

# **RAISING CHILDREN TO EXTRAORDINARY FAITH**

*Helping Parents and Teachers Disciple the Next Generation*

*13 Lesson Companion Guide*  
*Prepared by Debbie Salter Goodwin*

## **Objectives**

- To increase awareness that discipling children is something we **all** must do.
- To help parents and ministry workers recognize that discipling children is intentional work.
- To set personal goals and begin achieving some of them during the next 13 weeks.
- To create an accountability plan and begin to act on it.
- To propose partnership ideas between parents and ministry workers to submit to children's ministry leadership.

## **You Will Need to Recruit**

**Session Facilitator**—This is a person who is a good communicator and has the passion to motivate parents and ministry workers to make discipling children an intentional goal. This person opens the class, directs group processes, keeps activities and discussion moving on an appropriate schedule, makes sure the room is set up, and presents material in an engaging way.

**Session Recorder**—This person keeps a record of ideas to pass on to the appropriate ministry staff. These ideas may surface in group discussions or they may be collected from discussion group recorders.

**Book Sales Coordinator**—This person handles purchasing and collecting money for the books unless you offer complementary copies. This person would also handle setting up for a Christian bookstore representative if you decided to make resources available for purchase.

**Resource Table Coordinator**—This person is responsible for setting up a table to display samples of as many of the suggested resources as possible. Each session gives ideas for this table. Encourage this person to research other possibilities, as well. This person will also prepare a bibliography of the resources for Session 11.

**Refreshment Host/Hostess (optional)**—Make your own decision about whether or not to offer coffee, tea, and occasional light refreshments. If you do, recruit a host or hostess to handle set up and clean up.

## **The Session Titles**

Week 1: Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith  
Week 2: Chapter 1—Disciple Making Begins at Home  
Week 3: Chapter 2—Hearing Jesus Call  
Week 4: Chapter 3—Affirming Faith

- Week 5: Chapter 4—Following to Obey
- Week 6: Chapter 5—Making Prayer a Life Skill
- Week 7: Chapter 6—Learning to Read and Study the Bible, 1
- Week 8: Chapter 6—Learning to Read and Study the Bible, 2
- Week 9: Chapter 7—Discovering God’s Gifts to Share Them
- Week 10: Chapter 8—Helping Children Take Their Place in the Faith Community
- Week 11: Appendix—Exploring Resources
- Week 12: Chapter 9—Building an Accountability Plan
- Week 13: Chapter 9—Never Stop Discipling

### **Items for the Resource Table**

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith* (1-2 extra copies might be helpful)

*My Best Friend, Jesus: Salvation Booklet*, \$4.99 for 10, available from WordAction

*My Best Friend, Jesus* downloaded Leader’s Guide from [www.wordaction.com/mgfi](http://www.wordaction.com/mgfi)

Young Believers Discipleship Series from WordAction

So . . . *You Want to Follow Jesus?*, \$4.99 for the 5-lesson booklet, with Leader’s Guide, downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS](http://www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS)

So . . . *You Want to Be Baptized?*, \$6.99 for a package of 10, Leader’s Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/BAPTISM](http://www.wordaction.com/go/BAPTISM)

So . . . *You Want to Take Communion?*, \$6.99 for package of 10, Leader’s Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/COMMUNION](http://www.wordaction.com/go/COMMUNION)

So . . . *You Want to Talk With God?*, \$6.99 for a package of 10, Leader’s Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/PRAYER](http://www.wordaction.com/go/PRAYER)

So . . . *What Are Your Spiritual Gifts?*, \$6.99 for a package of 10, Leader’s Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/](http://www.wordaction.com/go/)

So . . . *You Want to Give to God?*, \$6.99 for a package of 10, Leader’s Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/give](http://www.wordaction.com/go/give)

So . . . *You Want to Share Jesus?*, \$6.99 for a package of 10, Leader’s Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/SHARE](http://www.wordaction.com/go/SHARE)

So . . . *Who is a Disciple-maker?*, \$6.99 for a package of 10, Leader’s Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/disciple-maker](http://www.wordaction.com/go/disciple-maker)

*New International Version* (NIV) of the Bible for children

*International Children’s Bible* (ICB)

*New International Readers Version* (NIRV)

*Contemporary English Version* (CEV)

A children’s Bible encyclopedia

A children’s Bible dictionary

A life application/study Bible for children

Sample Quizzing student workbook

Or, download and print sample pages from the student book from [www.wordaction.com](http://www.wordaction.com)

Sample of *Connect*, available quarterly from [www.wordaction.com](http://www.wordaction.com) for \$3.49

Or, download and print the sample from “Sample Pages”

A sample of tithing envelopes for children (See Appendix) or the envelopes your church uses for children

## **Optional, But Helpful**

*The Praying Parent* by Debbie Salter Goodwin

*77 Ways Your Family Can Make a Difference* by Penny Zeller

An ESL Bible (English as a Second Language)

An audio version of the Bible created for children (and equipment for playing the audio resource)

See <http://www.eyeintheear.com/#3>

Or <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com>

Or <http://www.talking-book-store.com>

One or more samples of Bible story books listed in the Appendix for different ages (or similar resources)

*First Things First: A Spiritual Growth Journal for Children* available at [www.arrowministries.com](http://www.arrowministries.com)

*God's Special Gifts for Me* by Larry Gilbert

Samples of information from [www.generousgiving.org](http://www.generousgiving.org)

## **Getting the Most Out of This Study**

1. For best results, decide how you can offer this study so that parents *and* ministry workers can take it together. This might require some creative scheduling or necessitate offering some ministry workers a sabbatical.
2. If you are meeting *only* with parents or *only* ministry workers, use the overlap within that group (those who have volunteered in children's ministry in the past or ministry workers who are also parents of elementary and young children) to address partnership issues.
3. Work with church ministry leaders to schedule dates for the 13-week sessions and identify a room for facilitating the sessions.
4. Confirm your target group and prepare personal invitations by mail or e-mail, as well as advertising the class in church communications. The way you invite potential participants demonstrates the priority you attach to this.
5. Purchase copies of *Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith* and recruit one person to handle book sales and distribution.
6. Recruit other key people as you begin to plan for the Sessions.
7. Read through the book along with the Leader's Guide, making notes as you go.
8. Pray for the sessions and the people who attend them. Pray that God will help each person commit to more intentional ways to participate in discipling the children within the church's influence.

## Session 1: Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith

### Key Verse

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matt. 28:19-20, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Children to Extraordinary Faith*

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 1

Student Sheets, Session 1

Name Tags

Pencils and paper

Optional: Flip chart and markers for recording ideas

Masking tape to post sheets

### Getting Started

1. As participants arrive, ask everyone to make a name tag with their first and last name and the ages of their children. Those who also serve as ministry staff or volunteers should include their role, even if it is not in children's ministry.
2. Hand out books if you have not already done so.
3. Welcome everyone to first session. Ask each person to identify themselves by sharing their name and the ages of their children. Ask ministry workers to identify their ministry assignment as well.
4. Have someone read Matt. 28:19-20.
5. Ask: *Who do you usually think of as those who need to be discipled? Who do you usually think of as disciple-makers?*
6. Ask someone to read the verse again, adding "parents" as the first word. (Ex: *Parents, go and make disciples*) *How does that addition change your focus?* Repeat by adding "Sunday School teachers" or other ministry roles. *Where do children fit into the Great Commission?* (We are to help them become disciples *and* disciple-makers.)

### Getting Deeper

7. Divide into two (or more) groups: those who serve as ministry workers in children's ministries and those whose primary role with children is parenting. Use people in both categories to even out the groups. Ask each group to appoint a recorder and respond to the following question with as many responses as possible within five minutes. *What is our responsibility in helping children follow Jesus?* Give each group an opportunity to share key answers. (Optional: Record ideas on tear sheets from a flip chart so that you can post them around the room.)
8. Ask each group to list three ways the other group could help them accomplish the list they just made. Share those responses as well. Use them

to talk about the expectations each group has of the other. *What would happen if we stopped expecting the other group to do more and we started looking for ways to cooperate with each other?*

9. Divide the following scripture passages among the groups: For parents, Deut. 4:9; Gen. 18:18-19; Deut. 11:18-21. For ministry workers, Col. 1:28; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:13-14. Ask each group to make a job description based on the scriptures.

### **Getting Serious**

10. Ask participants to turn Matt. 28:19-20 into a prayer by filling in the blanks on their student sheet with wording that reflects their parenting or ministry role. Ask participants to pray this prayer daily, asking God to open your eyes to new ways He wants to answer this prayer.
11. Close the session by asking for a parent and ministry worker to pray their paraphrase or use yours as the closing prayer.

### **For Next Week**

Pray Matt. 28:19-20 every day.

Read Chapter 1 and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.

Bring pictures of your children, class, grandchildren—any children within your influence.

## Session 2: Where Discipleship Begins

### Key Verse

Teach . . . your children . . . when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deut. 11:19).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 1

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 2

Student Sheets, Session 2

Optional: Poster board for picture collage using tape or other removable adhesive to attach pictures or post on a bulletin board.

### Getting Started

1. Optional: As the class gathers, ask participants to attach pictures of their children to the poster board or bulletin board in collage fashion. These pictures will be returned at the end of the 13 weeks. Make sure there is a name on the back of each picture.
2. Introduce newcomers to the class in the same way as last week.
3. Draw attention to the picture collage, if you use this optional idea. Explain that these pictures will help us connect our discussion to the children we want to raise to extraordinary faith.
4. Open the session making these statements in your own words: *We all come with our assumptions and expectations. In order to forge a partnership between parents and ministry workers, we have to openly identify these issues.*
5. Ask for responses to the following questions:
  - For parents: *How do I expect the church to commit to the spiritual development of my child?*
  - For ministry workers: *How do I expect parents to commit to the spiritual development of their children?*

### Getting Deeper

6. Ask someone to read or review the story of Legion in Mark 5:1-20.
  - *What did Jesus do for Legion?* (Gave him a new life.)
  - *What did Legion want to do because of it?* (Follow Jesus.)
  - *What did Jesus tell Legion to do?* (Go home and tell his family.)
  - *How does Jesus' instruction to Legion apply to parents and ministry workers?*
7. Write the definition for "disciple" from page 21: *A disciple is someone who follows Jesus, loves Jesus, learns from Jesus, and obeys Jesus in all of life.*
8. Ask the following questions and allow a short time for discussion: *Based on this definition, how do we help children become disciples? What is the difference between good parenting or good teaching and disciple-making? In what ways do parents have unique opportunities? In what ways do ministry*

*workers have unique opportunities? How do these opportunities give parents and ministry workers opportunities to become discipleship partners in the lives of children?*

## **Getting Serious**

9. One church adopted the following plan to make sure every child hears the salvation story and has an opportunity to respond. It is a four-step partnership with parents called Footsteps,<sup>1</sup> offered four times a year.

### **Step 1**

Children's ministry offers a special salvation presentation. Parents must sign up to attend this presentation with their children. Before attending, parents must complete a Bible study on Nicodemus with their child and help their child memorize John 3:16. Parents attend the special presentation with their child.

### **Step 2**

If a child makes a decision to follow Jesus, the parents schedule a counseling session with someone on the children's ministry staff.

### **Step 3**

The child participates in baptism no more than three weeks following a decision to follow Jesus.

### **Step 4**

The child attends two classes before being presented for church membership.

Discuss the pros and cons of a structured, church-initiated plan. You will have the opportunity to create your own plan next week.

10. Pages 24-26 list eight ways to commit to discipling children:

- Live a daily commitment to Jesus.
- Model what it means to follow Jesus.
- Tell the story.
- Spend one-on-one time.
- Read and discuss God's Word together.
- Help children become disciple-makers.
- Pray together.
- Encourage questions.
- Celebrate growth.

Ask the following questions about the list: *Which activity was the most effective in helping you become a disciple of Jesus? Which makes you uncomfortable? Why? Where have you seen someone use one of these methods effectively with a child? What obstacles and challenges do these present for parents or ministry workers?*

11. Ask participants to use their student sheets and rate their use of each principle as parents and/or ministry workers. Then, instruct them to make a goal that will encourage them to increase one principle one number within the next week.
12. Close the session by dividing into prayer groups of 2-3. After an individual reads their goal, the person on their right prays for that person and goal.

**For Next Week**

Read chapter 2 and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.

Optional: Recruit a parent/ministry worker to role play a gospel presentation with a child or another class member using the downloadable Leader's Guide for "My Best Friend, Jesus" found at [www.wordaction.com/mbfj](http://www.wordaction.com/mbfj)

<sup>1</sup> Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia. Visit their website, [johnsonferry.org](http://johnsonferry.org), for more information.



## Session 3: Hearing Jesus Call

### Key Verse

"Come, follow me," Jesus said (Matt. 4:19, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 2

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 3

Student Sheets, Session 3

Index cards and pens

"My Best Friend, Jesus" pamphlet for each participant

One or more of "So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?" packets

Downloaded sample Leader's Guide to "My Best Friend, Jesus"

Copy the "ABC Plan" on cardstock, one per person.

Optional: Consider showing the PowerPoint presentation of "Leading a Child to Christ" available at [www.wordaction.com/mbfj](http://www.wordaction.com/mbfj)

### Add to the Resource Table

"My Best Friend, Jesus"

Downloaded "My Best Friend, Jesus" Leader's Guide from  
[www.wordaction.com/mbfj](http://www.wordaction.com/mbfj)

"So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?" packet

Downloaded Leader's Guide for "So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus"  
[www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS](http://www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS)

### Getting Started

1. As participants come in, ask parents to write down the names of their children through sixth grade on index cards, one card per child. Ask ministry workers to write the names of children who *do not* have Christian support at home. Collect these for closing prayer time.
2. Ask someone to share how he or she began to follow Jesus. *What/who were the important factors making you ready to hear and respond to Jesus' invitation?* Give an opportunity for one or two to share.
3. The Barna Group research reveals that 43 percent of adults made a decision for Christ by the age of 13. Take a poll to see how close to the research your group is.

### Getting Deeper

4. Explain that the big question for today's session is *How can we create an environment at home and church where we expect children to hear and respond to Jesus' invitation to follow Him?*
5. Use the author's review of the story of Samuel and Eli by asking the following questions: *How did Eli recognize that God was calling Samuel? What simple instruction did Eli give Samuel to prepare him to hear God's message? How can we become Elis for our children?*

6. Basic to preparing a child to hear Jesus is to share the story of Jesus. When are two obvious times to review this story? (*Christmas and Easter*)
7. Divide into two groups: parents and ministry workers of birth to Kindergarten, and parents and ministry workers of 1st-6th grade. Duplicate or sub-divide groups as is best. Point participants to ideas for sharing the Christmas story on page 32. Ask each group to make their own list for families and ministry workers. Ask each group to appoint a facilitator and a recorder. After five minutes, have the groups report. Optional: Ask the Session Recorder to compile one list for duplication next week.
8. *How do we take the story of Jesus one step further and give children an opportunity to receive Jesus as Savior?* Direct participants to page 34 and 36 and do one of the following:
  - Introduce the parent or ministry worker you recruited earlier to role play a gospel presentation using the “My Best Friend, Jesus” pamphlet. Give time for the group to complete the Student Sheet and ask questions.
  - Use a portion of the PowerPoint presentation that you downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/mbfj](http://www.wordaction.com/mbfj) to help participants understand how to present the gospel to children.
  - Give participants access to a “My Best Friend, Jesus” pamphlet while you use the downloaded Leader’s Guide to explain presenting the gospel to children.
9. Follow up the sample presentation by showing the packet “So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus.” Briefly show how the packet includes week-by-week lessons that can be used one-on-one or in a small group. Discuss how this resource could be used in families as well as in children’s ministry. Note: If questions surface that ministry staff needs to address, make a list of those questions and submit them to the appropriate person, asking for a response before the end of the sessions.

### **Getting Serious**

10. Ask someone to read 1 Pet. 3:15. *How does it apply to the responsibility of parents and ministry workers?*
11. What commitment can we make as parents and ministry workers about making a gospel presentation a regular part of our parenting and teaching? (See Student Sheet)
12. Close the session by dividing into groups of 3-5. Divide the cards from the beginning of the class so that each group has some. Ask groups to take turns praying specifically for the salvation of each child as well as for their desire to hear and answer the voice of Jesus. When groups have prayed for each child by name, they are dismissed to leave.

### **For Next Week**

Memorize the ABC plan with scriptures and be prepared to share it with one person.

Read Chapter 3 and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.

## **ABC Plan of Salvation**

**A**dmit and tell God you have disobeyed Him.

*Romans 3:23—*

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

**B**elieve God loves you and sent His Son to  
make it possible for you to be forgiven.

**A**sk for and receive God’s forgiveness.

*John 3:16—*

*“For God so loved the world that He sent His one  
and only Son that whoever believes in him shall  
not perish but have eternal life.”*

**C**laim Jesus as your Savior and best Friend  
and begin to live as a child of God.

(Claim means to know for sure  
that Jesus is *your* Savior.)

*Romans 10:13—*

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord  
will be saved.”

## Session 4: Affirming Faith

### Key Verse

Now that faith has come . . . (Gal. 3:25, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 3  
Bible  
Leader's Guide, Session 4  
Student Sheets, Session 4

### Optional

A copy of *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* for each participant  
Invite the pastor or a representative from the ministry staff to share about baptism.  
A data projector or DVD player to show the Lee Strobel video clip available at <http://www.leestrobel.com/videos/Helping/CCNT1210.htm>  
Copies of the compiled ideas for sharing the Christmas story from last week's discussion

### Add to the Resource Table

*So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* and downloaded Leader's Guide from [www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS](http://www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS)  
*So . . . You Want to be Baptized?* and downloaded Leader's Guide from [www.wordaction.com/go/BAPTISM](http://www.wordaction.com/go/BAPTISM)  
*So . . . You Want to Take Communion?* and downloaded Leader's Guide from [www.wordaction.com/go/COMMUNION](http://www.wordaction.com/go/COMMUNION)

### Getting Started

1. Use the gathering time to practice the ABC presentation by pairing participants as they come in.
2. Begin the group session by asking, *How did your family celebrate special achievements when you were growing up? How do you celebrate special achievements in the lives of your children now?*
3. Discuss: *How we celebrate spiritual decisions helps children understand how important they are. How can we celebrate spiritual decisions, especially new faith decisions in memorable ways for children?* Since you will ask a small group to brainstorm specific ideas later, don't spend very much time gathering ideas.

### Getting Deeper

4. What is the definition of affirm on page 44? (*To affirm is to make a specific declaration of intent. It is to validate, confirm, and/or dedicate ourselves toward a specific purpose.*)
5. How is affirming different from rewarding? (*Affirming recognizes intent, motive, will, or personhood. It identifies something more enduring than an*

*event or achievement. We may reward a child for good behavior but we affirm honesty or kindness.)*

6. The book identifies three key ways to respond to new decisions to follow Christ.
  - **Make it a celebration.** Ask for ways families and/or ministry workers have celebrated new faith decisions. (See pp. 44-46.)
  - **Spread the word.** Who needs to know about the new decision and who will share the information? Track what happens in your church/family when a child makes a new faith decision. Or, generate a process for making sure key people find out and respond. (See pp. 46-48.)
  - **Use a specific follow up plan.** Show the *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* packet. Or, share the follow up plan that your children's ministries adopted, giving the key ministry leader an opportunity to explain it. (See pp. 48-50.)
7. *What are spiritual conversations? How do they affirm young disciples?* (Spiritual conversations are conversations about spiritual understandings and growth. They help children understand how following Jesus intersects all of life. See page 47.)
8. Optional: This is a good time in the session to show the clip from Lee Strobel about being ready to have a spiritual conversation with your child using the following link: <http://www.leestrobel.com/videos/Helping/CCNT1210.htm>.
9. Another way to promote spiritual conversations and affirm new faith decisions is with the sacraments of baptism and communion. Explain how the sacraments are object lessons for the meaning of salvation. Optional: This is a good place to ask someone from the pastoral ministry staff to explain when the church schedules baptism and how children can be presented for baptism.
10. Show copies of *So . . . You Want to Be Baptized?* and *So . . . You want to Take Communion?*, as well as the downloadable Leader's Guides for each. Encourage parents and ministry workers to download a copy, or make copies available to them.
11. Optional: Go back to the Footsteps plan from the Johnson Ferry church in Session 2 under "Getting Serious." What part of the plan do you like? What part would you change? Consider developing a partnership model between parents and ministry workers that fits your church. Either invite the appropriate ministry leader for this process or plan to make an appointment to share the ideas that come from this session.
12. Point the class to the discussion of the Christian calendar on pages 55-57. Briefly share how families could use this as a devotional focus or how ministry workers make use of the focus in their work with children.

### **Getting Serious**

13. Divide into 5 groups and assign each group one of the ways to (1) affirm faith decisions, (2) celebrate faith decisions, (3) follow up, (4) use the sacraments, and (5) use the Christian calendar. Ask the groups to choose a recorder and brainstorm ideas that parents and ministry workers could use

each. Instruct participants to mark ideas with Ⓜ for ministry workers and Ⓟ for parents. Also mark them with ! for ideas that can be immediately implemented along with who should implement it, and √ for ideas that need more planning and research. Be sure to give all sheets to the appointed Session Recorder.

14. Ask participants to select one idea to use immediately and write a goal on the student response sheet.
15. Ask someone in each group to pray for the salvation of our children. Ask another in each group to pray for developing and using a clear follow up plan in the lives of new disciples.

### **For Next Week**

Read Chapter 4 and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.

Review the Leader's Guides of

*So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?*

*So . . . You Want to Be Baptized?*

*So . . . You Want to Take Communion*

Bring questions about how to use the guides to next week's session.

## Session 5: Following to Obey

### Key Verse

If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 4

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 5

Student Sheets, Session 5

Optional: index cards and enough markers for participants to use

*So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus*, Booklet 2

### Getting Started

1. Start the session by asking if there are any questions about the Leader's Guides for any of the *So . . . You Want to . . .* series. Answer the questions or direct them to someone who might have the answers.
2. Turn attention to today's subject with the question, *What is the most challenging part about teaching obedience to children?* (Ex: authority issues, consistency, walking the tightrope between being too strict and being too lenient, knowing when to discipline and how, etc.).
3. Briefly discuss how God teaches obedience. (He uses detailed instructions, communicates the rewards and consequences, etc.)
4. Make the point that if God, the perfect parent, expects obedience from us, we must use His parenting example to teach obedience to our children.

### Getting Deeper

5. Explain that most parents agree that children don't come into the world ready to obey anyone. *What does that tell us about obedience?* (It must be taught.)
6. Ask parents and ministry workers to respond to the following questions from a parent's and ministry worker's perspective: *How do setting boundaries and teaching obedience go together? What happens if you expect obedience without communicating boundaries?*
7. How is a "decision to follow Jesus . . . a decision to obey" (p. 62)? (Since following Jesus is a life not just a decision, it takes obedience to keep in step.)
8. *What does our personal obedience to Jesus have to do with teaching how to obey Jesus to our children?* (Obedience isn't just an idea, it is the life. Our modeling must be part of the teaching. See p. 64.)
9. *How can we use the Ten Commandments as a starting place to teach obedience?* Use the ideas on page 66 and below. Add to the list from small group or whole group discussion.

#### **Other ideas:**

Re-write the Ten Commandments as positives. Ex: Always tell the truth  
Draw pictures of how the family keeps the Ten Commandments

Pick a commandment a week and gather ways your family/class keeps it. Keep a chart of how many times a TV program or movie breaks a commandment, giving 2 marks if it was used as humor.

10. Point out the how-to principles on pages 66-70. Read them. Ask participants to turn to someone that they are not related to and answer one of the following questions: *Which principle convicts you the most Which principle is the hardest to practice Which principle could you put into practice this week?*
11. Explain that where there is a standard for obedience, there will always be temptation to disobey. That means that teaching children what to do about temptation is just as important as teaching them to obey.
12. Look at the second lesson in *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?*, which is about dealing with temptation.
13. Point the group to temptation-busters on pages 73-75. *What are they and which would be most helpful to your children? How could you use them in your family/class?*
14. Optional: Provide markers and blank index cards. Have parents and ministry workers make one temptation buster to use with their children.
15. *What are some Bible Stories that are helpful for teaching obedience and how to handle temptation?* (Ex: Jonah, Daniel, Abraham, Moses, )

### Getting Serious

16. Ask participants to check boxes for the following questions.

Y = yes

N = No

? = I don't know

**Y N ?**

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do my children understand that Jesus loves them so much that He protects them with rules and boundaries?
  - ☐ ☐ ☐ Do my children understand the connection between loving Jesus and obeying Him?
  - ☐ ☐ ☐ Do my children demonstrate that they know how to obey Jesus in simple ways?
  - ☐ ☐ ☐ Do my children understand that a decision to follow Jesus *is* a commitment to obey Him?
  - ☐ ☐ ☐ Do my children want to grow a desire to obey Jesus?
  - ☐ ☐ ☐ Do my children understand that some things only happen because of obedience?
17. Ask participants to go back and mark the same questions with an X indicating their personal response. Make the point that if we want our children to make obedience a priority, we have to make obedience a priority ourselves.
  18. Use the prayer on page 80 as a closing prayer by asking everyone to say it in unison.



**For Next Week**

Read Chapter 5 and answer the questions at the end.

Choose one of the following to complete:

Use one of the Ten Commandment ideas in your family/class.

Use one of the temptation busters with a child who needs it.

Set an obedience goal by starting with scripture and “collecting” ways to obey it.

Share how obeying Jesus made a difference nothing else could have made.

## Session 6: Making Prayer a Life skill

### Key Verse

They devoted themselves . . . to prayer (Acts 2:42, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 5

Leader's Guide, Session 6

Student Sheets, Session 6

### Add to the Resource Table

"So . . . You Want to Talk to God?" and downloaded Leader's Guide available at [www.wordaction.com/go/PRAY](http://www.wordaction.com/go/PRAY). This resource was just released in March!

Optional: *The Praying Parent* by Debbie Salter Goodwin

Any other books on prayer with or for children that your pastor or children's ministry staff recommends.

### Getting Started

1. Choose a question to start today's session:
  - *What is the most significant answer to prayer you have received and what did it teach you about prayer?*
  - *Do you have a convicting or humorous story to share about a child's prayers?*
  - *What is the childlike characteristic God wants us to reproduce when we pray?*
2. Make the following transition: *If we want our children to follow Jesus, we must make sure that they have "transforming conversations with God" (p. 81).*

### Getting Deeper

3. Make the point that prayer is both a skill and a lifestyle. We must teach the skill so that prayer becomes a lifestyle.
4. Ask how the question on page 82 challenges them: *If the child I want to influence reproduces my prayer life, will it reproduce what Jesus wants?*
5. Repeat the three simple prayer principles that Glaphré Gilliland taught to children:
  - You can talk to God anytime.
  - You can talk to God anywhere.
  - You can talk to God about anything.Discuss how to model those principles as parents and teachers.
6. How is listening to God a critical but often forgotten part of prayer? Use any of these questions to discuss the ideas from pages 84-86: *Which one is a new idea to you? Which one convicts you? How do we shortchange our children by not asking them to share what they "hear" God saying when they pray?*

7. Write the acrostic PACT on a chalk- or whiteboard. Ask the group to review what each letter stands for and how it is an easy model to teach children.  
P = Praise is *reviewing who God is by names and roles*  
A = Ask gives a chance to *ask God anything*.  
C = Confess is when we admit we have sinned or *agree* with God about our actions and attitudes.  
T = Thanks helps us end a prayer *with a grateful heart*.
8. Ask participants for other prayer models they know about or have used that would help children pray.
9. Talk about how to make prayer an integral part of a child's life (more than mealtime and bedtime). *How can it be woven into every part of our day? What does that look like?* Use the following ideas from pages 88-89 to suggest a model:
  - Stop and pray—don't promise to pray about something. Do it right then.
  - Use conversational language. Pray with your heart not just your words.
  - Be transparent about your prayers. Let children know what you ask God to help you with, especially when it is about changing attitudes and actions.
  - Pray with complete honesty. Talk to God about what you don't know, what you wish you knew, what makes you afraid.
  - Match prayer times with attention span.
  - Don't spend more time talking about prayer than actually praying.
10. Divide parents and ministry workers into children's age groupings according to the way your church divides children. (Example: Pre-school, early elementary, elementary.) Ask groups to review the ideas from pages 92-99. Brainstorm other ideas that participants have used or heard of that would work best with their age group. Be sure to turn in the idea list to the Session Recorder to make copies for next week.

### Getting Serious

11. Stay in the brainstorm groups for the prayer time that will close today's session. Divide if groups are too large. Before you give instructions for prayer time, remind the groups that this is where they demonstrate how much they believe in the power of prayer.
12. Ask each person to make a prayer request based on the end-of-chapter questions or something that convicted them through today's session. Ask have each person turn to the person on their right to say, "I will pray for you," followed by a 1-2 sentence prayer. Ask groups to refrain from any *talking about* a prayer request. Just pray.
13. Before the end of the class, challenge everyone to pray about these issues every day and expect to learn something new about prayer in the process. Explain that the more recent the lessons about the power of prayer, the better they can pass the lesson on to children.

### For Next Week

Read half of Chapter 6 (pp. 103-111) and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.

Try one prayer idea in your family or class and be ready to report about it next week.

Ask parents to bring a Bible story book for the resource table they have successfully used with their children. (Be sure it is labeled with their name.)

## Session 7: Reading and Studying the Bible, Part 1

### Key Verse

The unfolding of your words gives light (Ps. 119:130, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 6

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 7

Student Sheets, Session 7

Compiled prayer ideas from last session

A 3 x 5 sticky note pad (or smaller) for each group in #5

A fine line marker for each group

### Add to the Resource Table

Copies of the following versions especially published for children:

*New International Version* of the Bible for children (NIV)

*International Children's Bible* (ICB)

*New International Readers Version* (NIRV)

*Contemporary English Version* (CEV)

Optional but helpful if you can provide:

An ESL Bible (English as a Second Language)

An audio version of the Bible created for children (and equipment for playing the audio resource)

See <http://www.eyeintheear.com/#3>

Or, <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com>

Or, <http://www.talking-book-store.com>

One or more samples of Bible story books listed in the Appendix for different ages (or similar resources)

*First Things First: A Spiritual Growth Journal for Children* available at [www.arrowministries.com](http://www.arrowministries.com)

### Getting Started

1. Start the session with a *neighbor nudge*. Ask participants to share the answer to the following questions with a neighbor: *What do you remember about your first Bible? Who gave it to you and when? How did you feel about it?* Ask the group to share any interesting stories they heard during this time of sharing.
2. On page 104 the author asks the question, *Why can't children fall in love with the Bible?* How would you answer that question? (Possible answers might include difficult to read, being a poor reader, etc.)
3. The focus for today's session is how we interest children in reading the Bible for themselves in preparation for a lifelong romance with God's Word.

### Getting Deeper

4. The author shares three reasons why we need to help children “embrace the Bible as the most important reading they will ever do.”
  - The Bible tells us who God is.
  - The Bible is the *living Word* of God.
  - The Bible is a book of truth.
 Use any of these questions to discuss these principles:
  - Do we help children know something new about God through Bible stories, or is there more emphasis on the story or the characters?*
  - Do we help children understand that Jesus tells us who God is?*
  - How do we demonstrate that God’s word is something “living and active?”*
  - Do we make the Bible more about something we do or something we know?*
  - How can we help children understand that falling in love with the Bible and falling in love with God should be the same thing?*
5. Point out the different Bible versions on the Resource Table. Explain that next week you will share more information about them.
6. Divide into two groups: parents and ministry workers of non-readers, and parents and ministry workers of readers. You may sub-divide these groups if necessary. Appoint a facilitator and recorder for each group. Give the recorder a sticky note pad and a fine-line black marker. Assign wall space for each group. Note: if sticky notes won’t stick to the wall, cover a section of the wall with white paper using masking tape. Ask the groups to brainstorm ideas to interest non-reading and reading children to the Bible. Place one idea per sticky note and stick them on the wall or white paper. Give 5 minutes for this activity.
7. Ask the group to think about sequencing the ideas. Which ideas should be used first, next, etc. Move the sticky notes around to represent this sequence. Explain that there can be several ideas at each step. Give 5 minutes for this activity.
8. Bring the group together and ask the group facilitator to share key ideas and summarize how and why they sequenced the ideas. Make sure each group’s recorder captures the ideas and organization so that the Session Recorder can prepare a handout for next week.
9. As you look at the sticky note charts, talk about the difference between how we start with non-readers and readers. End this activity with the question that will lead you to the next exploration: *How do we accommodate the transition between non-readers and readers?*
10. Present information about Bible versions (p. 111), audio versions (pp. 109, 182-183) and controlled vocabulary Bible story books (pp. 181-182), as well as samples that you have from the Resource table. Make sure parents and ministry workers understand the large range of options available to engage children in the Bible.

## Getting Serious

11. On page 106 the author shares a convicting challenge: *We must help children want to read the Bible for themselves with the same urgency that we want our children to do well in reading as an academic skill.* Using the student sheets, ask the group to rate themselves on how they are doing with this goal.
12. Point the class to the list supplied on the student sheet. Ask the group to check off at least one idea they will try this week to make the Bible come alive for the children they parent and/or teach.
13. As you close in prayer, hold up your Bible and ask, *What living, active work is going on in your life because of God's Word?* Emphasize that all the creative ideas will never do as much as sharing *your* up-to-date love affair with God's Word. Pray for parents and ministry workers that they will hunger for God's Word and make it an essential part of *their* day so that children will want to do the same.

### **Next Week**

Review the first half of Chapter 6 (pp. 103-111).

Read the last half of Chapter 6 (pp. 111-122).

Finish the questions at the end of the chapter.

Inventory Bibles and Bible story books from home/class and make a "want" list.

## Session 8: Reading and Studying the Bible, Part 2

### Key Verse

The unfolding of your words gives light (Ps. 119:130, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 6

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 8

Student Sheets, Session 8

Handout from Session 7 of non-reader and reader ideas

5-W Bible Study Method handout (included at the end of this session)

SOAPY Bible Study Method handout (included at the end of this session)

### Add to the Resource Table:

A children's Bible encyclopedia

A children's Bible dictionary

A life application/study Bible for children

Sample Quizzing student workbook or download and print sample pages from the student book from [www.wordaction.com](http://www.wordaction.com)

Sample of *Connect*, available quarterly from [www.wordaction.com](http://www.wordaction.com) for \$3.49

Or, download and print the sample from "Sample Pages"

### Getting Started

1. Start the class by asking if anyone can share any ideas they tried this past week, any new goal they made progress toward, or any Bible resource they discovered.
2. Ask the Session Recorder to hand out the idea sheet compiled from Session 7.
3. Explain that last week we explored ways to interest children in reading the Bible for themselves. This week's session will deal with studying and learning from the Bible in authentic and meaningful ways.
4. Make the point that while there are skills to studying the Bible, we have to find ways to make studying the Bible more than an academic skill. It always has to be about living the life God wants us to live.

### Getting Deeper

5. For the rest of the class, divide into ministry workers and parents. Ask the children's pastor or a children's worker you have confidence in to facilitate the ministry workers' group. You or someone you appoint should lead the parents' group.
6. Ask each group to look at the Bible Skills sidebar on page 108. Give groups 4-5 minutes to think about how to introduce and practice each of the skills. Ask someone to record the ideas and give them to the Session Recorder.
7. Make a short presentation to both groups on each of the Bible versions suggested on page 111. Suggest that parents and ministry workers look at



the samples from the resource table before and after the session. Ask for comments or questions about any of the versions. If you can't answer the question, delegate the question to someone who is willing to research the answer.

8. Introduce both Bible study models for children who have beginning study skills: the 5-W plan and the SOAPY method. Pass out the handouts and ask individuals to choose one of the methods to complete a short Bible study on Luke 6:46-49. Share comments about the pros and cons of both methods. If anyone has another Bible study model for children, ask them to share it next week.
9. Talk about ways to use Bible study with children whose learning disabilities or short attention spans make it difficult to use either approach. (Ex: games, one-on-one, etc.)
10. Share samples of Bible study resources (Bible dictionary, encyclopedia, etc.) that you added to the Resource Table. Make the point that these resources or similar ones should be available at home as well as at church.
11. Talk about what Bible study is for young children, especially non-readers. Explain that it takes a question-and-answer approach. The key is to take away something from the story the child can *do* and work to provide reminders and affirmation throughout the week.
12. How is Quizzing a good way to establish a Bible study partnership between parents and ministry workers? If your church doesn't use this resource, talk about ways you could even if you did not want to participate in organized competition (ex: mid-week study, family Bible study).
13. Another component of Bible learning is memorizing God's Word. Ask ministry workers to share how they help children memorize scripture. Ask parents to share how they do the same. Consider ways to make sure there is a cooperative effort between parents and ministry workers to memorize God's Word.
14. Share a sample of *Connect*, a family devotional guide complete with Bible study activities available quarterly from WordAction Curriculum for \$3.49. Consider recommending to ministry staff a way to make these easily available to families.
15. Remind parents and ministry workers that the goal of teaching Bible study to children is to help them become "independent spiritual learners" (p. 116). Ask: *What does this mean? How do we know when children are on the way to becoming independent spiritual learners?*

### Getting Serious

16. Repeat the key verse for this chapter, Ps. 119:130. Then, give participants some quiet time to reflect on their personal commitment to be *independent spiritual learners*. Ask them to use their Student Sheet to write a prayer or goal about how to allow God's Word to *unfold* and share its *light*.
17. Either ask for sentence prayers or pray a closing prayer yourself.

### Next Week

Read Chapter 7 and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.

Use the Bible Study method you did not experiment with on a passage of your choice.

Make a decision about which might be best to introduce to your children/class.

Try a new way to use the Bible, a Bible story, or a verse in my family or class this week.

# The 5-W Plan to Bible Study

Are you a detective who likes to go after the facts? Have you ever thought of being a newspaper reporter? This Bible study method might be for you!

**Scripture Focus:**

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**1. Who is in the story?**

*Consider named and unnamed people, places or objects.*

---

**2. What is happening?**

*Look for actions. Is someone eating, telling a story, listening, asking a question?*

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**3. Where is it happening?**

*Is it in a city, home, field, or on a mountain?*

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**4. When is this happening?**

*What time of day, what season, what event did it follow? This does not have to be a date.*

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**5. Why is this in the Bible?**

*Why do I need to know about this story? What lessons can I live?*

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# The SOAPY Method to Bible Study

*A way to get a clean start to your day!*



## **S**cripture Focus

*Identify a short scripture passage or story.*

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## **O**bservations

*What stands out? What someone said or didn't say, did or didn't do?*

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## **A**pplication

*What does God want you to do because of what you observed?*

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## **P**rayer

*Write a short prayer asking Jesus to help you live what you read about.*

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## **Y**es

*Will you say yes to Jesus with your words and actions right away? How?*

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## Session 9: Discovering the Joy of Giving God All

### Key Verse

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others (1 Pet. 4:10, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 7

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 9

Student Sheets, Session 9

Discussion Group Instructions, at the end of this session guide. Print two per small group: one for the facilitator and one for the recorder.

A copy of the *So . . . You Want to Give to God?* Leader's Guide for each discussion group (4 minimum)

Resources from Resource Table for each Discussion Group according to instruction sheet

### Add to the Resource Table:

*So . . . You Want to Give to God?* and Leader's Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/GIVE](http://www.wordaction.com/go/GIVE)

*So . . . What Are Your Spiritual Gifts?* and Leader's Guide downloaded from [www.wordaction.com/go/SPIRITUALGIFTS](http://www.wordaction.com/go/SPIRITUALGIFTS)

A sample of tithing envelopes for children (See Appendix) or the envelopes your church uses for children.

Optional:

*77 Ways Your Family Can Make a Difference* by Penny Zeller

*God's Special Gifts for Me* by Larry Gilbert

Samples of information from [www.generousgiving.org](http://www.generousgiving.org)

Other stewardship resources your pastor or children's ministry leader recommends.

### Getting Started

1. Start the class by giving participants a chance to share any ideas they tried this past week, any new goal they made progress toward, or any Bible resource they discovered.
2. Ask the group to share a childhood memory when they were excited about having money to give in the offering. *What affects that excitement as children grow into adulthood?*
3. Explain that today's session will help us engage children in the adventure of participating with God to take care of the world and people He created. A byproduct could be rediscovering the joy of giving to God for ourselves.

### Getting Deeper

4. Ask: *What is the definition of stewardship and what are the advantages of teaching children to be stewards?* (A steward takes care of what belongs to someone else. Stewardship protects against self-centeredness and

- entitlement. It allows children to participate in something big—God’s work to take care of His world.)
5. Make sure that everyone recognizes that the most important truth to start with when teaching stewardship is God’s generosity. *Why?* (When we recognize how generous God has already been, giving back to Him is not a struggle.)
  6. Review the key principles on pages 125-126:
    - Everything I have belonged to God first.
    - God is generous with His resources.
    - God asks us to take care of everything He has made.
    - God asks us to give to Him first.

Use these questions to discuss them briefly: *Which one do we have the most trouble remembering? How does our belief about these principles affect how we model stewardship to our children?*
  7. Use the following quote from page 127 to set up the next activity.
 

“Sometimes we teach stewardship backwards. We teach what children are supposed to do—give something away whether it is money or time or energy or possessions. But the real message of stewardship is not what we give; it is what we have already received.”
  8. Divide participants into interest groups based on one of the stewardship practices covered in Chapter 7: Tithing, Discovering and Using Interests and Abilities, Discovering and Using Spiritual Gifts, Helping Children Serve Others. Appoint a facilitator and recorder for each group. Instruct them to discuss the questions that interest them and will help them come up with a recommendation that helps parents and ministry workers partner in achieving the goal. (Ex: Parents present tithing to their children and ministry workers provide the envelopes.) At the end of 10-15 minutes, have groups share recommendations with the group. Make sure group recorders turn in their notes to the Session Recorder in order to add recommendations to the closing report to ministry staff.

### **Getting Deeper**

9. Point participants to their student sheets. Ask them to write down one new understanding about giving to God, one way they could increase their giving to God (through tithing or service), one principle they want to use as they teach children about giving to God.
10. Give time for participants to find a prayer partner to pray for each other as they try to respond to God’s generosity and teach their children to do the same.

### **For Next Week**

If you have not already completed the interest survey with your family (No. 1, p. 141), make sure to do so this week.

Meet with your family and decide on one ministry project you could do together. Address tithing, either personally or with your family/class.

Read Chapter 8 and answer the questions at the end.

# Tithing

**Group Resources:** Sample children's tithing envelopes  
*So . . . You Want to Give to God?* and/or Leader's Guide  
Chapter 7, pages 127-129

1. How could you teach or how have you taught tithing to children?
2. How do you help children understand the principle instead of just the math?
3. What do you think about using children's tithing envelopes? How would you propose making them available? Ex: To families? Through classes?)
4. Look at the section on tithing in *So . . . You Want to Give to God?* and the Leader's Guide. How could you use this pamphlet at home or in a class?
5. How do you teach giving beyond, not instead of, tithing?
6. Look at the ideas on page 128. Which ones appeal to you?

**Ideas—**

**We recommend** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Group Recorder** \_\_\_\_\_

# Discovering and Using Interests and Abilities

**Group Resources:** Calendar activities from your local and district church that use children's special abilities. (Ex: Children's choir, drama, District Talent Festival, etc.)

*So . . . You Want to Give to God?* and/or Leader's Guide  
Chapter 7, pages 130-133

1. How should we use children's interests to direct their involvements and learning activities?
2. How can we help children discover and develop abilities? (See p. 131.)
3. What local church and district activities could help?
4. How can families support the discovering process without adding pressure?
5. Look at the reminders on pages 131-132. How do parents and ministry workers partner to achieve these goals?

**Ideas—**

**We recommend:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Group Recorder** \_\_\_\_\_



# Discovering and Using Spiritual Gifts

**Group Resources:** *So . . . What Are Your Spiritual Gifts?* and/or Leader's Guide  
Chapter 7, pages 133-138

1. Do you understand the difference between natural abilities and spiritual gifts as defined on pages 134-135?
2. Why is it more important to experiment with different spiritual gifts rather than identifying a spiritual gift during childhood? (See p. 135.)
3. What are some ways we could help children experiment with different spiritual gifts?
4. How can parents and ministry workers have conversations about what they see surfacing in children?
5. How could you use the follow up questions on page 138 to evaluate a child's experience?

**Ideas—**

**We recommend** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Group Recorder** \_\_\_\_\_

# Helping Children Serve Others

**Group Resources:** *So . . . You Want to Give to God?* and /or Leader's Guide  
Optional: *77 Ways Your Family Can Make a Difference*  
Chapter 7, 138-141

1. What is the difference between getting children involved and getting children involved in ministry?
2. How should we set up an opportunity to serve to make sure it has a spiritual component?
3. How do we teach serving others as a way to grow compassion and sensitivity?
4. Which ideas do you and/or your church already use from the list on page 139?
5. How can you connect serving others with gratitude?

**Ideas—**

**We recommend** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Recorder \_\_\_\_\_

## Session 10: Helping Children Take Their Places in the Faith Community

### Key Verse

Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you (2 Tim. 4:5, NLT).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 8

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 10

Student Sheets, Session 10

Title sheets placed around the room where corresponding discussion groups will gather:

Sharing Christian Role Models and Mentoring (pp. 147, 149)

Practicing Spiritual Accountability (pp. 147-149)

Making Intergenerational Connections (pp. 150-151)

Increasing Global Awareness (pp. 163-164)

Note paper or index cards for closing activity number 10

### Add to the Resource Table:

So . . . *You Want to Share Jesus?* and Leader's Guide downloaded from  
[www.wordaction.com/go/SHARE](http://www.wordaction.com/go/SHARE)

So . . . *Who Is a Disciple-maker?* and Leader's Guide downloaded from from  
[www.wordaction.com/go/DISCIPLES](http://www.wordaction.com/go/DISCIPLES)

### Getting Started

1. Ask for a report concerning any new idea anyone tried during the last week.
2. Then, ask the group to think about what they like about a family reunion whether it is a formally organized gathering or something smaller. Use their responses to talk about helping children to feel a part of something bigger than their immediate family or circle of friends—the community of faith.

### Getting Deeper

3. Point out the discussion group titles posted around the room. Explain that each title represents something that helps connect children to the larger community of faith. Ask participants to move to the area representing the subject they would like to discuss. Ask each group to come up with ideas they could use with children both in families and at church. Point them to ideas already on pages 147-150, but ask them to go beyond these ideas. They are to choose the best two ideas to share with the entire group.
4. Talk about how Sunday is sort of a mini-family reunion for the community of faith. *What questions comprise the Sunday search on page 152? How could the Sunday search make a family's worship experience more intentional? What other ideas from pages 151-153 would you like to try? How have you or your parents made Sunday special for you?*

5. Point out that interest in an activity increases the more involved a person is. Explain how that is true for children and their Sunday/church experience. Remind the group that the goal is not just involvement for involvement's sake. The goal is that children make a spiritual contribution with their involvement and receive new spiritual understanding in return. *How do we encourage that spiritual interchange when we involve children in ministry activities?* Talk about how to use these follow-up questions: *What did you learn about yourself? What did you like best about what you did? What was easy? What was hard?*
6. On page 158, the author talks about "Faith Projects." Look at the list of how to decide on a faith project. *What are they? Has anyone in the group treated a family or teaching issue as a Faith Project? How could you?*
7. Another component of following Jesus is sharing Jesus with others. Read the parent quote at the top of page 161. *What keeps more of us as adults from sharing our faith with others? (fear, awkwardness) How can we make sure we don't pass on our fears and insecurities to our children?*
8. Summarize the content of the Leader's Guide for *So . . . You Want to Share Jesus?* Especially point out the easy 4-step plan any parent or teacher can use.

### **Getting Serious**

9. *What would happen if our children took the Great Commission more seriously than we ever did? How can we help children become disciple-makers as well as get out of the way and let them follow Jesus' commission their own way?*
10. Pass out the note paper or index cards. Ask participants to write down one way they will commit to connecting the children within their influence to the community of faith. Explain that you will share these cards with the children's ministry leader and pastor. Names are optional.
11. Collect the cards and close with a prayer of thanks for new understandings, new ideas, and new places of commitment.

### **Special Note About Next Week**

There are two optional approaches for next week's session. One is a review of resources you haven't had time to examine plus ideas for adding more. The other is a panel presentation. Decide which approach you will use so that you can announce it. If you use the panel presentation, consider taking time to ask participants to write questions they would like the panel to address and collect the questions.

### **For Next Week**

Work on the commitment they wrote down.

Review the Appendix and Notes sections, paying special attention to resources

## Session 11: Reviewing Resources

### Key Verse

Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it (2 Tim. 3:14, NIV)

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Appendix and Notes

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 11

Student Sheets, Session 11 (for Option 1 or 3 only)

Bibliography of the resources you have presented through the Resource Table

Additional resource table (if you invite a Christian bookstore representative)

Table and chairs for your panel (if you use Option 2 or 3)

### Add to the Resource Table

Any resources suggested or similar to the ones listed in the Appendix and Notes

### Session Option 1

This is a review of resources available to help parents and ministry workers address discipleship issues in their homes and classes. It could involve connecting with a Christian bookstore to supply non-curriculum resources for review and/or purchase. If someone has suggested a helpful resource, this would be a good time to hear about it. The Student Sheet gives participants a way to review two resources and suggest items they should add to their library.

### Session Option 2

Select a panel of at least two ministry workers and two parents, including one public or private school teacher, if possible. Consider a panel mix that has every children's age group represented. It's not a bad idea for one parent to have post-elementary children. You may also want your key children's ministry staff leader on the panel. Use the suggested questions to get panel discussion started in hopes to stimulate questions from the group.

### Session Option 3

Any combination of Option 1 and 2

### Getting Started

1. Explain that this session is designed to give everyone a chance to explore more thoroughly the resources and information we have been studying. Introduce the session option you plan to use and follow the appropriate instructions.

### Option 1: Resource Review

#### Getting Deeper

2. If you have a Christian bookstore representative, introduce that person and allow 20 minutes for presenting materials and answering questions. Then, follow instructions in numbers 4-8 for the remaining time.
3. If you don't have a special guest presenter, start by identifying any resources on the Resource Table that you haven't had a chance to talk about. It would be especially helpful to add new resources.
4. Pass out the bibliography you have prepared of all the resources you have used on the Resource Table.
5. Then, ask everyone to decide on one or two resources from the Resource Table to explore more fully. Use the Student Sheet to do this review. Give 10 minutes for this activity. If more than one person is interested in one resource, suggest they complete the review together.
6. As you come back together, use these questions to process their discoveries: *What is something interesting you found out about the resource you didn't know before? What is one resource you want to add to your family or home immediately? How will you use this resource in your family or class? How do good resources equip us to disciple our children? Why do you think we have not used more resources in the past?*
7. *How can we make more resources available to our families?* (Ex: a lending library collected from a resource shower.) Make sure the Session Recorder takes down the ideas to include in the end report.
8. *How can we make more resources available to ministry workers?* (Ex: Set up a "Wishing Tree" with titles and prices printed on cards. Friends of children's ministry can take a card and either purchase the item or simply give the money so that it can be purchased.)

### **Getting Serious**

9. Read the key verse for today's session: "Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it." *How will we continue to learn about how to disciple our children? From whom can we learn?*
10. Take time for praying about the ongoing learning that everyone needs to commit to in order to help children make a lifelong decision to follow Jesus. Ask a parent to pray for parents and a ministry worker to pray for ministry workers.

### **Option 2: A Resource Panel**

#### **Getting Deeper**

Pass out the bibliography of the resources collected on the Resource Table. Point out any new items you added.

1. Introduce members of your panel and have them take a seat at the panel table at the front of the room. Ask panel members to identify the ages of their children and a ministry position if applicable.
2. Use any of the following questions to get discussion going. Be sure to add your own to the list. Encourage anyone to ask a question at any time. (Note: Consider sharing the list of questions with panel members before Sunday.)

- This study has focused on what it takes to help children become disciples of Jesus. *What do you think is the most important component of that process?*
  - *How would you characterize extraordinary faith?*
  - *What has made the biggest difference for you as you commit to influencing children to grow an extraordinary faith?*
  - *What resource have you used in your family or class?*
  - *Have you used a set-aside devotional time? What has worked? What did not work?*
  - *How have you tried to grow/teach children to be independent spiritual learners?*
  - For parents: *What help do you want from the church in this responsibility?*
  - For ministry workers: *What support do you want from parents in this responsibility?*
  - *What do you do when your insecurity in this area comes because your parents were not Christians or were not active in passing on their faith?*
  - *How should we support the children in our church who do not have parents who can nurture their faith?*
  - *Are there other ways the church could support parents in their responsibility of growing disciples?*
  - *How important is an intergenerational component in growing disciples?*
  - *How do you use the Bible/scripture in your family/class?*
  - *How do you evaluate spiritual growth in your children?*
3. Thank the panel for their helpful and real-life responses.

### **Getting Serious**

(Same as for Option 1)

### **For Next Week**

Read Chapter 9

Ask the group to be prepared to take the Disciple-Maker's Test in class next week.

## Session 12: Building an Accountability Plan

### Key Verse

These, then, are the things you should teach (Titus 2:15, NIV)

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 9

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 12

Student Sheets, Session 12

Copies of the Disciple-Maker's Test for each participant

Sample Accountability Contract for each group facilitator

### Getting Started

1. Ask: *How did Jesus make disciples out of the diverse group He called?* (He spent one on one time and turned every day experiences into teaching moments.)
2. Explain that we can't push our children through a discipleship class to check off a box on a parenting or ministry to-do list. In the words of the author we have to be intentional, be present, and be honest (p. 168). Today's lesson will point us in the right direction—towards accountability.

### Getting Deeper

3. Pass out copies of the Disciple-Maker's Test. Give time for everyone to complete it and calculate their scores. Ask for any discoveries anyone made as they took the test.
4. Give the following definition of accountability: To be responsible to give a satisfactory answer for a delegated role or obligation. Then read the key verse: Titus 2:15. *Who is the one we are most accountable to about our responsibility to disciple children?*
5. Divide the group into parents and ministry workers. Use the parent and ministry worker facilitators you have used before. Explain that the goal of each group is to draft an accountability contract that will establish the partnership commitment that all of us have in the mission to raise children to extraordinary faith. Use the student sheets and sample Accountability Contract to provide guidance but direct the groups to be as creative as possible, utilizing any ideas from previous sessions.
6. Collect a copy from each group. Use them to prepare Accountability Contracts for next week's commitment closing. Make sure that the pastor and appropriate ministry staff approve the contract.

### Getting Serious

7. Make the point that accountability strengthens any commitment with honesty, partnership, and encouragement. It always sets people up for success.



8. Give time for each group to identify three things they need to keep at the top of their prayer list as they commit to making discipleship a higher priority. Then, ask for three volunteers in each group to pray about each of the three priorities.

**For Next Week**

Review Chapter 9

## A Disciple-Maker's Test

Read the following statements and respond with one of the following responses:

5 = Always

4 = Most of the time

3 = Some of the time

2 = Not enough

1 = Never

	5	4	3	2	1
1. I understand what my role in discipling children is.					
2. I am willing to ask for help from another parent or ministry worker when I feel overwhelmed about my spiritual responsibility to raise/teach a young disciple.					
3. I have and make opportunities to have a spiritual conversations (not a teaching session) with a child.					
4. When a child talks to me about a difficulty in life, I stop and pray with him/her.					
5. I open the Bible with a child to look for answers to a family, friendship, or other problem that a child asks for advice about.					
6. I use the sacraments of baptism and communion to help children affirm their faith in Christ.					
7. I have basic resources for age-appropriate Bible reading and Bible study for my children.					
8. I have shared my salvation story with my children.					
9. I know what my spiritual gift is as a starting place for recognizing a spiritual gift in a child.					
10. I know how to share the salvation message with a child.					
11. I am praying for the opportunity to share the salvation message with a child.					
12. Our class's/family's celebration of Easter and Christmas reflect more of God's story than society's secularization.					
13. I have a spiritual accountability plan that I use with the children I teach/parent.					
14. I pray with my children about their spiritual growth during the time we are together as a family/class.					
15. I help children find a way to serve others.					

16. I talk about tithing in our family/class.					
17. I encourage children to share their faith with others.					
18. I practice intentional worship and help children find their way to worship God as well.					
19. The spiritual growth of the children I raise/teach is more important to me than their happiness.					
20. I connect Bible stories and scriptural lessons to real life, theirs and mine.					

### Scoring

- ☐ 85-100      You are making discipleship a key priority. Keep it up!
- ☐ 70-84        Discipleship is important to you. Find ways to increase its priority.
- ☐ 55-69        Discipleship is something you want to do better. Let God and others help you.
- ☐ Below 55     Consider this a wake-up call. Begin now to make discipleship the priority God wants.

**Church Name Children's Ministry**

**Accountability Contract for \_\_\_\_\_**  
(parents or ministry workers)

**Our Mission is to . . .**

Make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you  
(Matt. 28:19, NIV).

**I understand that I am primarily accountable to God who has promised . . .**

And surely I am with you always (Matt. 28:19).

**To further strengthen my commitment to disciple children, I am also accountable to** (name leadership, prayer partner, or any other group or person)

**To protect that accountability, I will** (add the basic accountability components for everyone in the respective group)

**Believing that a parent-ministry worker partnership will strengthen my ability to complete God's mission, I will**

For parents (suggested):

- ☐ Attend parent meetings.
- ☐ Volunteer in at least one ministry area.
- ☐ Have at least one scheduled conversation with a teacher about my child's spiritual growth.
- ☐ Support learning activities from church
- ☐ Pray for the children's ministry workers.

For ministry workers (suggested):

- ☐ Schedule appropriate parent meetings.
- ☐ Make short-term volunteer opportunities available to parents.
- ☐ Be available to talk to parents about spiritual growth of a child.
- ☐ Find ways to support parents.
- ☐ Pray for the parents.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Pastor or children's ministry leader) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Session 13: Never Stop Discipling

### Key Verse

Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1, NIV).

### Resources

*Raising Kids to Extraordinary Faith*, Chapter 9

Bible

Leader's Guide, Session 13

Copies of the Accountability Contract from last week, one for parents and one for ministry workers. (This is instead of a Student Sheet.)

Optional: Ask the pastor or children's ministry leader to be present for the closing commitment time.

### Getting Started

1. Ask for limited responses to the following summary questions: *What is the most important lesson you have learned? What is the most encouraging idea you have tried? What will you do differently because of this special class?*
2. Then, explain that today's lesson is going to summarize the most important ways we can continue to make discipling our parenting and ministry priority.

### Getting Deeper

3. Look at Luke 8:5-8. Ask someone to read it aloud. *What if we change farmer to parent or Sunday school teacher spreading the seeds of faith? How would you answer the following questions?*  
*How could faith-seeds get trampled?*  
*How could faith-seeds shrivel?*  
*How could faith-seeds meet thorny obstacles?*  
*According to this story, what should the seed planter focus on in order to produce something that grows?* (Good seed, good soil, and focused planting.)  
*What is the "soil" in our children's lives?* (Their hearts.)  
*How do we give attention to the "soil"?*
4. Talk about how these sessions have attempted to resource, inform, and challenge each of us to provide every child a chance to hear, accept, and decide to follow Jesus.

### Getting Serious

5. Pass out the Accountability Contracts as modified/approved by your ministry staff leadership.
6. This is a good time for the pastor and/or children's ministry leader to acknowledge the investment each is making in raising children to follow Jesus as disciples. Ask this person to offer a prayer for the ongoing challenges each will meet as they handle one of our most important responsibilities.

7. Then, give participants a chance to sign their contracts and turn them in. Explain that you will make copies, have them signed by the appropriate leader, and return a copy to them next week. Announce where they may pick up their contract. Optional: When they turn in their contract, ask them to remove the picture(s) of their children from the collage created in Session 2.
8. Optional: Ask your pastor to include the participants of this study in the prayer time during worship by asking them to stand in place or come forward to kneel at the altar. The pastor could publicly acknowledge the parents and ministry leaders for their commitment to disciple children in intentional ways and pray for them.
9. Share thanks for everyone who helped in any way. Dismiss the group with the following challenge:

*I challenge you to go from here to make disciples in your families and in your classes. May the God who promised to be with you always instruct and affirm you on this journey to which God has called you.*

Let all the disciple-maker's say . . . "Amen!"