

DISCIPLING THE NEXT GENERATIONS | Mat 19:13-15 | Geldart | 9/29/24 | Tru

- 1) Welcome
 - a) Connect Card
 - b) Giving
- 2) Announcements
 - a) Family CG
 - i) Activity bags
 - ii) Coloring sheets (incl for adults!)
 - b) Membership Potluck

3) [1] Series Introduction

- a) **Memory Verse challenge**

b) [2] Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:19-20

- c) **Series Theme:** The call from Jesus for all believers and churches to go and make disciples of all people!
- d) Today we're going to be focusing on how this applies with kids → the next generations!

4) Kids – who's better? Kids or adults?

- 5) Pictures (compare between 2 pics of people)
 - a) Ask kids: Who is **stronger**? Who can carry more?
 - i) [3] Child or [4] weightlifter?
 - b) Who is **smarter**? "Who do you think knows more".
 - i) [5] Child or [6] scientist?
 - c) Who has **more money**?
 - i) [7] Child or [8] rich guy
 - d) Who likes to play **Basketball**?
 - i) Ok, you are my experts here Who would you rather have on your bball team?
 - ii) [9] Child or [10] Michael Jordan
 - e) Youth, who's better at **Smash Bros**
 - i) [11] A youth? Or [12] Mr Nathan?
 - f) If you were going to **teach people the Bible**, who would you rather to go with?
 - i) [13] Kids playing pillowfight, or one of our preaching team like me or [14] Mr James?
 - g) ***Seems like adults are the best doesn't it!***

6) Mat 18:1-6 (Jaina)

[15] 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (stop)

- a) [16] Show pics: Bball player? Rich guy? Strong dude? Adult?

b) **HAVE A KID COME UP AND SIT ON A STOOL, look out**

- 7) [17] (**Mat 18 continue**)² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them³ and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the

kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

8) Kids, did you know that Jesus really thinks yall are the bomb??? ya’ll are really awesome!

a) And that he tells adults they need to be more like you kids in some important ways if they’re going to be citizens on his Kingdom!

b) Isn’t that amazing?...

c) How does that make you feel hearing that Jesus thinks you are so wonderful?

d) What are some things that KIDS are better at than adults?

i) Play – FUN!

ii) Singing

iii) Dancing

iv) Good at changing plans

v) Brashness ... unfiltered honesty

(1) sharing how you really feel, even when it doesn’t sound nice

(2) and asking the questions you really wonder, no matter what other people might think

vi) **Humble** – kids are generally humble! They typically know they’re not the strongest, or the richest, or the smartest. And so they come just as they are.

e) Yes, Jesus thinks adults have a LOT to relearn from children!

f) Sometimes people call God’s Kingdom the Upside Down kingdom

i) God loves flipping things on their head to help people see and love others better.... Especially those who are small and weak, overlooked, and left out

ii) **[18] 1 Cor 1: ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God** chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him.

g) So, kids, -- ANSWER OUT LOUD -- are you important to God?

h) Adults, -- ANSWER OUT LOUD -- are these children as important to God as you are?

i) We got it? → I think so! Let’s see if the DISCIPLES Got it

9) **In the very next chapter of Matthew**, the disciples have a chance to practice what they were just taught

10) **[19] Mat 19 ¹³ Then children were brought to him [Jesus] that he might lay his hands on them and pray.**

a) How do you think the disciples will treat the children now?

11) **[20] (continue reading) The disciples rebuked the people, ¹⁴ but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” ¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them and went away.**

a) OH MAN!

- i) Jesus had just gotten done teaching his disciples how important children are to God and his Kingdom

ii) But did they learn their lesson?

(1) NO

- iii) Because the very next story when people/parents were bringing children to Jesus for him to bless and pray over them, the disciples KEPT THEM AWAY

(1) Either they didn't like the kids

(2) Or the parents?

(3) Or didn't think Jesus wanted to be bothered with such unimportant matters

- iv) But they BLEW IT

(1) The Disciples had not yet absorbed his revolutionary scale of values, in which the 'little ones' were the greatest.

- b) This story is in all 4 Gospel accounts, each with the same story, but a few different details:

c) [21] In Mark 10, adds this detail: "v 14: But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant"

- i) Indignant is a strong word, one we don't use every day

- ii) [22] Which of these people do you think is INDIGNANT like Jesus when he saw his disciples KEEPING kids from coming close to him?

(1) 1 pic someone laughing. Other indignation

- iii) [23] Yes he was furious and offended. Outraged. Because he saw someone being treated unfairly.

- d) Jesus was NOT OK with even his followers treating kids like a nuisance... 2nd class citizens... especially in ways that hindered them coming closer to Him

- e) They made Jesus seem like he didn't have time for them

- i) And Jesus was NOT OK with that

- f) In fact even as his disciples were rebuking the parents for bringing the kids, Jesus stands up and rebukes his disciples IN FRONT OF EVERYONE

- g) God loves little children... so very much. He wants them to come close to him. Sit on his lap.

i) [24] In Mark 10 it says he took the children in his arms!

- ii) His heart is WARM and open to these children, even though they'd done nothing to earn his respect.

- iii) It wasn't just the well behaved ones ... or the quiet or the extra smart ones.

- iv) He delighted in them.

- v) He wants to bless them and care for ALL of them. Get down on their level and talk with them. Touch them with care and love and blessing and honor.

- h) God wants children to know that they are extremely important to Him

- i) That all, including children, who come to Jesus in childlike trust and dependence, are given free access to Jesus.

i) There are no age limits on who can put their trust in Jesus

(1) Adults can do it

(2) Kids can do it

(a) **Even sometimes very young kids** can understand the basic truths and message of the Gospel and choose to follow Jesus. Even if the fruit of that decision doesn't mature for a while.

ii) Before the Throne of God, in Christ, we stand shoulder to shoulder in equal standing beside our younger brothers and sisters.... Little children who have placed their trust in Jesus

j) So Jesus can't stand it when adults intentionally or unintentionally make children feel like they're less important in God's Kingdom.

i) In the church.

12)TRU COMMUNITY CHURCH adults, How are we doing in this area?

13)What is our church culture like when it comes to how we engage our kids and youth?

a) Now, I **say OUR KIDS intentionally here**

b) I'm not speaking only to the biological parents of these children.

i) All adults set the tone of the emotional environment. Both at home and at church.

c) In the Body of Christ, we're now a big family. So whether you like it or not, the person next to you is your brother or sister, if they've trusted in Jesus.

d) And likewise, whether you like it or not, whether you feel it or not, these children are your brothers and sisters too – with EQUAL STANDING in God's Kingdom as you.

i) That goes for single people. Married folks without their own kids. Parents who have kids. All of us.

(1) We all play a significant role in the message that is sent to OUR kids.

(2) Whether explicit or implicit.

(3) Taught or caught.

ii) These are OUR people.

iii) These are OUR kids.

iv) Do you think about them like that?

v) **If not, adults, I want to challenge you with the love of Christ to repent!** -- CHANGE your mind, and begin acting out of that new perspective.

vi) Our church may just depend on it.

14)[25] Let's look at the stats:

15)Recent surveys by the Barna group and others reconfirmed what has been shown to be true for many years:

16)By far, most of the people who accept Jesus Christ as their savior do so during their childhood

a) **[26] 63% of all Christians choose to follow Jesus between the ages of 4-14.**

i) Sometimes called the 4-14 window

(1) Like the 10-40 window

- b) after the age of 18 years old, the number of faith decisions made drop drastically.
- c) This is not overly surprising. Childhood is when one's priorities, attitudes, and beliefs about life are shaped.

17) We're called to GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

- a) **From a pure numbers perspective, the most important demographic for reaching people with the Gospel are preteen children.**

18) Said another way, stats show that **the most strategic and fruitful ministry in reaching people for Christ** should be our Childrens and Youth Ministries.

19)[27] As Steve Chang wrote in an article for the Gospel Coalition.

- a) One of the biggest mistakes I've seen among those who have a heart for the lost is that they don't see the children in their own church as lost. Every child, even the cute ones in our Sunday schools, needs the gospel. Our goal is not just to get the children into church, but into Christ. So if the church is to be missional, let's be missional with those closest to us—the ones already within the church walls.

20) And it's not just a "get them saved" flash in the pan metric. Ministering to young children in particular has loads of deeper, long term benefits:

- a) [28] **People who become Christian before their teen years are more likely than those who are converted when older, to remain "absolutely committed" to Christianity through their lifetime.**
 - i) [29] **The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6, "train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it."**
 - ii) Not a promise, but a wise observation of how life tends to play out

21)[30] **Approximately 66% of families consider the children's ministry program to be "very important" when choosing their current church**

22)[31] **While Only about 5% to 7% of churchgoers actually tithe.**

- a) [32] **Around 57% of families with children in the ministry tithe weekly**

23) It's clear, engaging well and discipling the next generations is strategically crucial to the mission of the Kingdom and the health of the church!

24)[33] **INTERVIEW JENN AND KAYLA**

- a) Briefly introduce
- b) **Interview Questions:**
 - (1) How would you describe the culture you've seen and experienced in Tru in relating to our children and youth?
 - (2) What are some of the biggest challenges and rewards of ministering to and discipling children?
 - (3) What does discipleship look like in your ministry?
 - (a) How do you see the impact of early discipleship on children's lives?

- (b) How do you engage and inspire youth to take ownership of their faith?
- (4) Can you share a success story from your ministry? / A story of transformation you've seen in a young person's life?
- (5) From your perspective, what do you need more of from parents?
 - (a) our church?
- (6) *(only if time:) What's your vision/heart/desire to see for your ministry area long term?*

25)[34] Applications

- a) Kids → You're a vital part of our church and just as able to follow Jesus as adults!
 - i) [35] SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS – kids and adults
 - ii) [36] **1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)**: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."
 - iii) **Your TO DO is to follow Jesus in whatever age/grade you're in.**
 - (1) And SET AND EXAMPLE →
 - (a) **For other adults** → it's a healthy conviction to see God at work in kids!!!
Sometimes putting us to shame in taking steps of faith and growth!
 - (b) **For your peers** – other kids and youth
 - (i) Almost 1/3 of Believers report other kids – friends – helping lead them to Jesus.
 - (ii) Older youth, choose to see younger youth not just as a nuisance, but as people who you can disciple. Befriend. Pour into. Begin to practice discipling with younger youth.
 - (iii) When youth disciple other youth, the kingdom of God tends to explode!
- b) [37] **Parents, make sure you're discipling your kids**
 - i) Discipling your children DOES COUNT! (unless you're NOT discipling them)
 - (1) **Ephesians 6:4 (NIV)**: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."
 - (2) The first responsibility for discipling our children is NOT THE CHURCH or the Kids Ministry on Sunday mornings, but parents throughout the week.
 - ii) **Are you discipling your children?** Or merely helping them make it out of the house?
 - iii) Are you actively, intentionally, prayerfully helping your kids meet Jesus, and grow to become more like him?
 - iv) How insanely tragic it would be for us to succeed in providing for our family's financial needs, even providing for others through discipleship, but fail to provide discipleship for our children.
 - (1) Better to fail at discipling everyone else, but succeed with discipling our children!

- v) **LifeWay Research found common themes among parents who successfully passed on the faith to their children.** Such parents were typically involved in the following activities:

(1) [39] **Reading the Bible several times a week.**

(2) Taking part in a service project or church mission trip as a family.

(3) Sharing their faith with unbelievers.

(4) Encouraging teenagers to serve in church.

(5) Asking forgiveness when they messed up as parents.

(6) Encouraging their children's unique talents and interests.

(7) Taking annual family vacations.

(8) Attending churches with teaching that emphasized what the Bible says.

(9) Teaching their children to tithe.

- c) [40] **EVERYONE: See all the kids and youth in our church as YOUR KIDS (we're all members of one body)**

i) [41] **Take responsibility for modeling Christlike engagement with them**

(1) Informally → GO TALK TO THEM

(2) Take an interest in their lives. Learn their names

(3) Ask them to help you do something (yes it's less efficient, but highly strategic!)

(4) Pray for a Tru Kid by name during your next prayer time.

(a) Use the Directory!

(b) Crazy how praying for someone by name gives you a heart for them

ii) **Support our church's ministries to kids and youth**

(1) Primary need is for volunteers.

(a) Don't see it just as childcare – but as our church's most strategic ministry!

(b) Serve by volunteering

(i) Like many churches, we struggle to see God's heart here.

(ii) Struggle to have enough volunteers to most effectively resource this ministry

(iii) So we need more volunteers. Sign up to serve once a month as a class helper or teacher with children's min. **Clipboards**

(c) Jenn has a vision to offer a Sunday morning class for 4th-6th graders

(i) Engage this key demographic, a gap in our current offerings.

(ii) But we don't have enough volunteers.

(iii) Will you answer the call of Jesus to serve the least of these in his name?

1. And to let him use YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH KIDS as a key aspect of YOUR OWN DISCIPLESHIP with him?

(d) Kayla and Nathan have a vision to be able to offer some separate middle school and high school youth spheres.

(i) Need more helpers willing to serve and invest.

(2) Adopt a youth to disciple.

- (a) Yes. Be willing to take an interest in giving intentional time to invest in one or two of our youth.
- (b) Take them out to eat.
- (c) Invite them over to help fix your mower.

(d) GIVE THEM THE GIFT OF RELATIONSHIP

- (i) And Look for opportunities take the conversations deeper
- (3) This could be one of the most effective ways for you to take a step with discipleship!

iii) Give financially to help support these ministries for specific needs

- (1) We're in red light spending currently as we seek to stabilize our income as a church
- (2) Give money or supplies above and beyond your regular giving to meet some needs
 - (a) Youth need food and snacks for their meetings (simple!)
 - (b) Kids ministry needs supplies and snacks.
 - (c) Money – curriculum and furniture – kids
 - (i) Youth – give toward a scholarship fund to help our youth go to Oasis

(d) Online, choose the fund, write intention in memo.

(e) Or via check with ministry name in memo

26)[42] Everyone: Keep an eye open for kids and youth in your neighborhoods, on your kids sports teams, etc

- a) And build relationships that could eventually bear the weight of Kingdom work
- b) Look for opportunities to invite kids to church with your family.
- c) The Lord reaches so many adults through their kids!

27)[43] WHO KNOWS WHAT GOD MIGHT DO AS WE OBEY HIS CALL TO GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL PEOPLE → especially kids?

28)PRAY

29)[44] COMMUNION



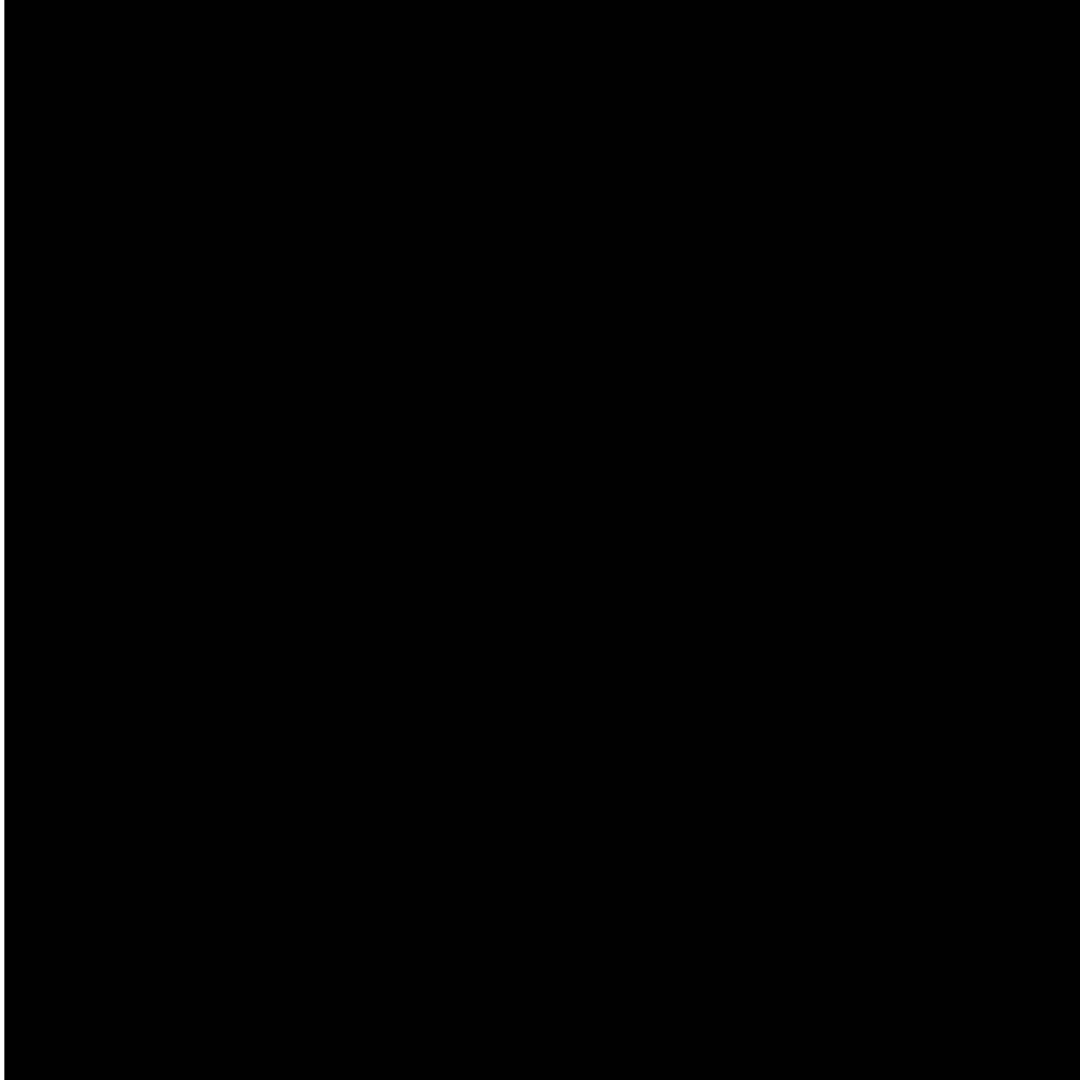
multiply

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

matthew 28: 19-20

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. And surely I am with
you always, to the very end of the age.”





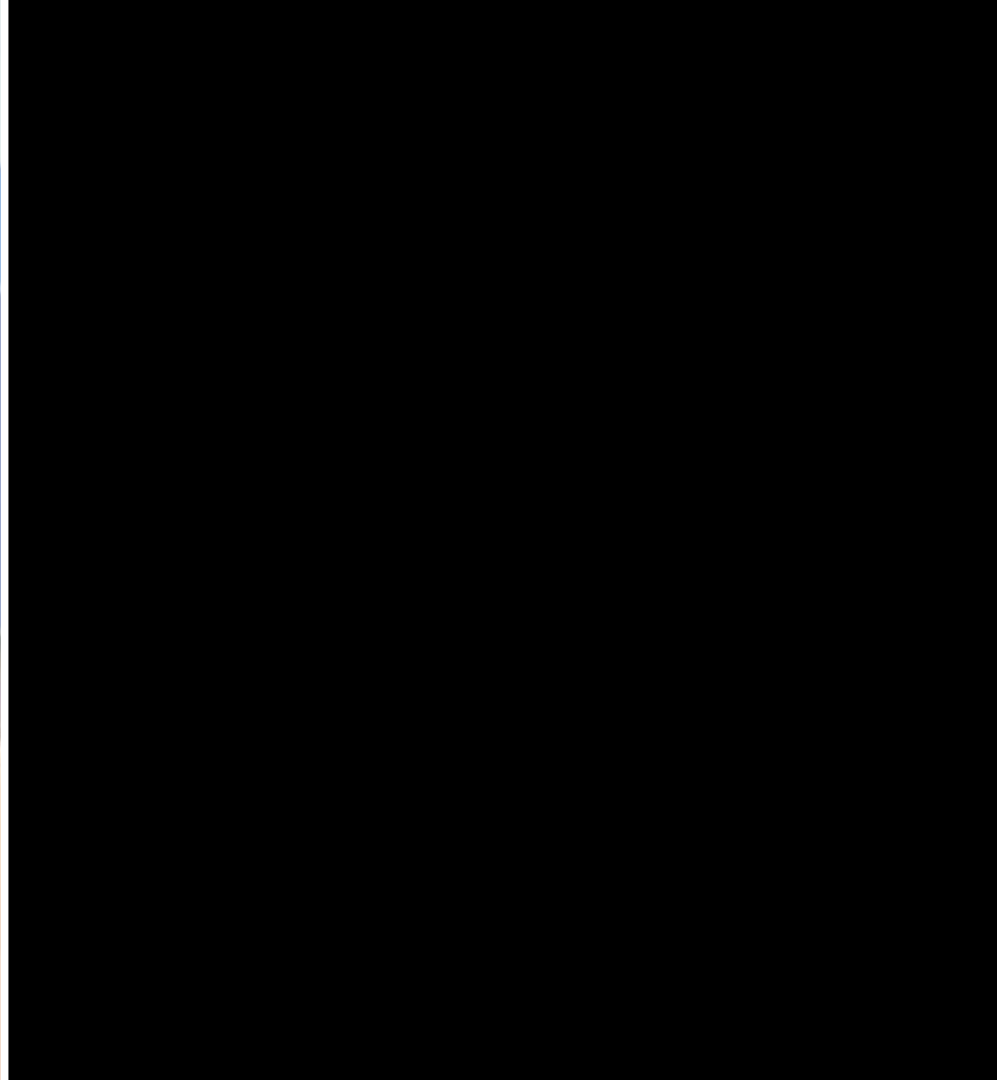


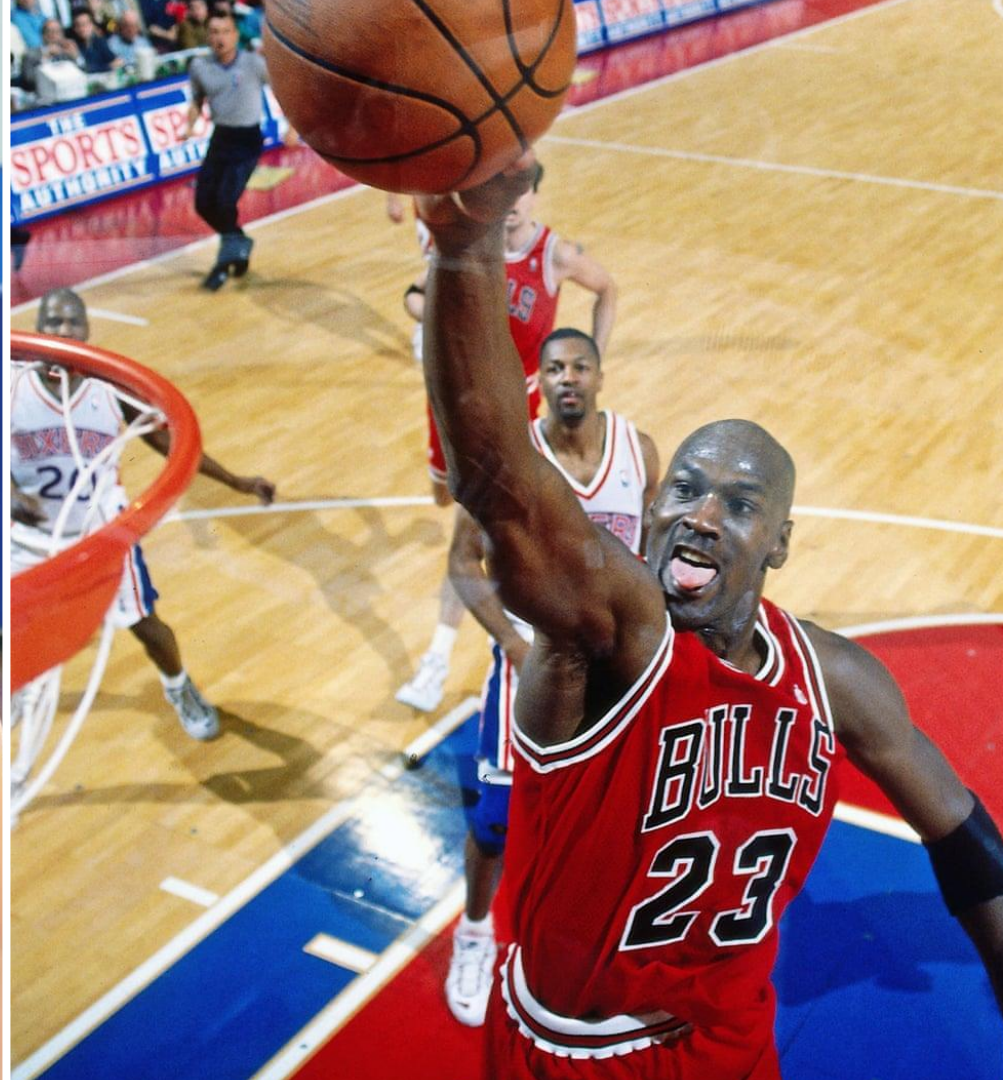


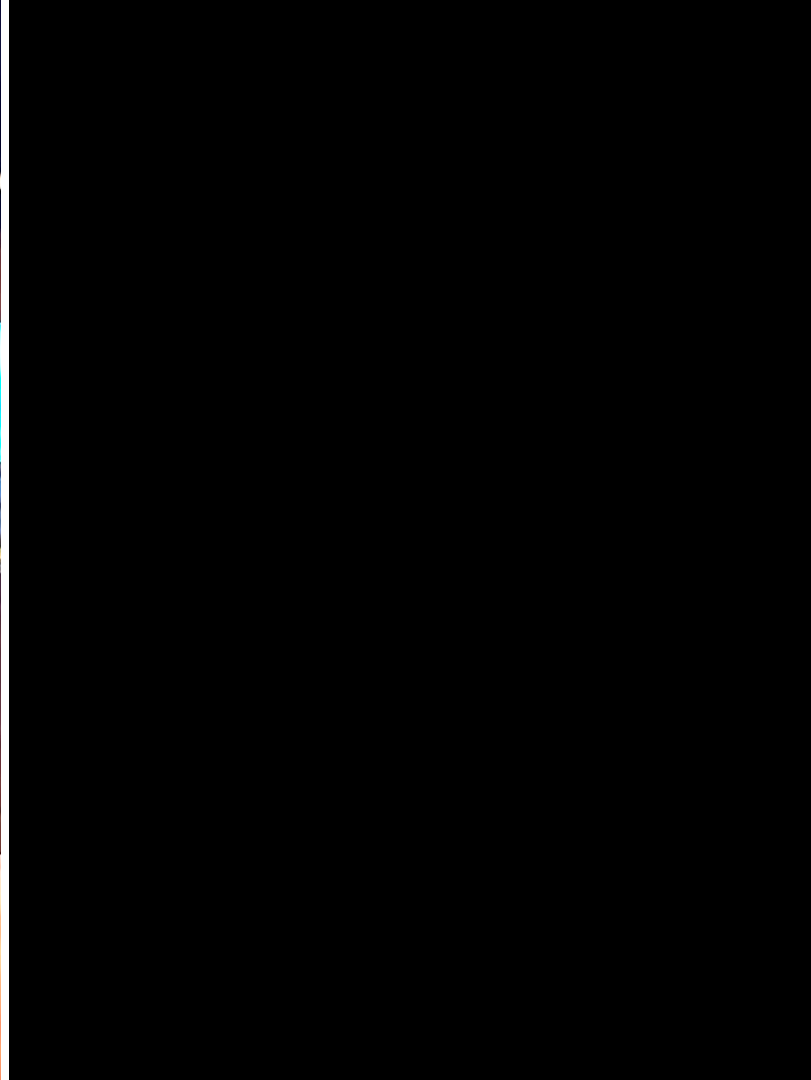


















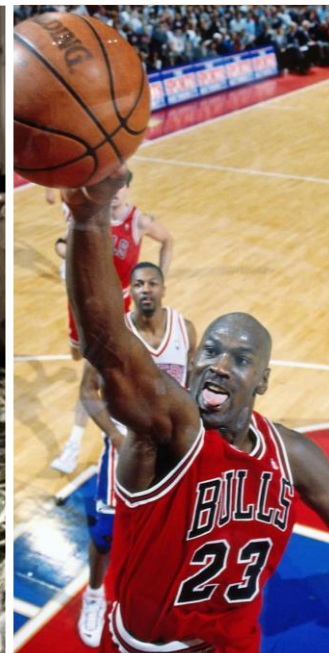
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(Mark 10)*



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- 57% of families with children in the ministry tithe.





interview

with Jenn Geldart

Tru's Children's Minister

and Kayla Talarico

Tru's Youth Minister



applications



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 - Encouraging their children's unique talents and interests.
 - Taking annual family vacations.
 - Attending churches that actually teach the Bible.
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 3. **Everyone**, see the kids and youth of Tru as YOUR KIDS.
 - Model Christlike engagement.
 - Go talk to them.
 - Ask them to help you.
 - Volunteer to serve with our children's and/or youth ministries.
 - Adopt/Disciple a youth.
- Give financially to support these ministries



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4. **Everyone**, keep an eye out for kids and youth to engage and invite.





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GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES



communion