

Family Discipleship



Quick Start Guide

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Family Discipleship Quick Start by Tara McClenahan, Faith Starts at Home

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eBook layout by Callie Domingues @ [The Successful Mama](#)

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From my heart....to Yours,

Welcome to your fresh start in family discipleship!

Because you downloaded this guide, I know that you are serious about focusing (or refocusing) your family on what truly matters – God and His Word – and I commend you for it.

Don't let the term "discipleship" scare you. This very simply means "teaching about God, His Word and how to bring glory to God with our lives". It is an uncommon component of children's education in today's typical family. But for a Christian family, it is THE most important component of our children's education. We are called to be different, to be separate and to pass a spiritual legacy to the next generation as directed in Deuteronomy 6:5-9. Family discipleship is how this happens and it starts in your own home.

Family discipleship is not a burden but a journey of love. It is a path of walking alongside your children, demonstrating God's grace, mercy, and unconditional love. Be open, honest, and vulnerable with them, sharing your own experiences and struggles, for this will deepen the bonds of trust within your family.

In addition to the intentional and structured discipleship that this guide helps you plan, seize the opportunities for discipleship that arise in the everyday moments of life. Teach your children about God's goodness as you prepare meals together, go on family outings, or even when you tuck them into bed at night. Look for teachable moments in nature, in the stories you read together, and in the experiences you share. Help your children see God's hand in the world around them and encourage them to seek His guidance and wisdom in all aspects of their lives.

As you embark on this journey, it's important to remember that you are not alone. Seek out a community of fellow believers who can support and encourage you along the way. Join a local church that values family discipleship and provides resources and programs to assist you in your efforts. Surround yourself with friends who share your vision and can walk alongside you, offering guidance, accountability, and shared experiences.

Finally, remember to extend grace to yourselves. There will be days when you feel inadequate, when you make mistakes, or when life simply becomes overwhelming. In those moments, lean on God's grace and trust that He is faithful to guide and strengthen you. Your sincere desire to lead your children towards Him is a testament to your love and commitment.

(continued)

May you find joy in the journey of family discipleship, knowing that you are partnering with the Lord in shaping the hearts and minds of the next generation. Be encouraged by the promise that as you faithfully sow the seeds of faith, God is faithful to bring forth a harvest.

I encourage you to work through this guide and set a date to get started. Please do not put it off as it may fall to the wayside and be buried under the tyranny of the everyday "to-dos".

This is too important.

Commit to it today.

You and your family will be in my prayers on this journey.

By His Grace,

Tara 



Deuteronomy 6:5-9

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.



01

Start Where YOU ARE

I have great news!

You don't have to wait for the perfect time or the ideal circumstances to embark on this journey. In fact, the best time to begin is right now, right where you are! Your home, with its unique dynamics and daily routines, is the perfect environment to lay the foundation of a strong and vibrant spiritual life for your family.

Remember, family discipleship isn't about having all the answers or being flawless in your approach. It's about being intentional and committed to growing together in faith. It's about creating a space where open conversations about God's love, grace, and truth can flourish.

*You can do all of that with your
family, right where you are...
starting today.*



02

Prayer Prepares **THE PATH**

As Christian parents, leading your family in family discipleship is an important aspect of nurturing your children's faith and spiritual growth. Prayer plays a vital role in seeking guidance and direction from God as you undertake this responsibility.

Starting (and continuing) your family's discipleship journey with prayer reorients your hearts as parents to surrender to and seek God's will as you lead your children. Ask God for wisdom and discernment as you make decisions as to what topics to cover and how to cover them. Ask the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of each of your children to prepare them to receive the Word and to understand it. Pray for everyone's spiritual growth and transformation on this journey.

Remember to make it a regular practice to seek His guidance and provision for your family's discipleship journey. Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and remain faithful in nurturing your children's faith as you trust God to work in their lives.



03

Your Family's SPIRITUAL NEEDS

It's important to consider the spiritual needs of your family members and their stage of faith when choosing a topic to cover. Take time to evaluate these for each family member. Consider their ages, maturity levels, and any specific challenges they may be facing. Identify areas where growth and understanding are needed.

If you are just starting on your family discipleship journey or if your children are younger, it's best to focus on foundational and essential spiritual topics such as salvation, the life of Jesus, the power of prayer, the importance of Scripture, understanding grace and forgiveness, and the role of the Holy Spirit, etc.

You may also choose to explore topics that are relevant to your family's current situation or cultural context. This may include discussions on morality, relationships, stewardship, media discernment, social justice, gender/sexuality issues or handling challenges specific to your family's circumstances.

Prayerfully choose a topic to begin. Don't get overwhelmed. Get started with one topic and then pick another when that first topic has been covered.

This is a journey, not a sprint!

If you want to plan out your family's discipleship journey in more detail, be sure to check out our [Family Discipleship Planner!](#)



04

Selecting BIBLES

Selecting a Bible for your child is a personal decision influenced by your family's beliefs, preferences, and the specific needs of your child. It's important to choose a Bible that resonates with them and encourages their spiritual growth in a way that is age-appropriate and engaging as well as one that most accurately delivers the Biblical text.

Some things to consider when choosing your child's Bible is their age and reading level, your preferred translation, whether you are ok with having illustrations and any needed or wanted study aids such as maps, concordance, etc.

If you need additional help making your selections, we have created a quiz to help you narrow down your options at <https://faithstartsat home.com/choosing-the-best-bible-for-your-child/>.

You can also select a main Bible to read aloud from during family discipleship. It is recommended to choose one that can be understood even by your youngest child.

One of the best practices is to choose a Biblically faithful "story" Bible such as More Than a Story OT/NT by Sally Michael. You would read a selection from one of the story Bibles, then read the same passage out of a regular Bible and discuss what has been read. This allows for younger children to participate in the discussion while still using the full Bible.

You can find additional recommended Bibles at our Faith Starts at Home Recommended Resource Center.



05

Selecting OTHER RESOURCES

You may decide to include other resources when covering your family discipleship topics. Additional resources can help to reinforce and cement what is being learned in the minds of your children. These can include things like Bible studies specific to your topic, supplements such as maps, graphs, timelines, devotions and/or activity books and even documentaries, movies or curriculum.

Another option is for each child to have a notebook to draw out what they are hearing or to even utilize a resource such as the [Picture Smart Bible](#) which is an incredible way to see what the Bible is teaching in a fun and interactive format.

Gather all the resources - notebooks, pens, colored pencils, markers, maps, timelines, etc. - into one central place such as a basket or even a shelf that is easily accessed during your family discipleship time.

You can find additional recommended resources at our [Faith Starts at Home Recommended Resource Center](#).



When, Where & HOW OFTEN?

Family discipleship is a deeply personal and individualized practice that varies based on family dynamics and routines. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, there are some things to consider when deciding on the schedule your family will follow.

- Keep in mind that there are basically two types of family discipleship: One is the informal and unstructured type that is done as you and your children go about your day (Deuteronomy 6:7). The other is the formal structured type where there is an intentional plan. It is this latter type that will need a schedule.
- First, assess your family's schedule by considering the routines and schedules of all family members, including work, school, extracurricular activities, and other commitments. Find times when everyone is available and create a regular rhythm for gathering together.
- Next, determine the frequency by deciding how often you want to engage in family discipleship activities. It could be daily, weekly, or a combination of both. Consider the age and attention span of your children, as well as the time commitments of yourself as parents. Consistency is key, so choose a frequency that is sustainable for your family.
- Finally, select locations that are comfortable and conducive to family discipleship. It could be a dedicated space in your home, such as a living room or dining area, or even outdoors in a park or nature setting. The important thing is to create an environment that promotes focused discussion and engagement.

07

Getting Everyone ON BOARD

Getting your kids on board with family discipleship can be a gradual process that requires patience, creativity, and intentional effort.

The best place to start is to hold a family meeting where you explain to your children why family discipleship is important, that it is your God-given responsibility and how it can benefit their spiritual growth.

Emphasize the value of a personal relationship with God, character development, and the opportunity to deepen family bonds and help them understand that family discipleship is not just an obligation but a joyful time to grow together.

Make sure to invite your children to be part of the planning process and allow them to contribute ideas for Bible study topics, worship songs, or service projects. They are more likely to be enthusiastic about participating when allowed to have a voice in the process and choices.

It's important for your children to share their thoughts, doubts, and questions without fear of judgment or criticism.

Encourage open dialogue and actively listen to their perspectives. It is the sharing of their thoughts, doubts and questions that will clarify where they are in the journey with God and will help guide you as parents on where you can focus your discipleship.



08

Have a KICKOFF CELEBRATION

A family discipleship kickoff celebration is a fun way to start a journey of faith together as a family! It's an opportunity to gather, set intentions, and establish a framework for growing spiritually as a unit.

Let your celebration be a starting point for building a strong spiritual foundation within your family. It can set the tone for the upcoming discipleship activities and create a sense of excitement and unity.

Your family discipleship kickoff celebration can include:

- an opening prayer and devotional,
- a discussion of when and where the structured teaching will take place, and
- what topic you will be covering.

This is the time to introduce any materials or resources you plan to use as well as presenting each child with their own Bible and notebook.

Share the purpose and goals of your family discipleship journey. As a family, discuss why it is important to grow together in faith and celebrate that you are on a journey of learning about God, His Word and His ways together.



09

Stay the Course & ADJUST AS NEEDED

Evaluating your family discipleship journey periodically is important to make sure you stay on track and make any necessary adjustments along the way.

While structure is necessary to family discipleship, so is flexibility and adjustment. On this journey, your children will be growing spiritually, mentally and emotionally which will necessitate you as parents to periodically evaluate progress and where any gaps may be. It's OK to slow down, backtrack and even change course when needed.

It is also completely OK to have to start over or start again. Life is messy and all of us are susceptible to letting the most important things slide to second place. What's more important is that you keep an eye on that tendency and be willing to humble yourself, ask forgiveness of God and your family and to start again. Do not abandon it altogether just because you get off-track. Your calling to disciple your children does not end if the process doesn't go as planned. Gather everyone together and start again!

Remember that family discipleship is a continuous process, and evaluation serves as a valuable tool for growth. Assess your efforts, make adjustments, and stay committed for the long haul through the hard times and the easy.



10 Next STEPS

YAY!!!! You've started your discipleship journey!

Now what?

Just keep going!

As you probably realized by now, there are numerous topics to cover. Your next step is to plan out your family discipleship over the next few months.

We've developed a simple Family Discipleship Planner for just this purpose! It's simple planning pages will reduce the stress of trying to figure out what topic to study and how to study that topic!

If you want to go completely stress-free and always be prepared for the next topic, our Faith Starts at Home Monthly Kits have topics planned out for you with study plans, recommended resources, applicable memory verses, prayer cards and related activities!

This is just the beginning (or re-start) for your family journey in God's Word, learning how to follow Him and how to bring Him glory with your lives!

Remember - it's

By His Grace & For His Glory!





Family Discipleship Checklist

Pray for wisdom ~ James 1:5

Evaluate the spiritual needs of your family :

Select a Bible for each family member

Select Bible passage(s) or topic of study:

Select catechism/Scriptures for memorization:

Purchase/gather all needed resources:

Create a family basket for pens, paper, etc.

Hold a family meeting to discuss expectations:

Decide start date and tentative end date

Plan a kickoff celebration with the family

Get Started!

Pray continually & evaluate periodically

Find additional resources at FaithStartsatHome.com

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE *for more resources*

We are working hard to offer you a robust family discipleship resource library at our site including quizzes, online courses, family discipleship guides and family discipleship plans!

Please be patient with us if you don't see what you are looking for! These are a work in progress.

[CHECK NOW](#)

