



Small Group Guide: Discipling the Next Generation

Series: Church Maintenance

Overview

This session explores one of the most urgent and often overlooked responsibilities in the life of the church: intentionally discipling our children and grandchildren. The sermon challenges us to examine whether the church is merely functioning or truly fulfilling the mission Jesus gave us -- to make disciples. It calls parents, grandparents, and the broader church community to take seriously their role in passing the faith to the next generation.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus did not call us to gather church attenders. He called us to make disciples. That is the mission of every follower of Christ.
- Discipleship is not a one-time class or a short series. It is a lifelong way of life that should be as central as prayer and reading Scripture.
- Parents and grandparents hold the primary responsibility for discipling their children. The church comes alongside them but was never designed to replace them.
- Children are not the church of tomorrow. They are the church of today. God has always used young people, and He still does.
- If we do not disciple our children, someone else will. The culture around us is already doing it.
- Discipleship is generational. What we pour into our children, they will pour into theirs.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Think back to your own childhood. Was there a person -- a parent, grandparent, teacher, or church member -- who intentionally poured into your faith? What did that look like, and how did it shape you?

Diving Deeper

1. The sermon described the church as potentially having a "check engine light" on -- still functioning, but not functioning correctly. In what ways do you think the church today might be functioning without truly fulfilling its mission of making disciples?
2. The pastor said, ***"Discipleship wasn't a ministry in the first century church. It was the ministry."*** What do you think it would look like for discipleship to be the central focus of a church rather than just one program among many?
3. In **Matthew 28:18-20**, Jesus gives the Great Commission to go and make disciples. He does not limit this command to pastors, teachers, or evangelists. How does it change your perspective to know that this command is for every follower of Christ, regardless of how long they have been saved?
4. The sermon walked through the reality that children spend roughly 35 hours a week in school, while the church may have less than six hours of influence on them per month. How does that breakdown challenge or change the way you think about your role in a child's spiritual development?
5. **Deuteronomy 6:6-7** instructs parents to teach God's commands diligently to their children -- when sitting at home, when walking, when lying down, and when rising up. What does that kind of everyday, woven-into-life discipleship actually look like in a modern household?
6. The pastor referenced **2 Timothy 1**, where Paul highlights that Timothy's faith was shaped by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. What does Timothy's story teach us about the power of generational faithfulness, even in imperfect family situations?
7. The sermon made a strong point that children do not need a smaller Jesus or a watered-down gospel. Do you agree? Are there areas where you think the church has underestimated what children can understand or experience

spiritually?

8. **Psalm 78:4** says the community of faith will not hide God's truths from the next generation. How can your small group or church community come alongside parents to help fulfill that promise?
9. The pastor said, "**If we don't disciple our kids, someone else will.**" What are some of the specific messages and ideologies that are actively discipling children in our culture right now? How does that reality create urgency for the church?
10. The sermon closed with the image of passing a baton. Who in your life are you currently passing the baton to? Is there a younger person -- a child, teenager, or young adult -- that you could intentionally invest in?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice this week:

- **Start a simple habit at home.** Whether it is a short prayer before meals, reading one Bible story before bed, or asking your child what they learned about God this week, begin one intentional spiritual practice in your household.
- **Share your testimony with a child.** Find a moment this week to tell a child in your life -- your own or someone else's -- one specific thing God has done for you. Keep it simple and honest.
- **Evaluate your role in the church body.** Prayerfully consider whether you are a consumer or a contributor. Ask God if there is a place -- including children's or youth ministry -- where He is calling you to get involved.
- **Have a conversation with a parent.** If you know a parent who is carrying the weight of discipling their children alone, reach out this week. Offer encouragement, prayer, or practical help.
- **Identify someone to disciple.** Think of one person -- of any age -- that you could begin to intentionally walk alongside in their faith. Pray about how to take one step toward that relationship this week.
- **Memorize the mission.** Write out Matthew 28:18-20 in your own words and place it somewhere you will see it daily as a reminder of the calling every believer shares.

Closing Prayer Focus

As you close your group time, pray together over the following:

- The children and grandchildren represented in your group
- Parents and grandparents who feel overwhelmed or ill-equipped
- Your church's commitment to becoming a disciple-making community
- A willingness to pass the baton to the next generation with intentionality and urgency