



**AGE 7**

*The Trunk Years*



**HOME**  
*22.6*

# AGE 7

## *A Snapshot of Life*

All children develop differently, but some characteristics are the same. Below are some developmental changes that may be present this year as your child grows physically, emotionally, and spiritually during age seven. This is not an exhaustive list, but it should give you some insight into what to expect and how to parent your child through this stage of life.

### **At 7 years of age, your child**

- Has well-established hand-eye coordination and is likely to be more interested in drawing or printing.
- May be sensitive to adult evaluation.
- Cares very much about fairness.
- Desires to assume more responsibility.
- Places importance on having friendships.
- Begins to compare him or herself to others, which can lead to self-criticism.
- May begin to experience guilt and shame.

### *Parenting Tip*

This is a great year to show your child that his or her worth comes from his or her individual identity rather than from his or her behavior (Matthew 10:29–31; Psalm 139:13–16; Romans 5:8). Children learn their worth as individuals as we discipline them and as they begin to develop significant friendships. In this way, we can teach our children to forgive themselves as well as others (Matthew 18:21–35; Colossians 3:12–13; Ephesians 4:32).

# Parent Dedication

## What is Parent Dedication?

Parent dedication is giving a strong spiritual legacy to your children. The Legacy Principle, the Likelihood Principle, and the Lenses Principle are crucial to your child's spiritual growth. In the parent dedication section you'll find tools to help you grow as a parent. **The Legacy Principle** states that the scriptures tell us that what we do today directly influences the multi-generational cycle of family traits, beliefs and actions – for good or bad (Exodus 20:5-6, Psalm 78:5-8). So passing a strong faith to our children begins by having a strong faith ourselves, modeling the gospel in our marriages and in how we relate to those closest to us. Some of us need to break negative cycles that may have started with our own upbringing in order to launch a new and improved legacy for the next generation. **The Likelihood Principle** states that the good news is this: in the context of healthy relationships, children tend to embrace the values of their parents. Proverbs 22:6 tells us that when children learn right from wrong at home under the nurturing, loving training of parents, they tend to adopt mom and dad's beliefs. While there are no guarantees because every child has a free will, kids are far more likely to embrace their parent's faith if they enjoy their parent's company! That's a big part of the reason parents are warned not to "provoke your children to wrath" but rather "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Bottom line – a strong relationship with mom and dad is key to a strong Christian faith. **The Lenses Principle** says Jesus taught that our enemy's primary weapon is deception – getting us to believe and live according to lies rather than truth (John 8:44). And when someone is deceived, he or she does not know it! Our children are growing up in a culture that bombards them with lies. An hour or two per week at church is no match for the hundreds of hours spent with media, school, and friends. Nor can it compete with a child's fallen nature that often wants to rebel against what is good, true and beautiful. It is the job of parents to equip children with the corrective "lenses" of truth so they can better navigate the deceptive roads of life.



**As the primary disciple-maker of your children, your spiritual growth is very important. You cannot pass along to your children what you don't have yourself. Spend time each day in God's Word. Take time to pray and to listen to what His Holy Spirit has to say to you. You are important to Him.**



# Parenting Tool:

## *Discipline vs. Punishment*

Discipline is one of the toughest and most rewarding aspects of being a parent. Since children at age seven develop sensitivity to adult evaluation, care a lot about fairness, and desire to assume more responsibility, it is important that our children see their discipline as a teaching and growing opportunity. As a parent, discipline is an opportunity for you to guide and build character in the children that God has given you to raise.

We would all agree that children are going to misbehave, and, when they do, parents need to respond. Unfortunately, many times parents react with punishment and penalties when they could respond with appropriate on-the-job teaching and correction that would be of lasting benefit to the child. That's what discipline is all about—learning. Below are a few concepts for parents to understand concerning discipline:

### **1. Consider discipline a privilege, not a chore.**

Consider discipline something you get to do, not something you have to do. What could be better than having the opportunity to give your kids direction or teach them a valuable lesson that could help them avoid some long-range disaster or contribute to their character development? Proverbs 29:17 says, "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul."

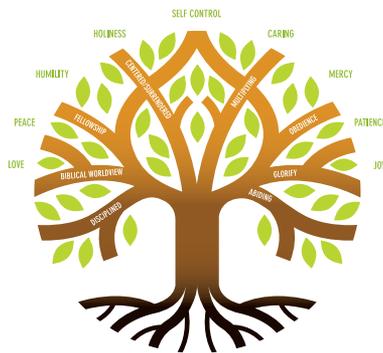
### **2. Keep self-discipline the goal.**

The highest form of discipline is self-discipline. Therefore, your goal should be to teach your kids how to discipline themselves. As soon as possible, encourage them to set their alarm clocks, dress themselves, be ready to head out for school on time, make their lunches, and feed the fish, etc. In other words, start allowing kids to do things for themselves just like you've taught them. This doesn't mean you don't do things for your kids at all, but rather that you don't do things for them that they are capable of doing for themselves. Be sure you recognize and verbalize how your child's contribution promotes the well being of the entire family. Remind your children that God helps us along the way. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline" (International Standard Version).

### 3. Use discipline for correction.

There is a difference between applying discipline with negative consequences and applying punishment with penalties. By applying discipline with negative consequences, you emphasize the positive lessons to be learned along with corrective measures to help the child learn, without attacking or belittling him or her. With punishment and penalties, however, the emphasis is often placed on the child himself, rather than the lesson to be learned from the mistake. The problem with this is that the child can feel lumped together with the bad things he or she has done, which, in turn, can lead him or her to feel bad about him or herself. Hebrews 12:11 reminds us, "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." By teaching our kids to see correction as a learning opportunity, we teach them to appreciate discipline as a good thing.

If you're trying to grow a family where kids behave themselves and get along with everyone in the family, don't jump down their throats every time they mess up. Instead, you might say, "Hey, this is not how we treat members of our family, and we've talked about this several times. I think this calls for a negative consequence" (use this term after you've taught your child what a negative consequence is). Then, ask your child, "What negative consequence do you think would help you learn to treat your sister with respect?" Let your child think it through and make a suggestion. If you need to alter your child's suggestion, alter it. Then, enforce it.



**The highest form of discipline is self-discipline. Therefore, your goal should be to teach your kids how to discipline themselves.**

# *Blessing Your Children*

## How do I bless my children?

There is power in a blessing. The Hebrew word for blessing is used over 640 times in the Old Testament alone. Do you know the very first thing God did after creating us? In Genesis 1:27–28 we read, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them...” We were made for blessing! Based on examples in the Bible, there are five basic elements that make up a biblical blessing:

**1. Meaningful Touch** Meaningful touch has many beneficial effects. The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth, personal acceptance, and affirmation—even physical health! For anyone who wishes to see the blessing grow and develop in a child, touch is an integral part of the blessing. As Mark 10:13–16 says, “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.”

**2. A Spoken Message** Words have an incredible power to build us up or tear us down emotionally. This is particularly true when those words are coming from our parents. Therefore, the blessing hinges on a spoken message. Your child desperately needs to hear a spoken blessing from you. As parents, we must be keenly aware of the power of the spoken word and also be aware of how powerful the absence of spoken words can be. Both people and relationships suffer in the absence of words of blessing, or those spoken words of love, encouragement, and support. Proverbs 16:24 reminds us, “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones...”

**3. Expression of High Value** To “value” something means to attach great importance to it. This is at the very heart of the concept of blessing. Anytime we bless someone, we are attaching high value to him or her. Our children need to hear that they are someone who has great worth apart from his or her performance. As Ephesians 4:29 reminds us, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

**4. Picture of a Special Future** Communicating a special future to a child is another important part of giving the blessing. Children are filled with the potential to be all God intends them to be. Picturing a special future for your children can help bring out the best in their lives. It gives them a positive direction to strive toward and surrounds them with hope. When a child feels in his or her heart that the future is hopeful and something to look forward to, it can greatly affect his or her attitude toward life. We can see this very thing in our relationship with the Lord. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “‘For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,’ says the Lord, ‘thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.’”

**5. An Active Commitment** The first four elements listed above are the building blocks of the blessing, but the mortar that holds them together is an active commitment—the fifth element. This element of the blessing describes the responsibility that goes with the blessing. Parents need to rely on the Lord to give them the strength and staying power to confirm their children’s blessing. You have God’s Word through the Scriptures as a guide, plus the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Words alone cannot communicate the blessing; they need to be backed with a commitment to do everything possible to help the one blessed to be successful. Isaiah 40:31 encourages us, “But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

For more information on the biblical blessing, see *The Gift of the Blessing* by Gary Smalley and John Trent, PhD.

# Ways to Bless Your Child

Use the following Scripture, or any Scripture you choose, to pray over your children daily. This can be at night before they go to bed, in the morning as you wake them up, in the car on the way to school, or any time in between.

*“...That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”—Ephesians 3:17b–19*

Write a blessing for your child based on the blessing elements of “expression of high value,” “picture of a special future,” and “an active commitment,” as described in the “Blessing Your Children” section.

## 1. Words of love and acceptance

Name qualities about your child that you admire; focus on who your child is, rather than what he or she does. For example, compliment your child on how s/he exhibits one of these characteristics: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control, mercy, and humility.

## 2. Acknowledgement of a special future

Tell your child ways you see how God can use him or her in the future. For example, you might say, “God has given you such a sensitive heart. I wouldn’t be surprised if you end up helping a great many people when you grow older.”

## 3. Reaffirmation of your commitment

Be sure your child knows you are on his or her team and are supportive. You might say something like, “Don’t forget I am here to support you, pray for you, and encourage you to be all God intends for you to be.”

## 4. Give a Written Blessing

Give your child a written blessing at a special dinner or one-on-one time. Be sure to keep the written blessing in your child’s blessing box.

## 5. One-on-one time

Plan one-on-one time with your child, in which you can include the five elements of blessing. Some suggestions for one-on-one time with your

7-year-old include:

- Making a silly movie together
- Staying at home and building a fort with blankets
- Taking a hike
- Visiting a pet store
- Lying down on the grass and making shapes out of the clouds
- Going for a drive, cranking up the music your child likes, and singing it loud. Call it a carty (car-party)
- Getting all dressed up and going out for a fancy dinner
- Having a water balloon fight
- Spending the afternoon exploring the River Market
- Going fishing

## *What's a Blessing Box?*

In Genesis 1:27–28 God's Word says, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them..." We were all made for blessing! Written words can place unconditional love and acceptance into the heart of a child. One idea for sharing blessings with your children is to have a "blessing box," or a special box where you can store written blessings and encouraging words for your child as they develop. Several ideas for written blessings include Scripture passages you claim for your child, words of affirmation, descriptions of accomplishments, desires for the future, prayers, or whatever God puts on your heart. Continue to store these blessings in the special box throughout your child's life. Think of what a treasure it will be in your child's adult life to have this blessing box!

# *Family Time*

## What is Family Time?

The idea of family worship is both attractive and intimidating. The thought of beginning a new pattern of worship in the home can be overwhelming for those just beginning. This guide includes answers to basic questions that we hope will equip you to lead your family in worship.

### **What does the Bible say about growing together in Christ as a family?**

The importance of the family in discipleship is prominent throughout the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Psalm 78:5-7; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15). Husbands are primarily responsible for the spiritual leadership of their wives (Ephesians 5:22-33). Parents, especially fathers, are primarily responsible for the spiritual growth of their children (Ephesians 6:1-3). These are huge responsibilities, but God has promised to provide everything we need to lead our families well, according to His design. As leaders in our home, the critical thing to remember is that God's Word must be written upon our hearts. Our faith in Christ and reliance on His Word should be authentic, tangible, and transparent.

### **What are the benefits of family worship?**

- Family worship brings glory to God. It is a visible reminder for all in the home that God is worthy of our time, attention, and affection.
- Family worship produces joy in the home. Jesus will bring joy to families who worship and grow together. The love of Christ will be more evident in a family where worship is central.
- Family worship effects change in the world. As families read, pray, study, sing, and grow together, they join from their homes in what God is doing across the nations, while influencing each other's lives for generations to come.

## What should we do during family worship?

Keep it simple. Consider the following elements as you worship together:

**READ**—Read a portion of the Bible together. Don't worry if you've already read it in your time alone with God. Reading a chapter a second time will only reinforce what God is teaching you. If children are present and able to read, allow them to do so. Of course, you'll want to explain difficult words and concepts (but don't worry too much if you can't explain everything!).

**DISCUSS**—After reading the Bible together, work through a simple process of examining what has been read, much like you do in your own time alone with God. Give everyone a chance to discuss the passage and consider how it applies to everyday life. Ideally, you will lead by example and share with your family what you learned in your time alone with God and the difference it has made.

**PRAY**—Consider praying through the key points of the Bible passage that you have just read and discussed. Ask God to change your hearts, minds, lives, and family accordingly. This specific prayer can lead to a more general time of prayer that uses the letters P-R-A-Y as a guide:

Praise—Worship God for who He is.

Repent—Confess your sin to God and acknowledge your need for Jesus.

Ask—Intercede for particular needs in your life and other's lives.

Yield—Surrender your life to following Jesus wherever He leads you.

Try to include everyone as you pray, even if this is on a rotating basis. Additionally, you may want to keep a prayer journal that enables you to keep track of prayer requests and God's answers to those requests.

**SING**—Sing or listen to music together as a family. If someone in the family has musical gifts, that person may lead some simple songs. If no one in your family is musical, you can sing along with music from a CD or DVD and discuss what the songs mean.

**MEMORIZE**—Choose key verses or passages to memorize. You may want to work on a verse or passage for a week or a month. Either way, be sure to work together, taking time to understand what you are memorizing. Periodically, set aside time to review verses over the course of the year.

# Frequently Asked Questions About Family Worship

## 1. What if a father or mother is not a Christian?

The commands regarding family discipleship in the Bible assume believing parents. Of course, this is not always the case. In those instances where the father is not a follower of Christ, the mother will need to take the initiative for leading family worship in a non-offensive and non-threatening way. In the case of a mother not being a follower of Christ, the father should lead with compassion and sensitivity.

## 2. What about a single parent family?

In this case, the responsibility falls to the single parent. This, along with the many other duties that single parents have, may present a significant challenge. However, God will supply great grace and everything we need to raise and strengthen our children in the faith.

## 3. What about children?

The dynamic of family worship will vary considerably depending upon the ages of the children involved. The goal for every child in the family is not the same. With young children, focus on the importance of knowing God, respecting the Bible, and worshiping as a family. With older children, dig into Scripture more, ask good questions, and discuss how the Bible relates to life and how a relationship with Christ changes us every day.

## 4. How do I keep things interesting if the ages of my children vary widely?

Regardless of age, include children in planning, reading, singing, teaching, and praying as much as possible and as much as maturity will allow. Make sure to keep things simple, and don't be afraid to keep it short; listen well, and be aware of what is happening in each child's heart and life.

## 5. What time of day is best for family worship?

Timing is far less important than consistency. Some families prefer to worship as the day begins. For others, evening may work best. Many families prefer to adjoin family worship to the evening meal since everyone may be present at that time.



Deuteronomy 6:7 says,  
"You shall teach [God's words] 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 up."

Concentrated time in family worship  
can serve as a catalyst and support for  
"as you go, as you sit, as you walk"  
conversations and applications of God's  
Word within our families. Encouraging  
and challenging our spouses and children  
in Christian faith happens best in the  
context of real, everyday life. Family  
worship builds consistency into our family  
routines and opens up many opportunities  
and possibilities within our family  
relationships.



# A Family Time from Leviticus 23

## READ

o Leviticus 23:26-32

o In the Old Testament, God made a way for sin to be forgiven by setting aside a day every year to fast and focus solely on seeking forgiveness from God for all sin. This day was known as the Day of Atonement. Through sacrificial rituals that pictured the transfer and removal of sin away from the people, the people of God witnessed God's amazing grace and mercy. These sacrifices pointed forward and were made effective by the coming sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross. There, Christ fully atoned for our sins through His substitutionary death. By His intercession, He turned away the wrath of God and became sin for us. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

*The Bottom Line: God is holy and has provided a way for us to be holy and pure before Him through His son Jesus Christ.*

## Questions:

- Does God forgive us of all sin?
- Can we truly be holy? How does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament sacrifices?
- What is our response to God's amazing acts of mercy and grace in Christ?

## PRAY

o Confession is our personal acknowledgement of the sin in our lives. God tells us in His word to confess our sin to Him and to turn from it. Confession is vital in the life of every believer as they seek to be more like Christ. If you desire to read some passages from scripture about this, some are listed below.

## Biblical Basis for Confession:

Proverbs 28:13; Romans 10:10; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9

Take an opportunity for those gathered with you in worship to spend time in silent confession to God.

o Pray for the nation of Bangladesh

- Pray for God to move in the hearts of the country leaders to govern with honesty, wisdom, and fairness.
- Pray for the people of Bangladesh who have lost family members, homes, and possessions due to flooding and other natural disasters.
- Ask God to continue to bless the Christian ministries that are present in Bangladesh who serve the people while proclaiming the gospel of Christ.
- Pray for the Bangladeshi Christians to remain faithful amidst difficulties and share their faith.

*Source: Operation World by Johnstone and Mandryk*

## MEMORIZE

o Leviticus 11:44a "For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. "

## SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions to help their children discover the truths of God's Word and worship Him together.

### Preschool (Birth-Kindergarten)

o Before you begin get a fun snack. Set the snack on the table and tell the children you are going to pretend the snack belongs to someone they know (grandma, friend, etc) and you are not supposed to eat it. Then say that the snack looks really yummy, and you think you'll eat it anyway. Pick up the snack and begin to eat it. Do you think I made a good choice by eating their snack? Did I do what was right? No, I didn't. I made a bad choice. I ate the snack when it belonged to someone else. Do you think God would be pleased with my choice? No, He would not. Remember we learned that God's people are supposed to be different and obey God's laws. When we choose to do things that we know are wrong, we are disobeying God. Sin is disobeying God.

o God is holy. That means God never sinned and He never will. He is different from everyone else. God loves us so much that He sent someone who can help us turn from our sin. He sent Jesus. When we make bad choices and choose to sin, we can pray and ask Jesus to help us turn away from our sin. Next time, if someone tells me that I cannot eat his/her snack,

would it be okay if I eat it anyway? No, it would not be okay. Remember, God sent Jesus to help us make good choices, so that we can show others that God is holy.

### **Children (Grades 1-5)**

o If possible, have on hand an old ceramic coffee mug. Also have a small bag, a hammer and some glue.

o Show your children the mug and explain that you all are going to pretend. "We are going to pretend that this coffee mug is your mom's favorite mug. Pretend it is expensive and irreplaceable. No one is supposed to touch or hold the mug except mom." Let everyone examine the mug and highlight the fact that the mug is perfect. "See what a lovely mug it is? There are no cracks or holes in it. It is perfect! We are also going to pretend that we disobeyed and played with the mug and broke it." Ask for a volunteer to break the mug. Place the mug in the bag and have the volunteer hit it with the hammer. Don't shatter it; simply break it so there are two or three large pieces. "Now the mug is no longer perfect. We disobeyed the rules and disobeyed mom and now it is broken. Because of our sin, we are broken before God, just like the mug is broken.

o The Day of Atonement was a time set aside each year for the Israelites to reflect upon and turn away from their sin so God could forgive them. Rather than go to work or school, the Israelites spent time thinking about their sin and how they could be more like God. Then they would sacrifice animals to the Lord as a way to pay for their sin. Now go back to the broken mug. "We broke the mug, so we need to sacrifice our time playing outside today to fix it. We will spend time thinking about our disobedience so we can ask mom for forgiveness for breaking her mug." Work together to glue the mug back together. Then say, "Can we make this mug look as if it had never been broken? No, we can't. Even though we have glued it back together, we can still see the breaks. It is no longer perfect."

o The good news for us is that Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice (atonement) for our sins so we no longer have to. Because He died on the cross, we can be holy and pure before God. We will still face consequences for our sins, just like the cracks in the broken mug. We will still need to reflect upon and turn away from our sins and toward Christ, but the payment to repair our sin has already been made. When we trust in the blood of Jesus to pay for our sins, we look as if they never happened. Because of this sacrifice, God, who is perfect and holy, sees us as perfect and holy, too.

## Students (Grades 6-12)

o Have you ever received an insincere apology from someone? How could you tell they were not really sorry for what they had done? Usually you will know if an apology is sincere when there is a change in behavior because the person is truly sorry for how they hurt you. Their heart changed, so their actions changed. Repentance is similar. When we repent, we turn away from sin and toward Christ. He changes our hearts to produce an overflow of obedience, submission, and love for Him.

o For the Israelites, atonement (or covering) for their sins happened on the Day of Atonement. It was a yearly practice. On that day, they reflected on their lives, identified and repented of their sins, and offered an animal sacrifice to pay the death penalty for their sins. For us, this process happened when Christ was crucified. He, like the animals we read about in Leviticus 16, was the Atoning Sacrifice for each of us. If repentance and reflection are part of the atoning process, what are some ways you can incorporate them into your daily life?

o Through Christ, we have received atonement for our sins. In Leviticus 11:44 God says, "For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy for I am holy." Repentance should lead us to live lives that are holy (meaning "set apart"). What are some things you need to separate yourself from if you are going to live a life that is holy? Is your life a reflection of the forgiveness and grace you have received through Christ?

# *Church Community*

## What is Church Community?

With so many young people leaving the church after they are under the leadership of their parents, it is important that we teach the necessity of the church. Scripture says that the church is the Bride of Christ and He has given the church these four responsibilities: worship God, connect with others, grow in God's Word, and go tell the world about Christ. It is important that our children understand the heart behind what the church is meant to be and that our children allow Christ to transform their hearts to serve Him through His church.

We go to church to worship our God who has saved each of us and given us a personal relationship with Him. We go to church to come together to celebrate our Heavenly Father by giving Him our worship. Our children should see families living their lives side-by-side, sharing experiences, caring for each other, being open with one another, and praying together. Our children should know that the church is a place where they can grow in their faith and gain the knowledge that will help them grow closer to the Lord and live a more abundant life. In other words, our children should know the church is a place where we can be transformed. Finally, the church leads us to the point where we must open our eyes and our hearts to step out and follow the nudging of the Holy Spirit to reach the world around us.



## Why Do Our Elementary-age Children Attend Worship With Their Parents?

Worship is a place for families. It is an environment for families to grow together spiritually. With our chaotic lives—school, work, soccer, and dance, etc.—our families need time together in peace. Children need calm and security, which doesn't always happen at home. Sitting in worship, holding hands, and speaking Scriptures and prayers together can give our families a respite. It's our hope that families will be able to incorporate these practices in their daily lives away from church as well.

Although we like for church to be fun, there are several other adjectives that seem like more important descriptors of what church should be: spiritual, educational, and transforming are a few. Church is a time of holiness, an opportunity to grow in our understanding of God's love for us and His desires for our lives. Children can experience and appreciate this if given the opportunity. Children of all ages are able to enjoy music and prayers and begin to learn valuable lessons, even from sermons aimed at adults. They will also see that they are a special part of a larger congregation of people, the church body.

We know that sitting in church can be difficult for young ones, but, when prepared, children can meet high expectations. Let them know, lovingly, that you expect them to sit still, stay quiet, and pay attention during the service. You may want to practice this. You may want to take your child into the sanctuary when it's empty. Sit in the pews and experience the silence. Show them the quiet voice to use when speaking in church so if they have a question, they can ask it appropriately. Tell them what'll happen during the service, where the musicians stand, how they take up offering, etc. But, always remember kids are kids. We all have restless days and fussy moments, and children don't have the ability to control that as much as adults do. There will always be days when worship seems impossible, but it's those days that we simply honor Jesus' words to "let the children come."

Just like so many other things, children learn to worship by observing others. Embrace the time you have each Sunday with your child during worship. Help your child find the Scripture reference in the Bible, help him or her take notes, and point to the words as you sing. What a privilege it is to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords with your church family and especially your children each week.

# Why Should My 7-Year-Old Attend Sunday School?

Although there is nothing more important than parents' influence in their child's spiritual life, the relationships your child builds in Sunday school with his or her teachers and peers are also very important. Below are ten reasons why your child should attend Sunday school:

**1. Age-targeted teaching:** Where else can your kids get biblical instruction that meets them at their developmental level? Sunday school provides a place of spiritual growth designed to meet your child at his or her individual grade level.

**2. Friendship:** In Sunday school, your children will build positive friendships with their peers as they discover God's Word together. These Sunday school friends will become a great support and encouragement to your children as they grow in their faith together throughout their preteen and teen years.

**3. Fun:** Sunday school is not Disney Land, but teachers work hard to teach the Bible in ways that are relevant and fun for kids.

**4. Spiritual mentors:** A dedicated teacher can be a Christian role model who both supports your work as a parent and helps inspire the faith of your child.

**5. Systematic Bible teaching:** The curriculum of Immanuel Baptist Church is designed to give a broad foundation, so children will understand how all the parts of Scripture point to Christ and how it applies to their lives.

**6. Prayer support from teachers:** Teachers at Immanuel Baptist Church consistently pray for your child's faith to grow. Coming to Sunday school gives another occasion for God to answer those requests.

**7. Exposure to Christian teaching:** If you're already coming for

worship, just come a little earlier or stay a little later. Did you know that one change will equal over 600 hours of additional Christian teaching before your child graduates? That's a big reward for a small investment!

**8. The right message:** Making Sunday school a priority shows your kids that God's Word really does matter more than sleep, the lake, sports, dance, etc.

**9. Best gift ever:** There's absolutely nothing more valuable than your child's relationship with Jesus. Bringing your children to Sunday school, in addition to discipleship at home, will equip your children to grow in God's Word and in their relationship with Jesus Christ.





# *Discipling As You Go*

## What is Discipling As You Go?

Deuteronomy 6 is clear in its instructions to parents: constantly, as you live your life, be an example and train your children to follow the Lord. As parents, it is important for us to live a consistent life of faith in front of our children. As things happen in life, we should use those events to train our children, not only in right and wrong, but also in how to make decisions to live the abundant life that Christ has for us. We should model and explain how God's truth should be the standard of how we live our lives. In other words, even from the beginning, we should teach wisdom rather than the facts of "do's and don'ts." Faith is much easier caught than taught. Parents should always help their children see life's decisions through the lenses of our faith.



## Parenting Tools: *Prayer*

“Pray without ceasing,” says 1 Thessalonians 5:17. One of the best ways to disciple your children as you go is share with them the joys of ceaseless prayer. Here are some ideas for incorporating prayer into everyday life with your 7-year-old:

- **Praying in the car** If an ambulance or fire truck passes you with its lights on while you’re driving, use this time to pray out loud for those who might be involved in the emergency. Always pray for the spiritual condition as well as the physical condition of the people involved in the accident. This is a good time to teach your children that we are called to pray for others (Job 42:10; 1 Timothy 2:1; James 5:16), and to show we care for others, even people we don’t know. It also shows that we believe in the power of prayer (1 John 5:14-15; Mark 11:24; John 15:7).

- **Praying at the dinner table** After Christmas, keep your old Christmas cards, and put them in a basket. At dinner, pass around the basket, and let each person choose a card out of it. When you bless the meal, have each person say a prayer for the family represented by the card. Again, this teaches our children that God calls us to pray for others (Job 42:10; 1 Timothy 2:1; James 5:16) and that we believe in the importance and power of prayer (1 John 5:14-15; Mark 11:24; John 15:7).

## Parenting Tools: *Caught in the Act*

Children have always been mischievous; it could be called the Adam and Eve syndrome. A child waits until he thinks adults are not looking then does what he has been told not to do. That is human nature and it is not going to change.

How should parents handle an incident when their child is caught in the act of doing something they have been told not to do? The answer to that question lies in the literal meaning of the word “discipline,” which is to create a disciple. From that point of view, discipline is a process by which parents transform a willful child into a willing disciple. This is accomplished not by manipulating consequences, but by providing the child with effective leadership.

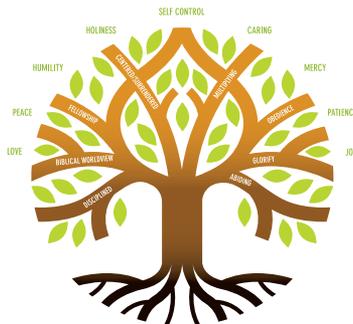
# Parenting Tools: *Leadership & Process*

## Parental Leadership:

- Always disapprove of the wrongful act, but always approve of your child. This is called unconditional love.
- Lead by example. Leaders do not expect others to do what they have not done themselves or are unwilling to do.
- Teach wisdom; give them reasons why we choose to be disciples of Christ. Explain the heart behind the action.
- Be decisive and be willing to make unpopular decisions
- Be consistent and stay the course.
- Set boundaries

## Process:

- Attitudes are caught over a period of time
- There is no one decision that builds a disciple. There are day in and day out decisions that lead to a consistent building of a disciple.
- Allow your child to suffer the consequences and do not soften the landing for them. This provides experience, which will shape your child's character. We learn from experience.
- Trust the Lord to bring the right people and circumstances into your child's life to also shape the person that they become.



**Discipline is a process by which parents transform a willful child into a willing disciple.**