

home & car discipleship

Helping our children find and follow Jesus in the flow of normal life

Children are a gift from God. The gift, however, is not actually the child. Rather, the gift is the privilege of being a parent to this boy or girl, looking after them on God's behalf. This is no easy thing! Life can be complicated and busy: pre-school, school, sports, dance practice, birthday parties, socialising, trips away, technology struggles, negotiating sleepovers, family squabbles... the list goes on. And on top of this, parents are trying to live an adult life as well. No doubt, at times it can feel as though you are running around in circles, with half your life spent in the car. So in the mix of this, what can we do to take up our responsibility of passing on faith in Jesus to our children?



Things to do/ Questions to consider

In Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Moses talks about the commands from the Lord that the people need to follow and how they are to pass these on to future generations. Let's use this as a guide to help us think about discipling our children.

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (printed on next page) and consider the following questions:

Generations

6:2 "you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God"

- It isn't enough to just help your children. The third generation also needs to be considered. What parts of your faith and life would you want to see your (potential or actual) grandchildren holding to?

Example of Parents

6:5 "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength"

- Family members get to see more of 'the real you' than others do. What might your children have to hear and see of you for them to believe you love the Lord? Or alternatively, what might be typical signs to show them you aren't doing as well at this as you might normally do?

Different ways to communicate faith

6:7 "Impress them on your children"

In other Bible versions, this verse says:

"tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time..." (CEV)

"Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are..." (The Message)

Verse 7 goes on to talk about different settings to do this:

6:7 "talk about them when you sit at home..."

- What can you do to nurture faith while sitting at the dinner table?

6:7 "...and when you walk (drive) along the road"

- How can you make the most of your "captured car-time" together?

6:7 "...when you lie down and when you get up."

- Are there some bed-time or morning routines you could try with your children involving the Bible and/or prayer?

6:9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

- What messages does your home environment communicate? (paintings/pictures, books, furniture layout, ...). To help promote godliness and good relationships, are there any visual or physical changes to your home that you could try?

Heart vs Going through the motions

6:6 "these commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts"

- Routines can be useful but they can also cause you to get stuck in a rut. How will you know if your family has 'faith routines' that have lost connection with the heart? What can you do about it?

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. ⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Thought to finish

In all likelihood, most of us feel we could do better to help our children know Jesus and grow in faith. Fortunately, the Lord knows our weaknesses and he remembers that we are dust (Psalm 103:14). Rather than beating ourselves up about it, let's just do the best we can with what we've got and prayerfully trust the Lord to fill in the gaps. Let's pray for something we can do this week to disciple our children, then do it. And let's pray the same again next week, and the week after. They may seem like little things to us, but the Lord is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine with our efforts to build faith in these children he loves so much. Try it. It could be the most important thing you do all week.