

Develop a Milestone Ministry and Equip Families to Build Faith @ Home

The church has a biblical mandate to make disciples of all nations as found in Matthew 28:19-20 and the family has a mandate to make disciples of children at home as found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. How can a church help parents become the primary disciple makers of their children? One strategy gaining momentum in churches is to develop a milestone ministry.

Brian Haynes, author of the book, *Shift*, identifies a milestone as “an event preceded by a period of instruction by parents and the church to be celebrated as God works in a person’s life. Each milestone marks an individual’s progression along a life path of spiritual formation. Milestones naturally connect with Christian families in important seasons of life.” Similar terms used to describe milestones are “rites of passage” or “spiritual markers.”

A brief glance at your church will likely reveal that you already have some elements of a milestone ministry in place. Many churches have child dedications, give out Bibles to children, baptize children after salvation, etc. All of these events are significant milestones or rites of passage in a child’s life. Enhance what you are already doing with these events or experiences by equipping parents to build up the faith of their children at home. So where do you start?

1. Discover milestone events already present in your church. Here are some examples: Baby dedication, transition of child attending “big church,” receiving first Bible, salvation, baptism, first communion, children’s camp, moving from children’s ministry to student ministry, first youth camp, first mission trip, purity ceremony, high school graduation, and eventually marriage. Your church may have other events or events like these with different names.

2. Choose one milestone event and identify the details. We’ll use a child dedication service as an example. In most churches this involves making an announcement of the date for the special service which often coincides with Mother’s Day. Parents sign up their child so that their names and the child’s name can be printed in the bulletin often with a cute picture of the baby. Parents then show up on the day of the service and stand in front of the congregation as the names are announced and the baby is given a small Bible. The young families stand in front of the church as the pastor prays for their families.

3. Brainstorm ways to equip parents through this milestone. We’ll continue to use the example of a child dedication service. Utilize this time to teach key passages of Scripture about parenting. Don’t assume most parents know what the Bible says about parents. Here are a few key passages: Deut. 6:4-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Prov. 22:6; Luke 2:39-40, 51-52; Eph. 6:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:14-17. Encourage them to memorize Deut. 6:4-9 and ask themselves the question, “How can we put this passage into practice in our home?” Ask a parent with older children to share some of the things they did to disciple their children at home. Encourage them to write out one intentional goal for their family that the pastor will share during the parent-child dedication service. Walk them through the nursery area, children’s area, and student area explaining how your church will help them along the way and encouraging them to be intentional in their home.

4. Develop strategic plans to equip parents prior to the event. After you’ve brainstormed a variety of ways to equip parents, then you’ll need to narrow them down to a few key things that you can realistically accomplish in your church context. Write out your ideas and how much time you will need to equip parents.

5. Identify who is best qualified to lead this training. In some churches this would be the pastor. In other churches it may be an education minister, children's minister, student minister, or committed lay person. You may choose to involve a variety of people in leading this parent training prior to the child dedication service.

6. Calendar the milestone event and training time(s) prior to the event. Make sure there are no conflicts with other events or training times at your church. Most parents, even those who are nominally committed to the church, will make it a point to participate in this kind of service. Some churches require parents to attend a series of consecutive training times on Sundays leading up to the event from one to three Sundays.

7. Publicize the training sessions required before attending the event. Make sure you do this well in advance in bulletins, verbal announcements, power point slides, church newsletters, and Sunday school announcements. Develop a section on your church website that provides information and resources for equipping parents through these milestone experiences.

8. Lead the training and the event. Provide good resources during the training. Show parents what you want them to do instead of just telling them what to do.

9. Evaluate and make adjustments for future milestone events. This will provide some feedback so you can continue to improve in your goal of equipping parents. How well did this training equip parents? How memorable was the event?

Once you have worked through this process with one milestone event then you can work through this process with other milestone events as you develop a strategy to equip parents to disciple their children through the natural stages from birth to leaving the home. Focus on equipping parents to disciple their children at each specific milestone stage. This equipping will enable parents to become more effective at passing the faith along to the next generation.

Contact Ben Phillips (bphillips@absc.org) with the Church Health Team at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention if you would like some help in developing this type of milestone strategy in your church. Other resources to help you along the journey are Brian Hayne's book, [Shift: What it Takes to Finally Reach Families Today](#), and his website [Legacy Milestones](#) for additional information, and [Faith Path](#) resources for parents by Lakepointe Baptist Church.

MILESTONE MINISTRY STRATEGIES

RESOURCE	Family Faith Celebrations Set	Spiritual Milestones	Shift	Faith Path	Take it Home	Sticky Faith Milestone Moments	Joshua Stones
AUTHOR	Group Publishing	Jim Weidmann	Brian Haynes	Kurt Bruner	Mark Holmen David Texeira	Kara Powell	
WEBSITE	http://store.grouppublishing.com	http://heritagebuilders.com	http://www.legacymilestones.com	www.lakepointe.org/faithpath/	http://www.faiathome.com/church-leader-resources/	http://stickyfaith.org/articles/milestones-of-faith	http://www.vbmb.org/resources/Joshua-Stones/default.cfm
MILESTONE #	6	6	7	12	13	14	14
	1. Baby Blessing Kit	1. The Testimony: Baptism	Milestone 1: The Birth of a Baby	1. Parent Dedication (Birth – 2 years)	1. Baby Dedication (Newborns)	1. Birth: Baptism (Parent-Child Dedication)	1. New Baby
	2. First Bible Kit	2. The Memorial: Communion	Milestone 2: Faith Commitment	2. Blessing (Ages 3+)	2. Family Blessings (Two-year olds)	2. Kindergarten: Lord's Prayer	2. Family Dedication
	3. Faith Commitment Kit	3. The Ring: Commitment to Purity	Milestone 3: Preparing for Adolescence	3. Family Time (Ages 4+)	3. Family Devotions (Three-year olds)	3. 1 st Grade: John 3:16	3. School
	4. Preteen Passage Kit	4. The Rite of Passage: Crossing into Adulthood	Milestone 4: Commitment to Purity	4. Prepare to Lead Your Child to Christ (Age 5+)	4. My Church (Preschoolers – 4years)	4. 2 nd Grade: First Bible	4. First Bible
	5. Commitment to Purity Kit	5. The High School Blessing: Worldview	Milestone 5: Passage to Adulthood	5. Prayer (Ages 6+)	5. Family Prayer (4-5year olds)	5. 3 rd Grade: First Communion	5. Profession of Faith
	6. High School Graduation Kit	6. The Wedding: Extending the heritage	Milestone 6: High School Graduation	6. Bible (Ages 7+)	6. Family Service Projects (1 st graders)	6. 4 th Grade: 10 Commandments	6. Baptism
			Milestone 7: Life in Christ	7. Worship (Ages 8+)	7. Family Worship (2 nd graders)	7. 5 th Grade: Apostle's Creed	7. Service Projects
				8. Giving and Serving (Ages 9+)	8. My Bible (3 rd graders)	8. 6 th Grade: Martin Luther	8. Mission Trip
				9. Preparing for Adolescence (Ages 11+)	9. Money and me (4 th and 5 th graders)	9. 7 th Grade: Youth Bible and Confirmation	9. Graduation
				10. Purity (Ages 13+)	10. Computer Boundaries (Teens)	10. 8 th Grade: Confirmation	10. Engagement
				11. Rite of Passage (Ages 16+)	11. Faith Mentoring (Teens)	11. 9 th Grade: Discipleship	11. Wedding
				12. Launch (Ages 18+)	12. Talking about Dating (Teens)	12. 10 th Grade: Gifting	12. New Home
					13. Looking into the Future (Teens)	13. 11 th Grade: Retreat.	13. Call to Ministry
						14. 12 th Grade: Commissioning	14. Celebration of Life



TEACH Faith @ Home

31 Day Parenting Challenge

Develop a biblical theology of parenting by reading, meditating, and applying a different passage of Scripture once a day for 31 days.

Day	Read the Key Passage (Understand the context)	Reflect on Key Verse(s) (Apply these verses)
1	Genesis 1, 2	Genesis 1:26-31; 2:15-25
2	Genesis 18:1-19	Genesis 18:19
3	Exodus 12	Exodus 12:24-28
4	Exodus 13	Exodus 13:8-10, 14-16
5	Exodus 20	Exodus 20:5-6, 12
6	Deuteronomy 4	Deuteronomy 4:9-10, 40
7	Deuteronomy 5	Deuteronomy 5:9-10, 16
8	Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 6:4-9
9	Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 11:18-21
10	Joshua 4	Joshua 4:6-7, 21-24
11	Joshua 24	Joshua 24:14-15
12	Judges 2:6-23	Judges 2:10
13	1 Samuel 1, 2	1 Samuel 2:22-26
14	Job 1	Job 1:1-5
15	Psalms 78	Psalms 78:1-8
16	Psalms 127	Psalms 127:1-5
17	Psalms 128	Psalms 128:1-6
18	Psalms 145	Psalms 145:4-7
19	Proverbs 1	Proverbs 1:8-9
20	Proverbs 4	Proverbs 4:1-4
21	Proverbs 6	Proverbs 6:20-23
22	Proverbs 22	Proverbs 22:6
23	Joel 1	Joel 1:3
24	Malachi 4	Malachi 4:6
25	Luke 2:21-52	Luke 2:39-40, 51-52
26	Acts 16	Acts 16:11-15, 29-34
27	Ephesians 5:21-6:4	Ephesians 6:1-4
28	Colossians 3:18-25	Colossians 3:20-21
29	1 Timothy 3; Titus 1	1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12-13, Tit. 1:6
30	2 Timothy 3:10-17	2 Timothy 3:14-17
31	1 Thessalonians 2:1-16	1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

KEY RESOURCES

Parent Equipping Ideas

Chanley, Michael: *Collaborate: Family + Church*
 Group: *130 Ways to Involve Parents in Youth Ministry*
 Group: *Children's Ministry in the 21st Century*
 Group: *Family Friendly Ideas Your Church Can Do*
 Powell, Kara: *Sticky Faith*
 Roehlkepartain, Jolene: *Nurturing Faith in Families*

Parenting Vision and Strategy

Joiner, Reggie: *Think Orange, Parenting Beyond Your Capacity*
 Anthony, Michelle: *Dreaming of More for the Next Generation*
 Baucham, Voddie: *Family Driven Faith*
 Erwin, Pamela: *The Family Powered Church*
 Freudenburg, Ben: *The Family Friendly Church*
 Hemphill, Ken: *Parenting with Kingdom Purpose*
 Holmen, Mark: *Church + Home*
 Jones, Timothy: *Family Ministry Field Guide*
 Kimmel, Tim: *Connecting Church and Home*
 Rienow, Rob: *Visionary Parenting*

Parents Discipling Children

Arthur, Kay: *How to Study Your Bible*
 Capps, Todd: *I'm a Christian Now (Younger, Older child)*
 Durbin, Kara: *Parenting with Scripture*
 Haynes, Brian: *Legacy Path*
 Holmen, Mark: *Faith Begins at Home*
 MacArthur, John: *A Faith to Grow On*
 Murphy, Art: *The Faith of a Child*
 Trent, John: *Spiritual Growth of Children*
 Tripp, Tedd: *Shepherding a Child's Heart*
 Turansky, Scott: *The Christian Parenting Handbook*
 Ware, Bruce: *Big Truths for Young Hearts*
 Younts, Jay: *Everyday Talk*

Parents Leading Family Devotions

Ascol, Thomas: *Truth & Grace Memory Books 1, 2, 3*
 Family Nights series by Heritage Builders
 Haidle, Helen: *What Would Jesus Do Today? A 1 Year Devotional*
 Ham, Ken: *A is for Adam*
 Hibbard, Ann: *Family Celebrations: Meeting Christ in Your Holidays*
 Hunt, Susan: *My ABC Bible Verses: Hiding God's Word in Little Hearts*
 Keffer, Lois: *Preschool, Elementary Family FUNstuff Bible Stories*
 McDowell, Josh: *One Year book of Family Devotions*
 Spraggett, Daphne & Jill Johnstone: *Window on the World*
 Swindoll, Charles: *Paw Paw Chuck's Big Ideas in the Bible*

Parents Reading Bible Story Books

Bible: *Serendipity Bible for Groups*
 Beers, V. Gilbert: *What Everyone Should Know about the Bible*
 Boa, Ken: *The 52 Greatest Stories of the Bible: A Devotional Study*
 Cromarty, Jim: *A Year with Your Children in the Bible*
 Helm, David: *The Big Picture Story Bible*
 Lloyd-Jones, Sally: *The Jesus Storybook Bible*
 Meade, Starr: *Mighty Acts of God: A Family Bible Story Book*
 NKJV: *Greatest Stories of the Bible*

Parents Discussing Sexuality with Children

Jones, Stan & Brenna: *Book 1: The Story of Me (Ages 3-5)*
 Jones, Stan & Brenna: *Book 2: Before I was Born (Ages 5-8)*
 Jones, Stan & Brenna: *Book 3: What the Big Deal? (Ages 8-11)*
 Jones, Stan & Brenna: *Book 4: Facing the Facts (Ages 11-14)*