



THE NEXT GENERATION HIGHWAY

**Fellowship Kids Jr.
Fellowship Kids
Fellowship Students**



Introduction

Our vision for the Next Generation Ministry here at Fellowship Community Church is to equip volunteers and empower parents to guide the next generation to know God, trust God, and obey God. Our children are precious gifts from God. With this gift comes great responsibility. How do we as parents and as a church body teach, encourage, and empower our students towards living a life of godliness?

“So that a future generation – children yet to be born – might know. They were to rise and tell their children so that they might put their confidence in God and not forget God’s works, but keep His commands.” - Psalm 78:6-7

We must be diligent in the arena of raising the next generation. Things of spiritual value must take top priority in the way we raise our kids. These things should be firmly grounded in the way we raise the next generation.

One of our priorities here at Fellowship is to pursue a commitment to the next generation. Our whole church family has a part to play in this. Parents that are committed to direct their child’s mind to the Bible, God’s Holy Word, and their feet to fellowship in the body of Christ; to restrain them from all harmful habits and associates; and as much as lies in us to bring our child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A church family that is committed as the Body of Christ to support and encourage these parents as they endeavor to fulfill their responsibilities to their children and assist them by nurturing their child’s growth toward spiritual maturity.

Plan for Partnership

While the role of the church is significant in a child’s or student’s life, the role of the parent or guardian is critical. The amount of time the church has to disciple children and students pales in comparison to the amount parents or guardians have with them. The Next Gen Highway book is structured to show how parents and the church can work together to disciple children and students. As you look at the various sections of the book, you will notice there are commitments of the church and responsibilities of the parents. These two sections are designed to create understanding about how the church and parents can partner together in discipleship of children and students.



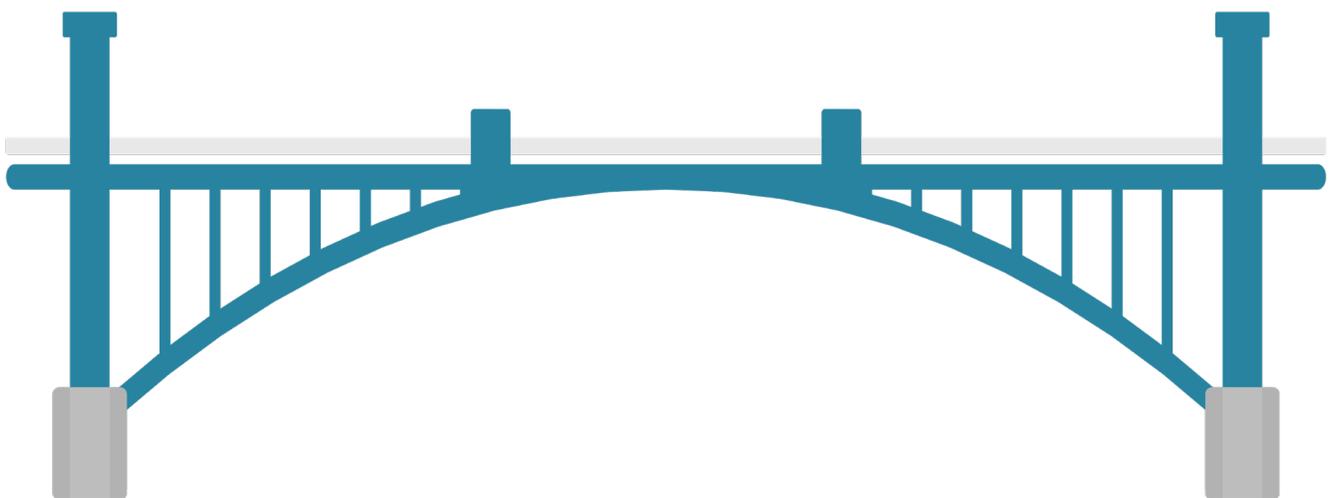
Introduction of Mile Markers

The Next Gen Highway focuses on the journey that our students are on, in the infancy stage to graduating high school. From the point of showing a Christ like love and care for them as infants to the point of equipping them for living in the world as ambassadors for Christ. When they enter into the adulthood part of their journey we want them to be adults that love Jesus Christ, correctly handle the Bible and are saturated in God's Truth, and live their lives with Biblical values. Mile markers help us look for signs of growth. Progress in the right direction.



Introduction of Bridges

Within each of these Mile Markers are bridges that our students come up to. Sometimes we come up to obstacles on road trips that can keep us from getting to our destination. Thankfully we have bridges that resolve those challenges. As our students grow in their faith, there are questions that come up. Challenging questions that we all need to find answers for at some point in our spiritual journey. We don't want these questions to become something that stops their growth. We want to help them find the answers to these questions from a Biblical viewpoint (God's answers). This will help them build a bridge over these obstacles to keep moving forward on this journey. Note: This doesn't mean we avoid it. This means we help them find the answers.



A: Goals

God loves our children and students unconditionally and is always working in them to form them to become more like Christ. Formation into Christ is an ongoing process. It's important they know that transformation doesn't happen overnight, but that God is always at work in them (Philippians 1:6) Christ-like behavior is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in them as they live with Jesus and practice rhythms that will help them listen to the voice of the Spirit. Godly behavior is not the result of trying harder; it is the result of training our hearts and minds to listen to the voice of God through his Spirit in us. One of the best gifts parents give their children is the gift of example; as you live with Jesus and practice rhythms that help you love God, self, and others in Christ-like ways, you will provide a path of understanding and example for your children.

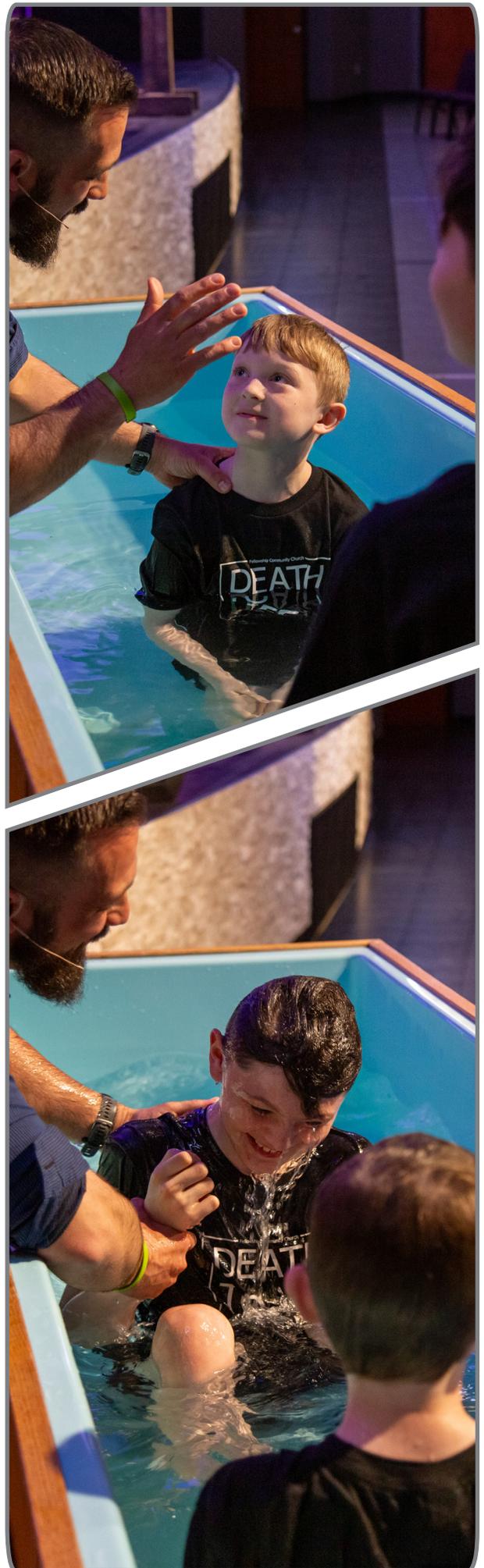
B: Commitment of the Church

Fellowship Community Church commits to creating a spiritual formation plan that endeavors to model spiritual rhythms in the church environment and encourages parents to model these at home. Through partnering together and providing teaching and resources, we want to empower parents to guide their families. This will enable parents to take the lead of faith-training their children and students.

Fellowship Community Church also commits to creating a safe and loving environment that allows children and students to grow in their walk with Jesus and to see ministry leaders and volunteers model a healthy, growing relationship with Christ. We will equip volunteers to engage children and students in relational ways that reflect the values of scripture.

C: Parent's Responsibility

As parents, we encourage you to commit to intentionally investing in your children's spiritual formation and their personal walk with Christ. As you model faith, you will create an environment in your home that honors Christ through the rhythms practiced, the words spoken, and the actions displayed. We encourage you to continually practice spiritual rhythms and be on your own journey of learning so that you can pass on a vibrant, authentic faith in both formal and informal ways. You are the primary discipler in your child's life.



Overview of Mile Markers & Bridges

NURTURE

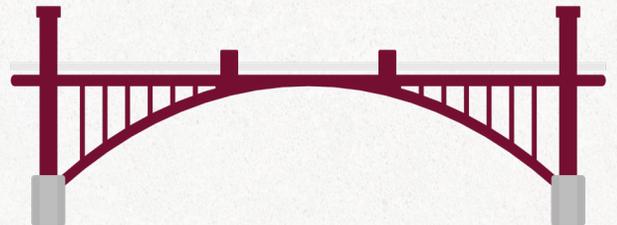
Nurture: Birth - PreK

Nurturing children as babies, toddlers, and preschoolers so that they know they are safe and loved.

Bridge 1: Birth - 18 months
Am I safe?

Bridge 2: 18 months - 3 years
Am I capable?

Bridge 3: 3 years - PreK
Do I have a voice?



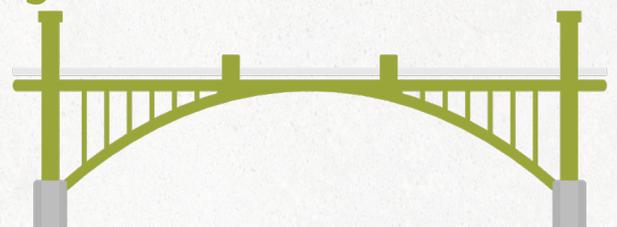
BUILD

Build: Kindergarten - 5th grade

Facilitating children's growth in using their imaginations to discover the beauty of how their story intersects with God's big story.

Bridge 4: K - 2nd grade
Who is God?

Bridge 5: 3rd - 5th grade
What does Christian community look like?
Do I have a part to play?

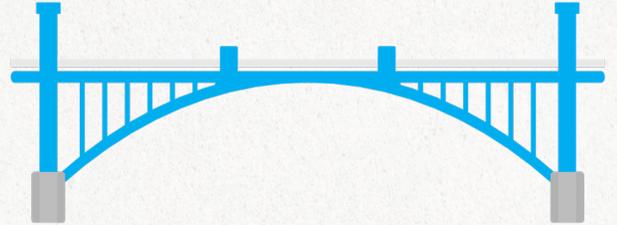




Guide: 6th – 8th grade

Affirming each student's worth and identity, honestly answering and encouraging their difficult questions and concerns with love and grace.

Bridge 6: 6th – 8th grade Who am I?

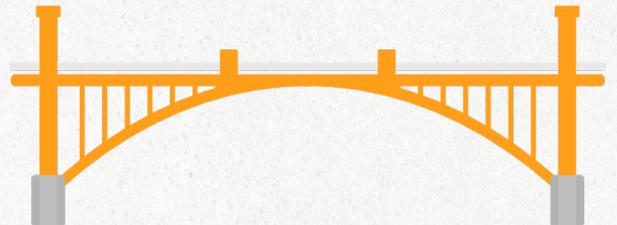


Launch: 9th – 12th grade

Assisting students in owning their faith and helping them to learn the value of serving others and making wise decisions regarding next steps into adulthood.

Bridge 7: 9th – 10th grade What do I believe? Where do I belong?

Bridge 8: 11th – 12th grade How will I matter? What will I do?



Birth - PreK



FUTURE

Mile Marker 1: Nurture

Nurturing children as babies, toddlers, and preschoolers so that they know they are safe and loved.

Bridge 1

A: Goals

- Experience love, security, discipline, joy, and worship in the nursery
- Create environments that develop awareness and concepts of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Church, and the Bible



B: Church's Commitment

Make prayer an important time in the room. Model active worship by singing and praising the Lord. Build relationships with children and parents.

C: Parent's Responsibility

Take time to pray with your children, preferably each day. Model Bible reading at home. Emphasize the positive things you see and experience at church and that you are excited to be a part of a local church. Remind your children regularly and consistently that you love them and that God loves them deeply.



Bridge 2

A: Goals

- Introduce basic characteristics of God and Jesus
- Recognize the Bible as God's special book, his Word to us
- Develop inquisitive interest when learning about the Bible
- Understand and practice prayer as talking and listening to God
- Understand why obedience to parents and teachers pleases God
- Worship God with words and actions



B: Church's Commitment

Help children understand how the Bible helps us learn about and connect with God and that the stories in the Bible are true and about real people. Pray regularly as a class. Read directly from the Bible when teaching a Bible story or memorizing a verse. Talk about how obedience to parents and teachers pleases God. Teach about the characteristics of God and Jesus and how much he loves us. Create time in class for worship.

C: Parent's Responsibility

Practice praying together and reading God's Word together. Consistently expose children to church environments. Talk honestly about what happens there, focusing on positive feelings and experiences. Talk about how God's Word is important. Create time and space in the day to talk to and listen to God.

Am I Capable?



Bridge 3

A: Goals

- Introduce and grow in knowledge of characteristics of God and Jesus
- Recognize the Bible as God's special book, his Word to us
- Memorize Bible verses and stories from the Bible
- Understand the value of and practice prayer as talking and listening to God
- Understand that obedience to parents and teachers is God's plan
- Worship God with words and actions



B: Church's Commitment

Encourage children to bring their Bibles to church and use them regularly during class. Help children to get to know the books of the Bible in order. Start to plant the seed of well-known stories and verses. Help them to recognize that God's plan is for them to obey their parents. Practice praying together.

C: Parent's Responsibility

Practice praying together and reading God's Word together. Consistently expose children to church environments. Talk honestly about what happens there, focusing on positive feelings and experiences. Talk about how God's Word is important and work on memorizing Bible verses together. Create time and space in the day to talk to and listen to God.

Do I have a voice?



K - 5th



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Mile Marker 2: Build

Facilitating children's growth in using their imaginations to discover the beauty of how their story intersects with God's big story.

Bridge 4

A: Goals

- Understand the characteristics and qualities of God and Jesus
- Develop awe and respect for God's Word
- Begin to understand the narrative of God's story and how it affects their day-to-day life and decisions
- Gain familiarity with the books of the Bible.
- Understand the 10 commandments
- Memorize Bible verses
- Understand more deeply who God is and what he has done
- Have an age-appropriate understanding of sin and God's holiness
- Understand the mission of God and what a missionary does
- Begin to develop a way of life based on the Bible
- Understand that others hold different beliefs
- Participate in service projects
- Begin to understand and use the prayer model "God is worthy (praise/reverence), we are needy (requests)" for prayer
- Focus their hearts for worship activities
- Participate in worship services



B: Church's Commitment

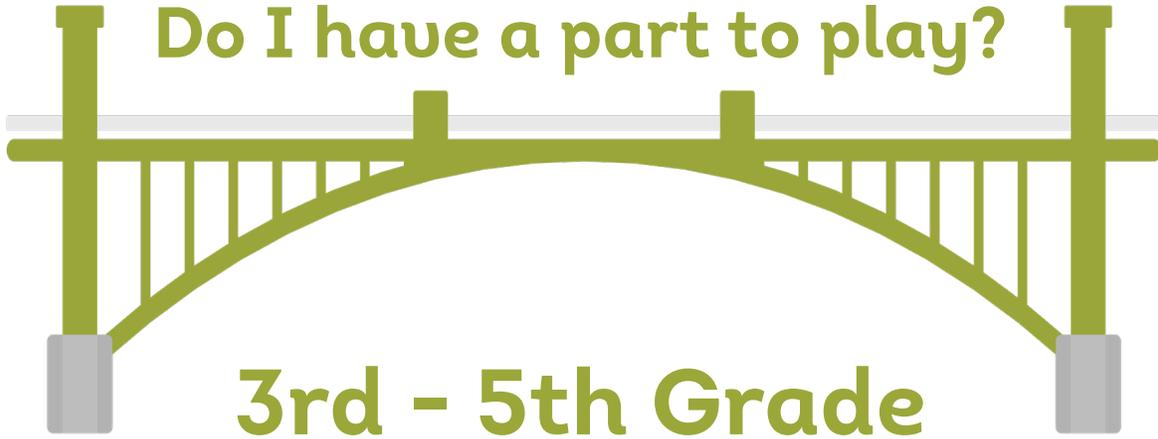
Create opportunities for the class to share about their life and prayer requests, fostering moments for children to pray for one another. Teach about brokenness and sin and God's holiness and desire for redemption. Talk about the mission of God and participate in projects to support missionaries. Encourage relationships through consistent serving. Within small groups, regularly speak about the gospel, sin and brokenness, and the need for salvation and restoration.

C: Parent's Responsibility

Participate in service projects as a family. Make connection with God and others in a church environment a priority and exemplify focusing on the positive aspects of going and being a part of the church body. Talk frequently about God, the gospel, and salvation. Read scripture together as a family and create a rhythm of having personal time with God.

What does Christian community look like?

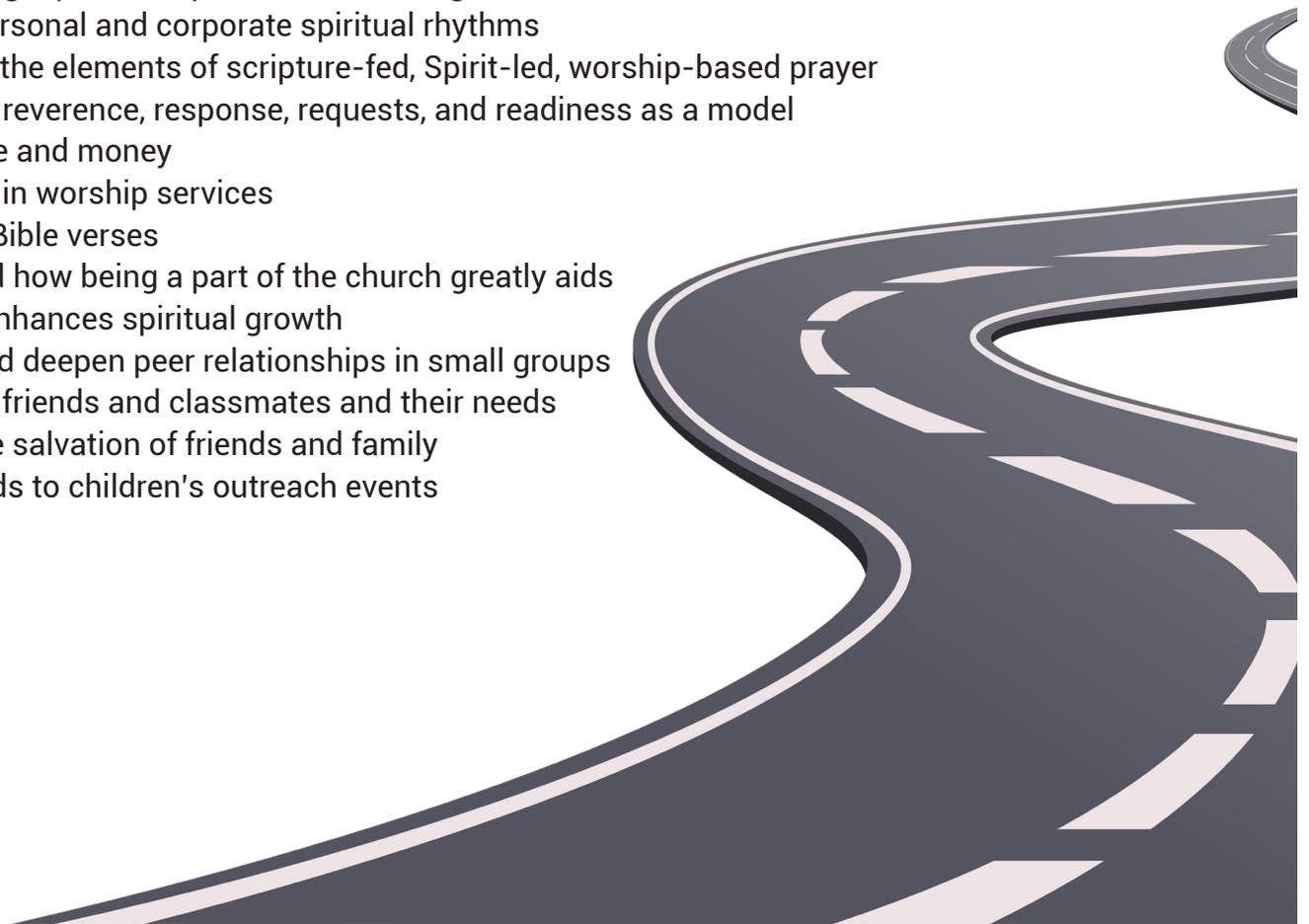
Do I have a part to play?



Bridge 5

A: Goals

- Develop a growing awareness of Christ's love
- Understand the mission of God
- Understand the narrative of God's story and apply it to their life
- Develop healthy attitudes toward self
- Explain the gospel in simple terms, including the need for salvation
- Practice personal and corporate spiritual rhythms
- Implement the elements of scripture-fed, Spirit-led, worship-based prayer using reverence, response, requests, and readiness as a model
- Give of time and money
- Participate in worship services
- Memorize Bible verses
- Understand how being a part of the church greatly aids and enhances spiritual growth
- Develop and deepen peer relationships in small groups
- Care about friends and classmates and their needs
- Pray for the salvation of friends and family
- Invite friends to children's outreach events



B: Church's Commitment

Model scripture-fed, Spirit-led, worship-based prayer by frequently practicing in classes. Foster peer relationships and help them grow deeper in those relationships. Create teachable moments in lessons pointing to the narrative of God's story. Talk to kids about spiritual growth and the mission of the Church.

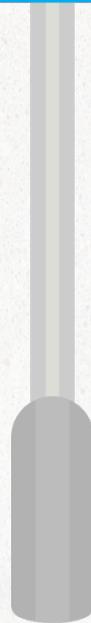
C: Parent's Responsibility

Choose times to consistently take children to worship service and worship as a family. Set an example for daily time with God and help foster this with children. Pray with children, frequently praising God for who he is. Openly talk about other beliefs. Freely speak about peers and friends who have other views and how our Christian worldview intersects with that. Help children invite friends to outreach events. Help children to learn the value of giving and serving with money and time.



6th - 8th

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Mile Marker 3: Guide

Affirming each student's worth and identity, honestly answering and encouraging their difficult questions and concerns with love and grace.

Bridge 6

A: Goals

- Begin to formulate an understanding of their holistic identity in Christ
- Be able to identify areas of struggle and strength in their lives
- Understand the purpose and mission of the Church
- Understand various aspects of church life, including communion, worship, giving, service, etc.
- Understand the necessity (and the joy and struggle) of community and doing life together
- Participate in small groups, events, and retreats
- Regularly participate in worship services with family
- Deepen relationships with peers and leaders
- Regularly practice personal and corporate spiritual rhythms
- Understand and be able to pray through the scripture-fed, Spirit-led, worship-based prayer model
- Understand how to study scripture and regularly engage with it
- Memorize Bible verses
- Understand the purpose of and have a plan for discipleship
- Begin to understand how to live biblically in the wider world
- Develop a heart for God's mission
- Participate in local serving opportunities
- Be able to explain the gospel to others
- Actively invite friends to Fellowship Students



B: Church's Commitment

Create spaces for students to foster deep and meaningful relationships with their peers and leaders. Encourage students to think biblically about their life and identity as they seek to live for Jesus. Teach about identity from a biblical perspective and how that identity informs all aspects of how they live. Encourage active participation in Fellowship Students and Fellowship Community Church. Highlight service opportunities where students can participate. Create an environment for discipleship with adult leaders who will guide students in accordance with scripture and Fellowship Community Church's vision. Talk about the gospel and the importance of following Jesus in all aspects of their lives.

C: Parent's Responsibility

Regularly model the impact of scripture memorization. Highlight the necessity of having healthy relationships with peers and people who speak truth into their lives. Encourage students to participate in Fellowship Students and church services as a family. Create a safe place for your students to ask questions and wrestle with issues surrounding identity and faith. Model what living biblically looks like in all aspects of life and engage students on how they are doing this.

9th - 12th



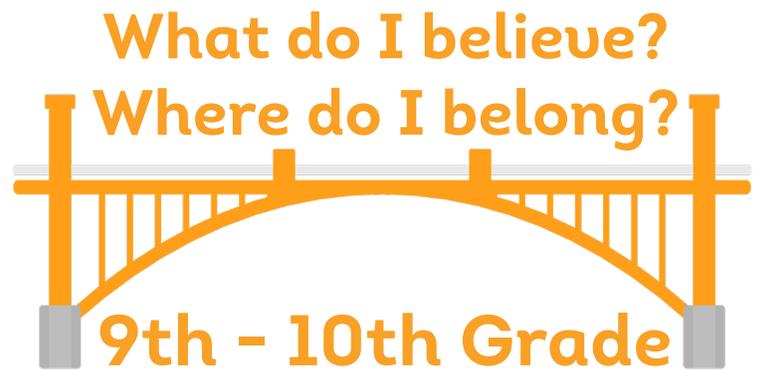
Mile Marker 4: Launch

Assisting students in owning their faith and helping them to learn the value of serving others and making wise decisions regarding next steps into adulthood.

Bridge 7

A: Goals

- Begin to ask questions about why they believe what they believe
- Identify areas of strength and struggle and seek help and guidance
- Address mental health and have access to resources and guidance
- Regularly practice personal and corporate spiritual disciplines
- Learn and practice scripture-fed, Spirit-led, worship-based prayer
- Understand the importance of scripture and regularly engage with it
- Memorize Bible verses
- Understand the purpose of the Church
- Regularly participate in worship services personally and with family
- Experience deepening relationships with peers and leaders
- Participate in small groups
- Develop a heart for God's mission and explain the gospel to peers
- Participate in retreats and local and global missional opportunities
- Engage biblically and lovingly with those who believe differently
- Actively invite friends to Fellowship Students



B: Church's Commitment

Continue to create environments for students to grow deep and meaningful relationships with their peers and leaders. Continue to challenge and encourage students to think biblically about their lives and how they represent Jesus. Challenge students to step out in faith and serve in the church community and begin to encourage them to be disciple-makers. Empower and encourage students to see that they are a vital part of the church. Equip students to bring depth, insight, and needed change with respect and love for all. Highlight the importance of physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental health. Help students formulate language to share their needs and desires for growth in these areas. Forster opportunities for conversations and care for students and families. Continue to talk about identity and sexuality and provide students with a biblical framework to approach these conversations and relationships.

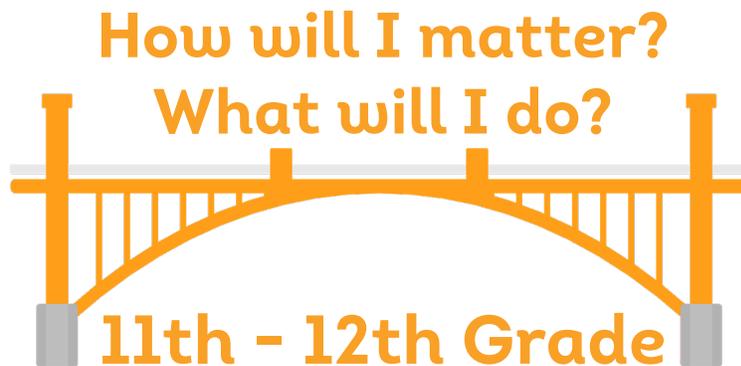
C: Parent's Responsibility

Regularly models rhythms of Bible study, scripture reflection and memorization, prayer, service, worship, etc. Highlight the necessity of having healthy relationships with peers and people who speak truth into their lives. Encourage students to participate in Fellowship Students and worshipping together. Create a safe place for your students to ask questions and wrestle with issues surrounding identity and faith. Model what living biblically looks like in all aspects of life and engage students on how they are doing this.

Bridge 8

A: Goals

- Understand their identity in Christ and how that identity shapes all aspects of their lives
- Understand the core components of the Christian faith
- Construct a faith that is fully their own
- Understand the beauty and hope in reconstruction after deconstruction
- Identify areas of strength and struggle and seek help and guidance
- Respond biblically to issues and questions surrounding sexuality and help others do likewise
- Understand the mission of the Church
- Understand various aspects of church life
- Regularly participate in worship services personally and with family
- Continue to experience deepening relationships with peers and leaders
- Participate in small groups
- Participate in retreats and local and global missional opportunities
- Regularly practice personal and corporate spiritual disciplines
- Understand the importance of scripture and regularly engage with it
- Memorize passages of scripture
- Develop a heart to participate in God's mission
- Explain the gospel to peers
- Consistently invite friends to Fellowship Students



B: Church's Commitment

Create space for students to foster deep and meaningful relationships with their peers and leaders. Encourage students to think biblically about their life and identity as they seek to live for Jesus. Teach about identity from a biblical perspective and how that identity informs all aspects of how they live. Encourage active participation in Fellowship Students and Fellowship Community Church. Highlight service opportunities where students can participate. Create an environment for discipleship to take place with adult leaders who will guide students following scripture and Fellowship Community Church's vision. Talk about the gospel and the importance of following Jesus in all aspects of their lives.

C: Parent's Responsibility

Model the benefits and need for Christian relationships in corporate, small group, and individual environments. Actively model and highlight how the gospel informs and shapes relationship, conversations, and daily living. Practice spiritual rhythms (e.g., prayer, Bible study and reflection, worship, Sabbath, silence and solitude, journaling) and challenge students to practice them as well. Engage students in conversations about identity, individual faith, and understanding how God's Word shapes our hearts and lives. Seek to understand, empathize, lovingly challenge, and listen to students as they wrestle with their faith and identity in Christ. Help students navigate theological points. Encourage students to attend Fellowship Students, church services, Fellowship Students retreats and mission trips, and to serve at Fellowship Community Church and in their community. Continue to cultivate a safe place for conversations with students as they engage in the broader cultural narrative. Regularly check in with students as a sign of love and care, seeking transparent communication and relationship with them.

Explanation of Monuments

Monuments are structures or natural features created to commemorate a person, event, or historical period. Monuments along the Next Gen Highway are places to briefly pull over and remember God's faithfulness, celebrate God's presence, and anticipate God's promises in the future. Intentionally celebrating monuments creates memories that honor significant moments in our student's journey. Monuments are a place for the family and church to celebrate together.



Monument 1: Child Dedication

This first monument allows parents to consider and express their God-given responsibility to pass on their faith to their child as a promise before God and the congregation. Parents affirmed that they have chosen to live with the commands and love of God in their hearts. They agreed to be the primary faith-trainer of their children and will endeavor to introduce their child to Jesus Christ through love, word, and deed.

Monument 2: Passage Ceremony for Incoming Kindergartners

This monument creates an opportunity to talk about God's faithfulness and presence as they take an important step on their journey of faith. Our desire for this ceremony is to affirm God's design for parents as the main disciplers of their children and our commitment to you as a church, specifically as Fellowship Kids Ministry, to partner with you in this discipleship process.



Monument 3: Personal Commitment to Christ

When children make a personal commitment to Christ, they understand that he is their Savior and Lord. This process comes with much discipleship and intentionality as parents and Fellowship Kids Ministry leaders ask guided questions to know where a child is in their spiritual growth. After a child commits to Christ, we celebrate! This is a joyful day for a child, their family, and the church. We are here to help answer the "So what?" and "What's next?" questions as you help your child take their next steps a faith. Your child will receive a small gift to highlight this important decision





Monument 4: Passage Ceremony for Incoming 6th Graders

Into middle and high school ceremonies are not a regular part of all culture, but with purpose and direction, that could have a powerful impact on the discipleship journey of students. As a part of this ceremony, we want you, as parents, to have the opportunity to personally and privately give spiritual inspiration and guidance to your student. As a part of this ceremony, we want you, as parents, to have the opportunity to personally and privately give spiritual inspiration and guidance to your students. This is an opportunity to for you to affirm your commitment to being faithful supporters of your student and to encourage and give direction as they continue to live as a disciple of Jesus, sent to build the kingdom of God.

Monument 5: Baptism

When we commit to following Christ, our entire lives should begin to shift as we become more like him. Instead of focusing on ourselves, we now focus on Christ and his mission. That means we shed who we were as we strive to be more like him. One of the ways we do that is by following the commandment that Jesus gave his disciples in Matthew 28 when he told them to go, make disciples, and baptize them.



Baptism is a public declaration of the inward change Christ has made in our lives. It is a way to show those around us that we belong to Christ and we want our lives to reflect him. We want to provide opportunities for baptism throughout your child's time at Fellowship. We will continue to champion this and offer classes to help them understand what baptism is and what it signifies.

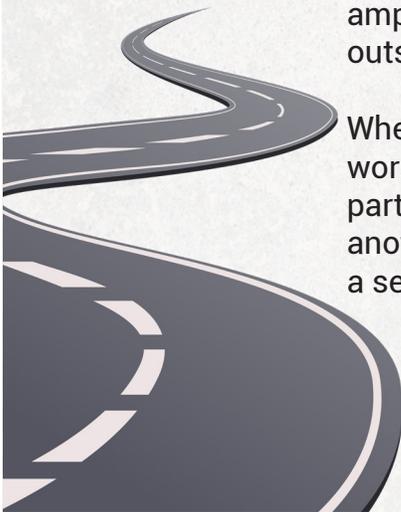


Monument 6: Missional Opportunities

We are committed to providing multiple types of missional opportunities for children and students. As a church, we place a high value on fulfilling the Great Commission and ministering to others in various capacities at all ages.

In Fellowship Kids, we have opportunities to raise support for mission projects with whom we partner. As children move into Fellowship Students, we have ample opportunities for them to explore serving within the church, locally outside of the church, and globally.

Whether it's serving younger children on Sunday mornings, leading each other in worship, or doing a project as a family, we believe that serving as an important part of spiritual growth. Jesus set an example of the significance of serving one another. Giving children opportunities to serve empowers them, helps cultivate a servant heart, and teaches them how to love like Jesus.





Monument 7: Senior Commissioning for 12th Graders

Graduation is a major milestone in the life of a student. It signifies academic and personal struggles. They have figured out the new normal, begun to formulate a biblical worldview and identity, wrestled with difficult questions and conversations, and continued to persevere.

Graduation is an opportunity for our church to recognize our seniors and their successes. We also want to champion them and help them know we are fully behind them as they move forward in their lives. Graduates are beginning a new stage of life as they step out into new academic/career-focused areas that may take them away from Fellowship Community Church and their home. Because of that reality, we are not simply recognizing our seniors but commissioning them. We are launching them to go out and be the disciple-makers we have been helping them to become.

Monument 8: Continue the Journey

Staying connected to church life is key as students move beyond high school. Students are encouraged to actively seek out Christian communities and a local church to be a part of post-high school. For those staying in the Norwalk area or staying connected through visits from time to time, we offer an invitation to participate in our Young Adult Ministry, which is focused on adults ages 18-30. This will continue to help them on their discipleship journey. We take them through the Membership Class to help them see the importance of being a member of a local church and give them an opportunity to join as a member at Fellowship.



So why does it matter?

We know that what we're asking you to do is hard. Life is busy, there are many demands that you face each and every day. Discipling your children and students requires perseverance, patience, and grit. Keep going! Know that we are with you and here to support and walk with you along the way.

The ultimate goal of discipleship is to think, live, and act like Christ. Jesus' teaching on being a disciple is summarized in the greatest commandment, which tells us to Love God, Self, and Others. The Next Gen Highway ultimately is about discipleship that produces a life of love. (Mark 12:30-31)

As we receive the love of God, we respond by loving him, loving ourselves, and loving others in a way that honors Christ. Teaching our children and students that God loves them unconditionally and is always working in them to become more like Christ helps them understand that formation into the character of Christ is an ongoing process. One of the best gifts parents give to their children is the gift of example. As you "live with Jesus" and practice rhythms that help you love God, self, and others in Christ-like ways, you will provide a path of understanding and example for your children.



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