evidence for God? Can we trust the Bible? Did Jesus rise from the dead? Justin tackles these and other issues on a show that gets Christians & skeptics talking. This is a great podcast for High School youth and adults who are well grounded in their faith for an introduction to differing worldviews and how the Christian worldview provides robust answers to life and faith.

Whaddo You Meme??--YouTube Channel

Jon McCray has a YouTube channel called "Whaddo You Meme??" that tackles current events and anti-Christian content found in culture and social media. His videos are generally under 10 minutes and are a great primer to discussing cultural issues and anti-Christian arguments with your Jr. High or High School teen.

Suggested Reading for Parents

Parenting Isn't for Cowards by Dr. James Dobson

Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Mentoring of Teens
Joe White & Jim Weidmann, General Editors

Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children
John Trent, Ph.D, Rick Osborne, Kurt Bruner, General Editors

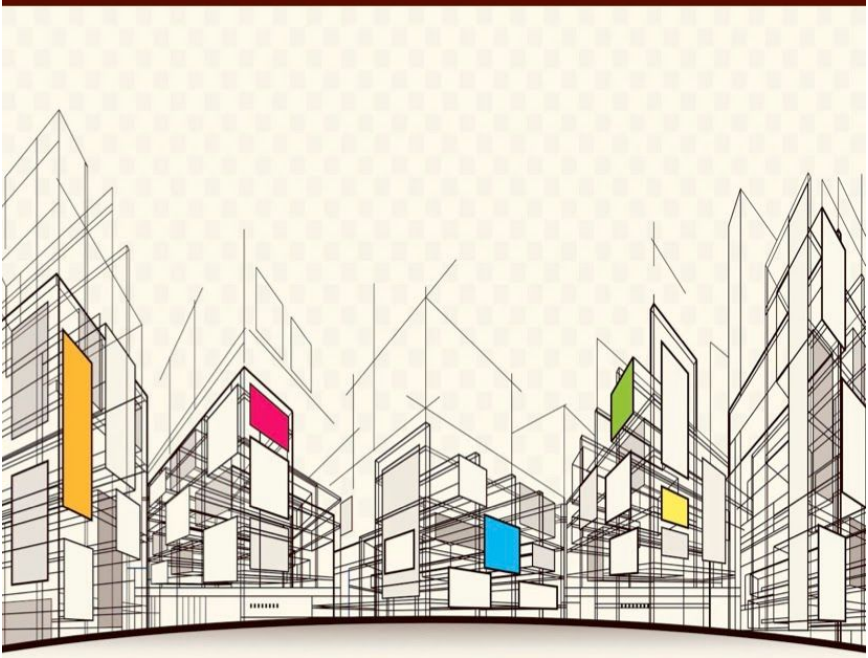
Keeping Your Kids on God's Side by Natasha Crain

Talking with Your Kids About God by Natasha Crain

Talking with Your Kids About Jesus by Natasha Crain

Finishing Strong by Steve Farrar

Family Driven Faith by Voddie Baucham Jr.



Discipleship Begins @ Home Blueprint

5 Year Plan

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Discipleship Begins @ Home Blueprint

Our prayer is that this blueprint will help make the discipleship of your children in the Lord attainable through a systematic step-by-step process that strives to grow at the same rate as your children do. We do this through a focus on 6 disciplines throughout the life of your child: Bible Reading, Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving.

This blueprint includes a 5 Year Discipleship Plan geared for youth & adults 6th grade and older. This plan focuses on implementing the knowledge of the Word of God and the participation in the disciplines of the faith at a rate equal to their maturity. This plan is perfect for parents who have never read through the Word of God before or for the teenager or young adult who has never read through the entirety of Scripture.

For those who have children younger than 6th grade, we recommend the Discipleship for Life Plan.

Focus on the Bible

A majority of this blueprint fixes its attention on your and your children's knowledge of the Bible. Of all the six disciplines listed above, in my experience, Bible Reading is the most neglected. However, of all the disciplines, Bible Reading is the most important.

Let me explain why.

It is through our Bible Reading that all of our disciplines are informed. It is through the witness found in the Word of God that we learn about God, His and our nature, the life, death & resurrection of Jesus and the implications those things have for us. It is through the Word that we are not just informed about each disciplines' importance, but also the correct way to practice those disciplines. Consider the following passages on each of these disciplines:

Bible Reading (Ps. 119:9-16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12-13)
Prayer (Matt. 5:43-45; Matt. 6:5-15)
Fellowship (John 13:34-35; Phil. 2:1-11; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 John 1:5-10)
Outreach/Service (Luke 6:27-35; Luke 10:25-37; Gal. 6:9-10)
Discipleship (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 12:28-34; John 13:34-35)
Giving (Matt. 6:1-4; Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 8-9)

As you and your children gain a proper understanding of the Word of God, they will also be gaining a proper understanding of the importance of these disciplines.

Our focus on six disciplines is two-fold. First, it is to help create an understanding that living out faith in Christ isn't something just done on Sunday mornings or Wednesday nights. Second, it is to provide practical ideas for opportunities to work out these six disciplines of the Christian life producing a more well-rounded faith in your youth or young adult as they grow.

The Discipleship Plan included is for youth or adults of any age and any knowledge level of the Scriptures. It is specific enough to give real direction to parents desiring to raise their children in the Lord and varied enough not to fall in the realm of legalism. Our goal is to see a faith produced in your children that is intellectually stimulating and practically fulfilling at an age appropriate level, thereby training them to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength (Mark 12:30).

How to Study the Bible

The goal of this section is simple: To make reading the Bible and understanding it attainable to the reader or the parent who is trying to instill a knowledge of the Word of God to their children. I would like to be the first to say, *You can do this, even if you have never done this before! You can teach your children, even if, before reading this blueprint, you have never read through the Bible yourself!*

Let's face it. The Bible can seem to be an intimidating and confusing book. Consider the fact that the Bible is not one book, but a collection of books covering two covenants (or promises) of God, that have their fulfillment in Jesus and it is easy to see how people get confused. When we add to that foreign, ancient practices, such as sacrifices, and rules listed in the Bible that followers of Jesus no longer practice, such as the prohibition of tattoos (many believers have them today), it can seem that the Bible is too barbaric or too contradictory to understand. Other sections, such as prophecy, seem too mystical or fantastical to ever have the hope of understanding it.

Overwhelmed? Don't be! The purpose of this blueprint is to provide a practical way to break down the Bible in understandable portions in a three phase process that will help you understand how to read the Word of God for the rest of your life. It will also instruct you on how to use that knowledge to teach your children to do the same at a very early age.

So where do we begin?

A Word about Translations

I believe that the best place to begin is the type of Bible you or your youth use. When talking about the type of Bible, I am speaking of translation. Many people believe that any translation of the Bible you use is just as good as another, just as long as you are in the Word of God. Sadly, this is not true.

There are a few factors that must be considered when searching for an appropriate translation. One is the consideration of the age or reading level of the reader. The second is the reliability of the translation, especially for the maturing reader.

When I was about 10 years old, I visited my grandmother who gave me my first Bible. It was an imitation leather black covered Bible. I loved that Bible and appreciate it even more now, as I wasn't a Christian when it was given to me (that would be another 10 years).

However, there was one thing wrong with the Bible my grandmother gifted me: it was a King James Version Bible (KJV). The King James Version is written in Old English dating back to 1610...the time of Shakespeare. I sure didn't understand the language being used in it at the age of 10! In my case, Bible translation became a barrier to understanding the Bible at an early age.

The good news is that today there are many translations that can help maturing readers get the most out of their Bible.

Without going into too much detail, I would like to describe the different types of translations.

The first type of translation is known as an essentially literal translation. This is a word-for-word rendering of the original text. This is the best type of translation for those in High School and adults. An

essentially literal translation ensures that the words you are reading are the Word of God and not an interpretation of the Word of God. These include the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the English Standard Version (ESV) and the New King James Version (NKJV).

The second type of translation is known as a dynamic equivalent translation. The New International Version (NIV) and the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) fall into this category. These are known as thought-for-thought translations. There is a spectrum for these types of translations. Some, like the NIV and HCSB, draw closer to the word-for-word translations than others. These can be good translations for those growing into Jr. or Mid High. However, the further away the translation gets from a literal translation, the more opportunity there is for misinterpretation of the original text, which is why I do not recommend the dynamic equivalent translations for those in High School or for adults.

The third type of translation are the reader's version translations. The NIrV falls into this category. These are great Bible for those learning English as a second language or the growing reader in the 3rd to 5th grade range. These Bibles break down large words and concepts for the beginning reader. It is a great encouragement to child and parent alike because it allows children at a very young age to really read the Bible for themselves.

Finally, there is the "translation" known as a paraphrase Bible. This is usually one man's or a group's opinion of the ideas God was trying to get across in His Word. The Message Bible (MSG) and the Living Bible (LB) fall into this category. However, the paraphrase changes the text of the Bible so dramatically that it is often unrecognizable from the original text. To understand what I mean, go online to biblegateway.com or to a bookstore and compare the Message to one of the more literal translations. You will find that many well known passages become something entirely different in the paraphrase

edition. This is why I believe this type of "Bible" isn't a Bible at all. Therefore, I do not recommend it under any circumstances.

A Few Words about Study Bibles

If this is your or your child's or first time through the Bible, I do not recommend a Study Bible. Going through the three phase reading plan in this blueprint will give both you and them a proper understanding of the Word of God and prepare them for the deeper insight that a Study Bible will offer them, as they grow. The most important thing needed the first time through is familiarity with the Word of God itself.

For those who are Jr. or Mid High and older, who have gone through the three phase reading plan, I recommend having a good Study Bible from one of the translations mentioned in the previous section. A Study Bible can unlock the meaning of people groups, places, cultures and customs not known by modern day readers. The introduction given before each book of the Bible can help set the timeframe of when the book was written, the circumstances leading to its writing and other things of cultural and historical importance.

When you hear a good sermon, it often unlocks meaning from within the text of God's word that you never understood before. The pastor or teacher has taken the time to study the passage fully and bring out many things from the Scripture that may not have been apparent from a straightforward reading of the text. A good Study Bible can have the same effect. I encourage getting one with lots of notes and articles to be of the best benefit for you or your youth.

However, be wary of the marketing of "Teen Study Bibles". Many of these Bibles through their title give the impression that there is a lot of information being shared. But the truth is that many of these "Teen Study Bibles" have very few notes or articles. There are some good ones

out there if you look hard, though. But don't be afraid of buying a regular Study Bible for your teen.

A word of caution concerning Study Bibles needs to be said here. The Word of God is the actual inspired text, not the notes or the articles. While I believe that a Study Bible is a useful tool, it is in no way a replacement for the Word of God itself. A man can become mature in his faith reading just the Word of God alone, without the benefit of any notes or articles. However, a man cannot become mature if he only regarded the notes and articles at the expense of God's Word.

There are many in today's society both believers in Christ and opponents of Christ who know a lot of random verses of God's Word through hearsay, YouTube, the Internet, Instagram, movies, TV and what they hear from family and friends. However, many of these same people don't know what the actual Word of God says, in context. An adult or youth who is tempted by any of these mearns to shortcut their knowledge of the Word of God would be better served by purchasing a Bible without the notes first. As their personal knowledge increases concerning their understanding of God's Word, then they can purchase a Study Bible to further this understanding.

The Three Phase Reading Plan

Now that we have looked at Bible translations and Study Bibles, it's time to dive into the three phase reading plan that will help anyone learn how to read the Word of God and understand it.

Phase 1--The New Testament

The best place to begin studying the Word of God is the New Testament. The New Testament is broken up into 5 sections, consisting of 27 books. The first section comprises four books called the Gospels. These books are about the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The next section has only one book in it, Acts. Acts chronicles the life of the early church after Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven. The third section consists of the letters of Paul. This section spans from the book of Romans to the book of Philemon. Hebrews is sometimes placed with the Pauline epistles because the style of writing is similar to Paul's. However, the writer of Hebrews is unknown, so oftentimes it is placed within the next section of the New Testament known as the General Epistles. These stretch from Hebrews to Jude. They are called "general" because they were written by different people from the early church and their authors are often identified in the book title. The final section consists of only one book, Revelation. Revelation deals with the prophecy of the end times, when Jesus judges the earth and finally, victoriously reigns as King.

Jesus' last words recorded in Matthew give us a good idea where someone should begin in the New Testament. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20). In this passage, Jesus says that in order for us to be made a disciple (follower), we are to observe (or obey) all He commanded us.

So the obvious question becomes: Where can we learn about what Jesus has commanded us to do? Answer: In the Gospels. It is in the Gospels that we learn about the life, death and resurrection and the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also the best place to begin our study of the Word of God.

The Reading Plan for the New Testament included in this blueprint begins with the Gospels of Luke & John and continues through a majority of the New Testament. These plans do not go in the book order of the Bible. Rather, they are arranged to be read in a way that brings the most understanding for the reader.

Understanding the Old Testament becomes our next goal after Phase 1 is complete.

Phase 2--Overview of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is broken up into 5 sections, consisting of 39 books. The first section is known as the Pentateuch or the Books of Moses. These are the first five books of the Old Testament and cover the history of the beginning of the world to the birth of the nation of Israel. The second section is the History of Israel which spans from the book of Joshua to the book of Esther. The third section is known as the Writings or the Wisdom Literature which cover the books of Job through the Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon). These writings cover prose, poetry, songs & wisdom literature bringing glory to God, remembering His promises, recounting Israel's history and pondering life's deep questions. The next section is the Major Prophets. The Major Prophets include the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. Through these prophets we see a bold proclamation calling the people of Israel back to the God whom they have promised to serve. Finally, the last section is the Minor Prophets. The Minor Prophets begin in Hosea and

end in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. Like the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets called the people of Israel back to faith in the living God through warnings and encouragements based upon the covenant the people of Israel made with God.

One thing to note about the sections of the Old Testament. Each section is more or less in chronological order. For example, Genesis begins the Books of Moses, whereas Deuteronomy ends this section chronologically. Joshua picks up where Moses left off and the History of Israel is traced from Joshua until Esther in chronological order (with a slight repeat happening in 1 & 2 Chronicles). These first two sections represent the chronological history of humanity and God's chosen people Israel.

The Writings and the Major and Minor Prophets are also in chronological order respectively. However, the chronology of each of the books in these sections may intersect with the history of Israel at different points. If we think of the Pentateuch and the History of Israel as a timeline from the start to the finish of the Old Testament, we can see better how they interact with the other sections of the Old Testament.

Gen-Deut, Jos, Jud, 1&2 Sa, 1&2 K, Ez, Neh, Es ***Pentateuch/History***
1 & 2 Chron.

Job, P s a l m s, Pr-Song ***Wisdom Literature***

Is, Jer/Ez, Dan ***Major Prophets***

Hos-Zep Hag-Mal ***Minor Prophets***

In our blueprint, we read our outline of the Old Testament through these sections, combining the Major and Minor Prophets into one section. As with the New Testament, the readings are arranged in a way that will make the most sense. In this, our first run through, we skip through much of the family tree of the tribes of Israel, many of the

ceremonial & sacrificial laws and the harder to understand prophets. We read enough to understand their importance, but not so much that we are overwhelmed with these details the first time through. Our goal is to gain an understanding of the Old Testament's makeup and how it points to Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of God.

After we have completed the outline of the Old Testament, we will be ready to read the whole Bible.

Phase 3--The Whole Bible Chronologically

This blueprint recommends "The Daily Bible" by F. LaGard Smith to read the Bible chronologically. In this unique edition, the Bible is chronologically read in 365 daily selections. Because of the background given in Phase 1 & 2 of the reading plan, the reader will more easily understand as the Daily Bible weaves from the history of King David to the Psalms that he wrote, the history of King Solomon and the Proverbs he wrote, the downfall of Israel and Judah and the warnings of the Prophets living during that time, the life of Jesus as a unified whole, and, the early church and the letters of Paul. Beyond the chronological approach, there is commentary in appropriate spots in the readings that help explain the background or history of a section just read or about to be read and how it connects the story of the Bible as a unified whole.

After having read the Daily Bible, the reader will be able to enjoy the Word of God for the rest of their lives.

The 5 Year Discipleship Reading Plan

The 5 Year Discipleship Reading Plan is designed for anyone 6th grade and older, including adults. In this plan, both Phases 1 & 2 are completed in the first year with the Daily Bible read in Year 2. An introduction to each section can be found at the beginning of each part of the reading plan to bring more context and background for the growing reader. This plan is constructed for growing youth and adults at a pace and reading level that will be challenging without being overwhelming.

Some Final Pieces of Advice...and Encouragement

Bible Reading is not like a "pass or fail" class in school. However, a lot of people unknowingly treat it that way. This attitude has defeated many in their attempt and desire to study God's Word. Phases 1 & 2 provide a lot of leeway for missed days by only having readings 5 days a week, some weeks even less than that. This makes catching up easy, if you find that you or your teen is falling behind schedule. However, Phase 3 is a 365 day devotional. Many who undertake this endeavor will have every intention of finishing Phase 3 in 365 days, a very doable effort. But what if you or your child miss a day because of sickness, busyness or forgetfulness? In the mind of the parent or teen who has made this goal, they now have twice the reading to do. A daily reading that was between 3-4 chapters is now 7-8 in the mind of the person who has fallen behind. What if that day turned into a week because of vacation or sickness or something unexpected? Now that same person feels that they need to "make up" the equivalent of 28 chapters (or the length of the Gospel of Matthew) to get "caught up" with where they are "supposed" to be! The response for many who fall into that situation is to give up reading the Word of God altogether because the task has become overwhelming.

I'd like to free you from those feelings of helplessness and stress before they ever crop up. Setting a goal for reading, which this blueprint

attempts to do, is a good thing. However, the real purpose of our Bible Reading is to grow to know God more so that we and our children may follow Him better. Missing a day or even a week happens at times. I've been a Christian nearly 30 years and I still have inconsistencies in my Bible Reading. When we miss that time, we have to avoid the attitude that we have to catch up. Remember our ultimate goal is to read the Word of God, not the arbitrary time frame we have set in our mind to do it. When we or our children miss a day (or many days), the next time we remember our devotional time, we read one day's worth of devotions, not two or three or 10. Treating your Bible study this way will help ease the pressure we sometimes put on ourselves or our teens, especially when our intention is to honor God through these actions.

For those who may still be struggling with this concept, let me put it another way. Which do you think is more God honoring: A person who set up a plan to read the Bible all the way through but falls behind after 3 months and never completes their study because they began to see the task as too laborious OR A person who makes it their priority to finish reading the Word of God, and though they hoped to complete the task in a year, they continued to pick up where they left off, one day at a time, until finally, after 19 months, they celebrated reading the final verse of Revelation? You see, the first person lost sight of their goal confusing their timetable with their actual task of reading the Bible, the last person never gave up. Remember the goal is not the time frame, getting yourself and your teen into and completing our reading of the Word of God is. I truly pray keeping this perspective in studying your Bible will free both your mind and heart, and by extension, the mind and heart of your teen, from false guilt and expectations we place on our devotion to God, as we seek to honor Him.

5 Year Discipleship Plan

This plan is for individuals and families who haven't grown up in the church who are wishing to start a discipleship plan for themselves or their children at an older age. For family members under age 11, I would refer to the Discipleship for Life Blueprint.

It is strongly encouraged that parents walk through the 5 Year Discipleship Plan as they begin their discipleship process for their children, no matter which plan your children are in. This will set up a firm foundation of faith for the parent to be equipped to answer questions of growing children or discover answers together with their children if they too are on the 5 Year Discipleship Plan.

Year 1

Read the How to Study the Bible section of this blueprint and plan on completing Phases 1 (The New Testament) and 2 (Survey of the Old Testament) this year for your youth. They should be able to accomplish this by reading between 2-3 chapters per day. (The reading plan is included in this blueprint).

If you have children 16 or over, it is important they are part of a small group within the context of the church or involved with growing in relationship to other believers within your congregation in an intentional way (this could be Bible studies or mentoring relationships). If you are not sure where to begin with this, ask your pastor or minister how your congregation accomplishes this.

High School youth should begin to use their gifts to help serve the church. At this point, because they are still learning the basics of the faith, areas of teaching should be left to others. Playing an instrument, handing out bulletins, serving in the kitchen, making meals for others, visiting the sick, babysitting for young couples with children, helping the homeless through programs in the church and any other task oriented function is a great service to the body of Christ and a great opportunity for growth.

Keep your youth accountable for their daily reading. Have daily discussions concerning the passages read to make sure your children have an understanding of what they read. Treat their commitment to their Christian disciplines: Prayer, Bible Reading, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving, the same as you treat the disciplines in their school of attendance, homework and good grades.

Treat their attendance in church as non-negotiable. However, give the biblical reasons for attendance (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12-14; Romans 12; Heb. 10:23-25), so that your children understand that it is obedience to Christ and not to your roule that is important. Interact with them concerning what they heard in the sermon and how the sermon impacted/challenged you, as well.

If they choose to be involved in Youth Group, Worship Team or any other serving activity in the church, then treat it the same as you would a commitment they make at school (running for student president, joining an athletic sport or other extracurricular activity): Have them there when they meet, practice or train and make sure they fulfill their commitment for the year or semester before withdrawing them, if they choose not to do that activity the next semester or year. Communicate with the leaders if there is a choice of withdrawal and the date it will take effect.

Begin to introduce Christian book reading for the purpose of personal discipleship. Have them read one chapter a day, five days a week from the Suggest Reading book list. The goal is to have them read 4-5 Christian books per year. As with Bible Reading, ask often where they are, what they are learning and when the last time they read their book was. Discuss what you are reading/studying as well and what you are learning through your studies.

Include in your Christian book reading some books on Apologetics. Subjects such as creation/evolution, biblical sexuality (including biblical views on premarital sex, living together, homosexuality, transgenderism & abortion), practical Christian living books, etc. need to be included during this time, as your children will be wrestling with these ideas among their peers and in their school environment.

Year 2

Read through the entire Bible chronologically this year using the Daily Bible (NIV). (This is Phase 3 in the "How to Study the Bible" section). Understand how each of the sections of Scripture, both Old & New Testaments, interact with each other.

Introduce your children to Bible study tools such as, commentaries, Bible dictionaries & concordances. Of course, in today's day and age, all of these materials can be found online or in digital format.

Teach your children the differences between Conservative/Historic, Moderate and Liberal /Progressive interpretations of the Bible and of the faith. These differences represent a profound contrast on how the Bible is viewed and how the gospel is treated. A Conservative/Historic view holds the Bible and its teaching as inerrant, the content of the Bible historical and the Jesus of the Bible as real. From the Conservative/Historic standpoint, the Word of God is used to evaluate the culture in which we live *(This is our view)*. Whereas, Moderate views of the Bible hold the Bible in less regard. The Bible is often contextualized within the framework of current scientific theory and veins to see some of the miraculous passages as allegorical rather than literal. These changes have a profound impact on faith and doctrine. Moderate views often morph, over time, to Liberal/Progressive ones. Liberal/Progressive views of the Bible hold the Word of God as guidelines to be seen through the lens of the culture. Culture is used to define the Word of God within the Liberal/Progressive context. Liberal/Progressive views often morph into atheism over time.

Keep current on cultural issues and teach your children to interpret those issues through the lens of Scripture (see Col. 2:6-8; 2 Cor 10:1-5).

Continue to have your youth read books that will help supplement their faith from the Suggested Reading book list at the end of this blueprint.

Continue having them read one chapter a day 5 days a week. By doing so, they will be able to read at least 4-5 books every year to help bring practical life application to the faith they are reading about.

Youth should continue to serve within the body of the church in much needed task oriented areas, as they continue their understanding in the faith of Jesus Christ.

As with any responsibility, hold your children accountable to the commitments that they make at church. Youth group, serving in the kitchen, visiting the elderly, Sunday School helper, etc. should be held in the same regard as you would treat an equal responsibility at school (be there on time, be committed throughout the season of ministry, go even when it is hard or inconvenient, etc.)

For Youth 16 & older, have them continue to be an active participant within small groups or mentoring within your church (or become a part of small groups or mentoring, if they are turning 16). Remember, attending a small group or being mentored by another is not simply a meeting time together once a week. It is beginning to learn to love (and be loved by) the body of Christ as Jesus commanded (John 13:34-35) and therefore demands an investment of life that goes beyond the scheduled meeting times.

Have daily discussions concerning all that you and your children are learning from your Bible Reading, your small group/mentoring times, your service, your weekly congregational meetings and your Christian book reading.

Years 3-5

If you haven't yet, purchase a good study Bible with LOTS of notes for your youth. Begin reading the Bible again 2-3 chapters a day. Now that they have read the Bible once and have an understanding of its makeup, they will find that the study Bible will open up deep understanding into the Scriptures. They will also find that reading the Bible is much easier to understand with this basic knowledge underneath their belt. During years 3 & 4, they should read through the Bible again and start again in Year 5.

Youth 16 and over should take some time one of these years to take a course, such as, Financial Peace University (Dave Ramsey) to understand how to be a good steward of their money in God's eyes.

Now that your youth have read through the Bible once and read through a survey of the Bible twice, it is time to stretch them by having them help those teaching within the classrooms of younger children. Being in a classroom environment as a helper or co-teacher will help them articulate their faith to those who are younger in simplified terms. This time of teaching will be really helpful in their times of outreach to those who do not know Christ.

If they have been involved in your Youth Ministry, consider having them approach the Youth Minister or Leader about consideration for leadership within the youth group. Being an example to peers, as they continue to grow in Christ, is a great way to both remain accountable and spur them on to further growth.

Youth 16 and over should continue to participate in small groups (or join one if turning 16). They should continue to stretch themselves by constantly building relationships with those who are outside their natural age range.

Youth should consider going to conferences or camps during these years to encourage their growth in the faith and build stronger relationships with those in your church and/or family. The conferences or camps may be age oriented, such as, Youth or College Age or may be group or subject oriented, such as a Men's or Women's Conference or a Worship or Apologetics Conference. Investing in their faith this way will help them grow in their relationship with God and their understanding of the Word and how it applies to their life. It will also create lasting memories with those in your congregation and family who also desire to draw closer to Christ. (They can do this at an earlier time, but if they haven't done it by Year 3, it should become a priority.)

Youth should continue to read a chapter a day, five days a week on books from the Suggested Reading book list. Focus more on the Evangelism/Apologetics books these years. They will be a great help in answering questions they or their friends might have concerning their faith. I would suggest that for these years, every other book they read should be from this category. Again, by doing this, they should be able to read at least 4-5 books by the end of each of these years.

Youth should consider stretching themselves through an outreach sponsored by your church. It could be as simple as feeding the homeless or visiting those in nursing homes or can be as challenging as taking a mission trip with your church.

Continue to have daily discussions concerning all the things they are learning and being challenged with in each of these areas of Christian discipline and discipleship. Share also your times of challenge and growth.

At the end of this 5 year period, your youth/young adult should have read through the Word of God 2½-3 times and have read between 20-25 Christian books.

Some Considerations for Those Turning 16 & Older

In our current culture, the age 16 is an important coming of age time for our children. They often get their driver's license and their first job at this age. Similar milestones need to happen within the context of their faith, as they are preparing for adulthood.

If your church participates in small groups, it is important to have youth at the age of 16 become part of the adult small group. As youth are beginning to break out of their "youth age only" shell, it is important that the church also encourages and fosters this growth. This will also make transition from youth to adult ministries in the church a much easier one.

During these years (16-18), continue to reinforce the important disciplines of Bible Reading, Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship and Giving. Ask often about the Bible Reading and Christian book reading. In areas such as Outreach/Service and Giving, encourage your children in these disciplines without your direct involvement. Allow God to burden them to the needs they see and encourage them to meet those needs themselves, as God leads.

During these years, it is important to help them understand the importance of finances. Have your children enroll in a Christian Financial Ministry Class, such as Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University. This will teach them the proper way to handle money. It will teach them the importance of tithing and savings.

When they get their first job, teach your children the importance of making faith a priority by making sure that Sunday worship, small group meetings/Bible studies and times of serving the church remain free. Jobs will not protect their faith, so we must teach them to make faith a priority. The use of their gifts within the body of Christ are one of the greatest factors in continued faithfulness beyond High School.

A Final Note

This 5 year plan can be started at any time and though tailored in terminology for parents of youth, can be completed by people any age. Therefore a youth who begins this plan during his/her senior year in High School, will still find this effective in aiding his/her discipleship through their young adult years. Similarly, parents and other adults who wish for themselves to be discipled will find this an equally effective tool.

This plan is also highly adaptable. You may find at the beginning that your youth has already completed some of all of Year 1, Year 2 and/or Years 3-5. It is highly encouraged that whatever year is incomplete, you focus on filling in the gaps to fully complete that year before moving on to the next year. The considerations for those turning 16 or older should be added to whatever year (1-5) your youth turns 16.

I pray this tool will be a help to parents as together we strive to see a mature faith built up in our youth. Lord bless you.

Now on to our Reading Plans!

Phase 1 (New Testament)

Part 1--The Gospels & Acts

Each of the Gospels are about the life, death & resurrection of Jesus. Because each of the Gospels are written by a different person, they each have a slightly different account. All the facts are there, but Matthew remembers different things about some of the stories than Mark or Luke do. John was written after the first three were well known to add new accounts about Jesus that people didn't know.

You will find many of the same stories in Matthew, Mark & Luke. This is why they are called the Synoptic Gospels. Just like synonyms are words that mean similar things, these Gospels share similar accounts of the same stories. Because so much is shared of these three Gospels, this blueprint focuses on the Gospel of Luke among the Synoptic Gospels before moving forward to John and Acts.

Luke is the Gospel most interested in details. This is why many who study the past often start with Luke. Luke begins his story by telling the person he is writing, Theophilus, that he has studied carefully everything about Jesus' life.

John Is the Gospel most interested in showing that Jesus is God. From the very beginning of John's Gospel, he boldly proclaims that Jesus is indeed God (John 1:1-18). As a matter of fact, at the end of his Gospel, he gives the reason for writing it: "...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" (John 20:31).

Acts is the second book written by Luke. It is written to the same person, Theophilus, as his first book. It picks up immediately after the first volume left off, after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The book of Acts is about the disciples of Christ. Now they are called apostles. Now that Jesus has risen from the dead and gone to be with the Father, He has commanded His disciples to be His "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8b). The book of Acts is about the beginning of this mission, a mission that extends to us as disciples of Christ.

The first part of the book of Acts follows the early church and its leader, Peter. The second part of the book begins to follow Paul and how God used him to spread the "good news" of Jesus to many other places.

The book of Acts is a reminder to us as believers of how the Gospel is supposed to change us and how we are supposed to spread the Gospel, like Jesus commands us to do.

Phase 1 (New Testament)

Part 1--The Gospels & Acts

Week 1

Day 1 Luke 1-3
Day 2 Luke 4-6
Day 3 Luke 7-9
Day 4 Luke 10-12
Day 5 Luke 13-15

Week 2

Day 1 Luke 16-18
Day 2 Luke 19-21
Day 3 Luke 22-24
Day 4 John 1-3
Day 5 John 4-6

Week 3

Day 1 John 7-9
Day 2 John 10-12
Day 3 John 13-15
Day 4 John 16-18
Day 5 John 19-21

Week 4

Day 1 Acts 1-3
Day 2 Acts 4-7
Day 3 Acts 8-10
Day 4 Acts 11-13
Day 5 Acts 14-16

Week 5

Day 1 Acts 17-19
Day 2 Acts 20-22
Day 3 Acts 23-25
Day 4 Acts 26-28

Phase 1 (New Testament)

Part 2--The Epistles & Revelation

The Epistles are letters written to churches or individuals covering a variety of subjects. The purpose of the letters are to instruct both proper theology and the working out of that theology in the individual or church circumstance. Paul is the author of the section of Scripture from Romans to Philemon. The writer of Hebrews remains unknown. The other epistles in the New Testament are authored by the person bearing the name of the letter: James, Peter, John or Jude.

The reading plan for the Epistles are arranged in an order that will be easiest to understand and most profitable for the growing Christian.

This section begins with **Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians**. The first half of each of these letters is focused on what God has done for us through Jesus. The second half of each letter then tells us how we should act as believers because of what Jesus has done for us.

The General Epistles **(James-Jude)** cover a lot of different subjects. They were concerned with the believer's understanding of proper Christian living in a world that didn't like them very much **(1 Peter)**. They were also concerned with false teaching that was entering the church **(2 Peter, 1 & 2 John, Jude)**. And they were concerned with how Christians were supposed to treat one another **(James, 3 John)**.

The Personal Epistles of Paul are letters that he wrote to specific people who bear the name of the letters he wrote. **1 & 2 Timothy** and **Titus**, also called the Pastoral Epistles, are focused on leadership within the church, as Timothy & Titus were leaders. **Philemon** is focused on reconciliation.

The letters of **1 & 2 Corinthians** focus on the life of the early church and reveal that the church has never been perfect and has always been a place for broken people learning what it means to be a people of God.

The letters of **1 & 2 Thessalonians** focus on encouragement under persecution and a reminder to those suffering that this world is not our home and Christ has already won the victory.

The letter of **Galatians** confronts a false teaching that Jesus' sacrifice wasn't enough alone to save, but they had to become Jews after accepting Christ. It is written in urgency so there isn't a section of encouragement at the beginning of the letter like Paul's other letters.

The last three books to be read are **Romans, Hebrews & Revelation**. These are the last because they are the hardest to understand. What makes them hard are the many Old Testament references found in these books. Therefore, they are perfect to end with before plunging into the Old Testament.

Romans is Paul's great explanation and defense of the Christian faith. In it, he describes how Jesus both fulfills the promises given to Abraham, the forefather of the Jews and opens the way for both Jew and Gentile to have their sins forgiven through Christ's sacrifice.

The book of **Hebrews** takes many of the Old Testament passages concerning the Tabernacle, the High Priest and the sacrifices (found in Exodus & Leviticus) and shows how each of these pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of these things observed by the Jews.

Revelation is the only prophetic book found in the New Testament. Many of the visions and promises found in this book actually have their origins in the Old Testament prophets. The persecuted church was reminded that Jesus was both the one who had the spirit of prophecy and had already won the ultimate victory.

Phase 1 (New Testament)

Part 2--The Epistles & Revelation

Week 1

Day 1 Ephesians 1-3
Day 2 Ephesians 4-6
Day 3 Philippians 1-4
Day 4 Colossians 1-4
Day 5 James 1-3

Week 2

Day 1 James 4-5
Day 2 1 Peter 1-3
Day 3 1 Peter 4-5
Day 4 2 Peter 1-3, Jude
Day 5 1 John 1-3

Week 3

Day 1 1 John 4-5, 2 John, 3 John
Day 2 1 Timothy 1-3
Day 3 1 Timothy 4-6
Day 4 2 Timothy 1-4
Day 5 Titus 1-3, Philemon

Week 4

Day 1 1 Corinthians 1-3
Day 2 1 Corinthians 4-6
Day 3 1 Corinthians 7-9
Day 4 1 Corinthians 10-13
Day 5 1 Corinthians 14-16

Week 5

Day 1 2 Corinthians 1-3
Day 2 2 Corinthians 4-7
Day 3 2 Corinthians 8-10
Day 4 2 Corinthians 11-13
Day 5 1 Thessalonians 1-3

Week 6

Day 1 1 Thessalonians 4-5
Day 2 2 Thessalonians 1-3
Day 3 Galatians 1-3
Day 4 Galatians 4-6
Day 5 Romans 1-3

Phase 1 (New Testament)

Part 2--The Epistles & Revelation cont.

Week 7

Day 1 Romans 4-6
Day 2 Romans 7-9
Day 3 Romans 10-13
Day 4 Romans 14-16
Day 5 Hebrews 1-3

Week 8

Day 1 Hebrews 4-7
Day 2 Hebrews 8-10
Day 3 Hebrews 11-13
Day 4 Revelation 1-3
Day 5 Revelation 4-6

Week 9

Day 1 Revelation 7-9
Day 2 Revelation 10-13
Day 3 Revelation 14-16
Day 4 Revelation 17-19
Day 5 Revelation 20-22

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 1--The Pentateuch

The first 5 books of the Bible are known as the Pentateuch. They are also known as the books of Moses, as Moses is the author of these books.

Genesis is all about beginnings. The beginning of the universe, the beginning of life, the beginning of humanity, the beginning of sin, the beginning of God's story of redemption, the beginning of nations & the beginning of God's special people Israel.

Exodus is about the Israelites escape from Egypt by the hand of God to become a people of their own. The ten commandments are given to the people and the tabernacle is constructed so the people can worship God.

Leviticus is about the sacrifices and festivals that the people of God were supposed to observe. Sacrifices were done for both sin and for praise. Because Jesus is the fulfillment of the sacrificial system, we do not sacrifice today. However, by learning some of these sacrifices in our first read through, we will understand life for the Israelites better and see how Jesus fulfilled what they practiced.

Numbers is about the time of wandering in the desert for 40 years before entering the land of promise. The males of every household were counted at the beginning of the journey (in chapter 1) and near the end of the journey (in chapter 26), hence the name Numbers given to the book.

Deuteronomy is the second telling of the law of God given to Israel right before they were to enter the land of promise. These were the rules which the people of Israel agreed to live by to be called the people of God.

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 1--The Pentateuch

Week 1

Day 1 Genesis 1-3
Day 2 Genesis 4-6
Day 3 Genesis 7-9
Day 4 Genesis 10-12
Day 5 Genesis 13-15

Week 2

Day 1 Genesis 16-18
Day 2 Genesis 19-21
Day 3 Genesis 22-24
Day 4 Genesis 25-27
Day 5 Genesis 28-30

Week 3

Day 1 Genesis 31-33
Day 2 Genesis 34-36
Day 3 Genesis 37-39
Day 4 Genesis 40-42
Day 5 Genesis 43-45

Week 4

Day 1 Genesis 46-48
Day 2 Genesis 49-50
Day 3 Exodus 1-3
Day 4 Exodus 4-6
Day 5 Exodus 7-9

Week 5

Day 1 Exodus 10-12
Day 2 Exodus 13-15
Day 3 Exodus 16-18
Day 4 Exodus 19-20
Day 5 Exodus 31-32

Week 6

Day 1 Exodus 33-34
Day 2 Exodus 35, 40
Day 3 Leviticus 16, 19, 23
Day 4 Leviticus 25-27
Day 5 Numbers 11-13

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 1--The Pentateuch cont.

Week 7

Day 1 Numbers 14, 16-17
Day 2 Numbers 20-22
Day 3 Numbers 23-25
Day 4 Deuteronomy 1-3
Day 5 Deuteronomy 4-6

Week 8

Day 1 Deuteronomy 7-9
Day 2 Deuteronomy 10-12
Day 3 Deuteronomy 13-15
Day 4 Deuteronomy 16-18
Day 5 Deuteronomy 19-21

Week 9

Day 1 Deuteronomy 22-24
Day 2 Deuteronomy 25-27
Day 3 Deuteronomy 28-30
Day 4 Deuteronomy 31-32
Day 5 Deuteronomy 33-34

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 2--The History of Israel

The books of **Joshua-Esther** tell of the history of the people of Israel from the entry of the Promised Land to their eventual exile and finally return to the land God had promised them.

In these books you will learn of the Israelites entry into the Land of Promise **(Joshua)**, the faulty leadership of the judges in conquering the land **(Judges)**, the rise of the kingship **(1 Samuel)**, the king after God's own heart **(2 Samuel)**, the wisest of all kings and the splitting of the kingdom into two: Israel and Judah **(1 Kings)**, the path of destruction by both kingdoms of Israel and Judah that would lead the people of Israel to exile away from the Land of Promise **(2 Kings)**.

However, we also see the faithfulness of God in the return of His people Israel to the Land of Promise, as the return to their faithfulness to God **(Nehemiah)**.

While we will not read every book in the history of Israel, we will read enough to understand the special relationship God had with His people Israel, and wants to have with us today through His Son, Jesus.

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 2--The History of Israel

Week 1

Day 1 Joshua 1-2
Day 2 Joshua 3-4
Day 3 Joshua 5-7
Day 4 Joshua 8-9
Day 5 Joshua 10-11

Week 2

Day 1 Joshua 22-24
Day 2 Judges 1-3
Day 3 Judges 4-6
Day 4 Judges 7-9
Day 5 Judges 10-12

Week 3

Day 1 Judges 13-15
Day 2 Judges 16-18
Day 3 Judges 19-21
Day 4 1 Samuel 1-3
Day 5 1 Samuel 4-6

Week 4

Day 1 1 Samuel 7-9
Day 2 1 Samuel 10-12
Day 3 1 Samuel 13-15
Day 4 1 Samuel 16-18
Day 5 1 Samuel 19-21

Week 5

Day 1 1 Samuel 22-24
Day 2 1 Samuel 25-28
Day 3 1 Samuel 29-31
Day 4 2 Samuel 1-3
Day 5 2 Samuel 4-6

Week 6

Day 1 2 Samuel 7-9
Day 2 2 Samuel 10-12
Day 3 2 Samuel 13-15
Day 4 2 Samuel 16-18
Day 5 2 Samuel 19-21

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 2--The History of Israel cont.

Week 7

Day 1 2 Samuel 22-24
Day 2 1 Kings 1-3
Day 3 1 Kings 4-6
Day 4 1 Kings 7-9
Day 5 1 Kings 10-12

Week 8

Day 1 1 Kings 13-15
Day 2 1 Kings 16-18
Day 3 1 Kings 19-20
Day 4 1 Kings 21-22
Day 5 1 Kings 1-3

Week 9

Day 1 2 Kings 4-6
Day 2 2 Kings 7-9
Day 3 2 Kings 10-12
Day 4 2 Kings 13-15
Day 5 2 Kings 16-18

Week 10

Day 1 2 Kings 19-21
Day 2 2 Kings 22-23
Day 3 2 Kings 24-25
Day 4 Nehemiah 1-3
Day 5 Nehemiah 4-6

Week 11

Day 1 Nehemiah 7-9
Day 2 Nehemiah 10-11
Day 3 Nehemiah 12-13

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 3--The Writings/The Wisdom Literature

The Writings of the Old Testament include poetry, songs and proverbs. As with the other sections of the Old Testament, the oldest writing is first **(Job)**, while the latest writing is last **(Song of Songs,** also known as **Song of Solomon)**.

Job is a book that takes an in-depth look at suffering, especially the suffering of the righteous.

Psalms are songs that were written by men through the influence of the Holy Spirit. There are many prophecies about Jesus that are found in the Psalms. There are also many songs of praise, thanksgiving, lament and even righteous anger.

Proverbs are wise saying that are founded in "the fear of the Lord" (Proverbs 1:7). They are general truths and not promises of God.

Ecclesiastes is a book that explores the idea of what makes life meaningful and comes to the conclusion that without God, everything is meaningless.

Song of Songs looks at the beauty of intimacy when grounded in God's covenant of marriage.

In our readings, we will focus on ***Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes***. Through the Writings, we begin to understand why faithful men have always praised God.

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 3--The Writings/The Wisdom Literature

Week 1

Day 1 Psalm 1-5
Day 2 Psalm 6-10
Day 3 Psalm 11-15
Day 4 Psalm 16-20
Day 5 Psalm 21-25

Week 2

Day 1 Psalm 31-33
Day 2 Psalm 35-37
Day 3 Psalm 40-43
Day 4 Psalm 45-48
Day 5 Psalm 50-54

Week 3

Day 1 Psalm 61-64
Day 2 Psalm 69-71
Day 3 Psalm 77-78
Day 4 Psalm 84-87
Day 5 Psalm 88-90

Week 4

Day 1 Psalm 91-94
Day 2 Psalm 95-98
Day 3 Psalm 103-105
Day 4 Psalm 106-107
Day 5 Psalm 115-118

Week 5

Day 1 Psalm 119:1-32
Day 2 Psalm 119:33-72
Day 3 Psalm 119:73-104
Day 4 Psalm 119:105-144
Day 5 Psalm 119:145-176

Week 6

Day 1 Psalm 120-124
Day 2 Psalm 125-130
Day 3 Psalm 139-143
Day 4 Psalm 144-146
Day 5 Psalm 147-150

Part 2 (Old Testament)

Part 3--The Writings/The Wisdom Literature cont.

Week 7

Day 1 Proverbs 1-3
Day 2 Proverbs 4-6
Day 3 Proverbs 7-9
Day 4 Proverbs 10-12
Day 5 Proverbs 13-15

Week 8

Day 1 Proverbs 16-19
Day 2 Proverbs 20-22
Day 3 Proverbs 23-25
Day 4 Proverbs 26-28
Day 5 Proverbs 29-31

Week 9

Day 1 Ecclesiastes 1-3
Day 2 Ecclesiastes 4-6
Day 3 Ecclesiastes 7-9
Day 4 Ecclesiastes 10-12

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 4--The Prophets

Prophets were men of God who were given special messages to the people of Israel. Prophets often pointed back to the Law (the Pentateuch) to remind the people of Israel of the promise they made to God to follow Him. Prophets also warned the people of the consequences of disobedience to the Law of God and how their disobedience would bring judgment (see Deuteronomy 28-30).

The prophets are broken up into two groups in the Bible: *The Major Prophets* **(Isaiah-Daniel)** and *the Minor Prophets* **(Hosea-Malachi)**. The only difference between the Major or Minor Prophets is the amount they wrote. Major Prophets wrote more than the Minor Prophets. However, both are equally important, because in the writings of the prophets, we have the Word of God (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Each of these sections are in order with the earliest Major or Minor Prophet first and the latest Major or Minor Prophet last.

Many of the prophets give the names of the kings who were ruling either Israel or Judah, or even Babylon & Persia during the time of their ministry. Major prophets like **Isaiah, Jeremiah & Daniel** ministered during the reigns of many kings. Some Minor Prophets like **Micah** did, as well. Other prophets, like **Haggai & Malachi** served after the Babylonian exile during the time of rebuilding in conjunction with **Nehemiah**. Identifying when the prophets ministered can help in understanding the message they delivered from God better.

Though we will not read all the prophets, through them we will hear of God's relationship to His people Israel and the promise of the One who was to come to be the Savior of the whole world...Jesus.

Phase 2 (Old Testament)

Part 4--The Prophets

Week 1

Day 1 Isaiah 1-3
Day 2 Isaiah 4-6
Day 3 Isaiah 7-9
Day 4 Isaiah 10-12
Day 5 Isaiah 36-38

Week 2

Day 1 Isaiah 39-41
Day 2 Isaiah 42-44
Day 3 Isaiah 45-47
Day 4 Isaiah 48-50
Day 5 Isaiah 51-53

Week 3

Day 1 Isaiah 54-56
Day 2 Isaiah 57-59
Day 3 Isaiah 60-62
Day 4 Isaiah 63-64
Day 5 Isaiah 65-66

Week 4

Day 1 Jeremiah 1-3
Day 2 Jeremiah 4-6
Day 3 Jeremiah 7-9
Day 4 Jeremiah 10-12
Day 5 Jeremiah 13-15

Week 5

Day 1 Jeremiah 16-18
Day 2 Jeremiah 19-20
Day 3 Jeremiah 39-41
Day 4 Jeremiah 42-44
Day 5 Jeremiah 30-31

Week 6

Day 1 Daniel 1-3
Day 2 Daniel 4-6
Day 3 Jonah 1-4
Day 4 Micah 1-3
Day 5 Micah 4-5

Week 7

Day 1 Micah 6-7
Day 2 Nahum 1-3
Day 3 Haggai 1-2
Day 4 Malachi 1-2
Day 5 Malachi 3-4

Phase 3 (The Whole Bible Chronologically)

This blueprint recommends "The Daily Bible" by F. LaGard Smith to read the Bible chronologically. In this unique edition, the Bible is chronologically read in 365 daily selections. Because of the background given in Phase 1 & 2 of the reading plan, the reader will more easily understand as the Daily Bible weaves from the history of King David to the Psalms that he wrote, the history of King Solomon and the Proverbs he wrote, the downfall of Israel and Judah and the warnings of the Prophets living during that time, the life of Jesus as a unified whole, and, the early church and the letters of Paul. Beyond the chronological approach, there is commentary in appropriate spots in the readings that help explain the background or history of a section just read or about to be read and how it connects the story of the Bible as a unified whole.

Because "The Daily Bible" is a 365 day reading plan, it doesn't have the flexibility of missed days as the other plans have. If you are ready for a daily commitment in reading the Word of God, great! However, it can be tailored to the same reading regimen as the other plans, if so desired, to provide more flexibility (5 days a week vs. 7 days a week). Either way, you must not stress over "missed days" and commit to reading one entry a day, even if you miss a day or two or even a week. The 5 day a week plan will take about ½ year longer to complete reading the Bible. Remember, the goal is to read the Bible, not complete some task in a certain timeframe.

After having read the Daily Bible, the reader will be able to enjoy the Word of God for the rest of their lives.

Suggested Reading Lists & Additional Resources

In this blueprint, we have included suggested reading lists for your growing child. We have tried to account for their reading level and the subjects that would be appropriate at their age and maturity level. These lists are by no means exhaustive, but they are a good place for your child to begin to grow in important areas of discipleship. Our goal was to give a number of reliable books of many different subjects and genres, enough to give variety but not to overwhelm with too many choices.

Our "Suggested Reading Lists" include one for Year 1, one for Year 2 and one for Years 3-5. Each list has 17 suggestions, therefore, the unused portion of the Year 1 list can be used by a person in Year 2 and both the unused portions of the Year 1 & Year 2 lists can be used by those in Years 3-5. However, since the lists are constructed to challenge students at their level of maturity, it is highly recommended that most of their book selections take place within their assigned reading stage.

Our blueprint recommends 4-5 books per year. Of course, for the voracious reader, more could be done, if desired. After the completion of their 5th year, your youth/young adult should have read between 20-25 books, leaving another 25-30 books for them to explore as young adults.

Our "Additional Resources" page includes a number of podcasts, websites, YouTube channels and other media that provide a wide range of resources that will help your child (and you) grow in their faith in Jesus Christ.

Finally is our "Suggested Reading for Parents" page mainly geared toward parenting. For further discipleship, we recommend parents also use the reading lists for students, as well as, the other additional resources provided.

Year 1-- Suggested Reading

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis

Quit Church by Chris Sonksen

The Kingdom Series by Chuck Black

The Christian Atheist by Craig Groeshel

Weird by Craig Groeshel

7 Men by Eric Metaxas

7 Women by Eric Metaxas

Not God's Type by Holly Ordway

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire by Jim Cymbala

Refuting Evolution by Jonathan Sarfati

Coffee House Chronicles by Josh McDowell & Dave Sterrett

More than a Carpenter by Josh McDowell

Not a Fan by Kyle Idleman

The Case for Miracles by Lee Strobel

One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven by Mark Cahill

Which None Can Shut by Rhema Goode

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Year 2-- Suggested Reading

Surprised by Faith by Dr. Don Bierle

Letters to the Church by Francis Chan

The Prophet by Frank Peretti

Ask Me Anything by J. Budziszewski

Ask Me Anything 2 by J. Budziszewski

Respectable Sins by Jerry Bridges

Fresh Faith by Jim Cymbala

Fresh Power by Jim Cymbala

The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel

The Case for Faith by Lee Strobel

The Case for the Real Jesus by Lee Strobel

Relational Apologetics by Michael Sherrard

Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus by Nabeel Quershi

Ethix by Sean McDowell

The Circle Series by Ted Dekker

Dreams & Visions by Tom Doyle

I am n by Voice of the Martyrs

Years 3-5-- Suggested Reading

The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer

Another Gospel by Alisa Childers

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis

The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

Stealing from God by Frank Turek

Tactics by Gregory Koukl

The Hobbit/The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

Cold Case Christianity by J. Warner Wallace

Forensic Faith by J. Warner Wallace

Giving Wisely by Jonathan Martin

Evidence for Christianity by Josh McDowell

The Unholy Trinity by Matt Walsh

The Case for a Creator by Lee Strobel

Defeating Darwinism by Phillip E. Johnson

Killing Christians by Tom Doyle

Family Driven Faith by Voddie Baucham

Additional Resources

Adventures in Odyssey--adventuresinodyssey.com

It is an award-winning audio drama series created for ages 8-12 and enjoyed by the whole family. Episodes often start with the grandfatherly Mr. Whittaker ("Whit"), who runs an ice cream shop called Whit's End. They last an average of twenty-five minutes and bring biblical principles to life, through a balance of fun, faith and imagination.

Alisa Childers--alisachilders.com

Alisa Childers is a writer/speaker who covers topics of Apologetics, Theology, Culture & Worship in her blogs, podcasts & books. Her specialty revolves around the danger of Progressive Christianity, how to recognize, defend against it and engage those who are caught in its web. An absolute must for the parent or High School teen navigating these waters.

The Bible Recap--thebiblerecap.com

Have you ever closed your Bible and thought, *"What did I just read?"*

The Bible Recap is here to help! It's a short daily podcast (about 8 minutes) hosted by Tara-Leigh Cobble. She has read through the Bible many times chronologically, and she'll highlight and summarize that day's Bible reading in a casual, easy to understand way. The Bible Recap will not only help you read Scripture but help you love reading it!

Cooper Stuff--johnlcooper.com

Lead singer of the Christian hard rock band "Skillet". He takes on the issues of the culture found in social media. Like his band's music, his observations and teachings are bold and full of biblical truth. His site includes links to his podcasts, his videos, his blogs, as well as, his other social media connections (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & YouTube).

Cross Examined--crossexamined.org

Cross Examined exists to address the problem that 3-out-of-4 Christian youth leave church while in college, many because they are intellectually skeptical. Cross Examined is an apologetic ministry designed to defend the Christian faith and address topics faced by young people today through speaking, blogs, podcasts & videos.

Focus on the Family--focusonthefamily.com

Focus on the Family is a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families thrive. They support families through a number of resources designed to help families teach their children about God and His beautiful design for the family, protect themselves from harmful influences of the culture and equip themselves to make a greater difference in the lives of those around them.

They also have ministries focused on evaluating media content from a biblical perspective (Plugged In) and a ministry specifically aimed toward young adults (Boundless).

Krista Bontrager--theologymom.com

Krista is a theologian with a mother's heart. This makes her especially effective in conveying theological truths and applying them to real life situations. Her Facebook page is filled with great articles from a number of topics helpful for the growing teen or parent wishing to guide their teen to a better understanding of Christian faith in a fallen world. She has a podcast with Monique Duson called "All the Things" which is a weekly conversation about cultural issues of the day through the lens of the historic Christian worldview. Highly recommended for parents & High Schoolers.

Natasha Crain--natashacrain.com

She is a speaker, author, podcaster and blogger whose passion is to equip Christian parents to raise kids with an understanding of how to make a case for and defend their faith in an increasingly secular world. Whether you have young kids, teens, adult kids or grandkids, you'll find the resources here to better equip you for the challenges of discipleship today.

One Minute Apologist--oneminuteapologist.com

Bobby Conway is the One Minute Apologist. He provides quick, credible answers to apologetic questions that resource people with a hunger to defend their Christian faith. These brief videos (often less than 5 minutes) are meant to be a starting point to dig deeper into the various topics discussed. His interviews are with many of the well known, leading Christian apologists. These are great introductory videos for youth and adults of all ages.

The Next Generation Ministries--thenextgenerationministries.com

The Next Generation Ministries exists to equip parents to help them disciple their children into mature believers in Christ. The Next Generation Facebook page is designed to provide reliable resources in the form of trusted blogs, articles & videos for the purpose of equipping parents to disciple their children. The Next Generation's "Discipleship Begins @ Home" podcast gives practical advice and resources to parents with children of all ages to help them on this journey to discipleship.

Unbelievable? Podcast--premierchristianradio.com

Each Saturday, Justin Brierley asks questions like: Is there evidence for God? Can we trust the Bible? Did Jesus rise from the dead? Justin tackles these and other issues on a show that gets Christians & skeptics talking. This is a great podcast for High School youth and adults who are well grounded in their faith for an introduction to differing worldviews and how the Christian worldview provides robust answers to life and faith.

Whaddo You Meme??--YouTube Channel

Jon McCray has a YouTube channel called Whaddo You Meme?? that tackles current events and anti-Christian content found in culture and social media. His videos are generally under 10 minutes and are a great primer to discussing cultural issues and anti-Christian arguments with your Jr. High or High School teen.

Suggested Reading for Parents

Parenting Isn't for Cowards by Dr. James Dobson

Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Mentoring of Teens
Joe White & Jim Weidmann, General Editors

Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children
John Trent, Ph.D, Rick Osborne, Kurt Bruner, General Editors

Keeping Your Kids on God's Side by Natasha Crain

Talking with Your Kids About God by Natasha Crain

Talking with Your Kids About Jesus by Natasha Crain

Finishing Strong by Steve Farrar

Family Driven Faith by Voddie Baucham Jr.

So you want to help parents create a discipleship plan for their children but don't know where or how to start. Our Discipleship Begins @ Home Blueprints were created for you!

Our ***Pastor's Edition*** is designed for pastors and teachers who wish to partner with parents in creating a true discipleship plan for parents and their children at an age appropriate level, no matter their previous biblical knowledge. Through these blueprints both the parents and youth will be challenged to grow in their faith at an age appropriate level leading to maturity in six areas of discipline: Bible Reading, Prayer, Fellowship, Outreach/Service, Discipleship & Giving.

This step-by-step process was created to give confidence to pastors that they were doing all they should in fulfilling the biblical command to equip the saints for their works of service (in this case, parents). You can do this! Our blueprint is here to help.

This blueprint is designed to work in conjunction with the ***Discipleship for Life*** edition for parents beginning the discipleship process from birth-5th grade (going through High School) & the ***5 Year Plan*** for parents and youth 6th grade & older.



The Next Generation Ministries exists to equip parents to help them disciple their children into mature believers in Christ. We offer Biblical advice, practical teaching and other tools to aid parents to make "training their children in the way they should go" attainable.

It is our desire to partner with churches to help pastors and teachers come alongside parents and help create a plan of discipleship and growth for their children.

For more information on our resources or to invite us to speak at your church, check out our website: www.thenextgenerationministries.com