

Design Your MasterPlan

A STEP-BY-STEP CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BLUEPRINT

Why Develop a MasterPlan?

Walking in Jesus' steps and being His disciple is the Christian's highest privilege! That is what Jesus Christ invites His Bride, the Church, to do and to be. An effective, life-changing, and Biblical children's ministry requires an intentional, coordinated strategy. Unfortunately, strategic planning is often neglected in children's ministry. As a direct result, many kids do not reach their full potential in Christ. They fall prey to worldly influences and philosophies. Churches attempt to respond by offering high-energy, entertainment-based programs—wanting to keep kids happy and to make recruiting easy. These short-sighted solutions inevitably lead to severe problems.

The late Francis Schaeffer warned, "We have left the next generation naked in the face of twentieth century thought..." Our kids are spiritually and intellectually ill-equipped to handle the challenges they will inevitably face. Recent studies show that the failure to focus on building disciples contributes significantly to the alarming exodus of teens from the church. Discipleship is the ongoing process whereby believers grow in Biblical knowledge, Christlike character, and faithful conduct—to the glory of God (Deut 6:5-9; Matt 28:18-20). Effective discipleship interweaves these three dimensions: **knowledge + character + conduct** (Luke 2:52; Mark 12:30-31).

What Difference Does Discipleship Make?

God calls the Church to build lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ—growing kids who know God intimately, love Him passionately, and serve Him selflessly. The Bible illumines a finite number of "must know" topics to understand (knowledge), "must be" traits to exhibit (character), and "must do" activities to experience (conduct). When a

child's developmental process includes that knowledge, those traits, and those experiences, you can be reasonably assured that you have done your part to build a lifelong disciple of Jesus Christ.

You *can* make disciples! You *can* shape children to be like Christ—knowing God intimately, loving Him passionately, and serving Him selflessly. You *will* see results! Your kids *will* reach their potential, rising above the challenges they face to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ. Your church *can* become a discipling center!

These five steps outline a procedure designed to assist your ministry team as you plan, prepare, and implement successful ministries for kids in the church and at home. Customize these five steps to fit your particular ministry situation. May the Lord encourage you along the journey—and provide dramatic results in the lives of your children!

1. Determine Your Direction

Formulate a strategy so all your kids' ministries harmonize with each other.

2. Draft Your Dream Team

Gather a "circle of champions" who share God's vision for discipling kids.

3. Makeover Your Ministries

Restructure each program to contribute to your purpose.

4. Promote Your Programs

Generate church-wide passion for discipleship of children.

5. Maintain Your Momentum

Keep your eyes on the Lord and the goal—building lifelong disciples for His glory!

1. Determine Your Direction (Prov 22:6; Eph 4:11-16)

Formulate a strategy so all your kids' ministries harmonize with each other.

- A.** Pray for God's vision for your children's ministry, seeking specific direction for each program.
- B.** Secure responsibility and authority from church leadership for setting the new direction. Provide regular updates on your progress.
- C.** Describe the kids that you want to produce. Begin with the end in mind. List those skills, character traits, knowledge, and

behaviors that you want to build into your disciples. The resource, "Reach Your Potential" will help you get started (download at DiscipleLand.com/training).

- D.** Repurpose ministry programs to ensure that each has a unique identity. The focus of each program should complement and balance the others. Examples:

Ministry Program (frequency)	Primary Purpose make disciples via:	Discipleship Venue (age levels)
SUNDAY SCHOOL (weekly, year-round)	Bible learning	closely-graded classes (preschool—grade 6)
KIDS CHURCH (weekly, year-round)	worship, fellowship	combined-age groups (preschool, grades 1-4)
MIDWEEK/CLUB (weekly, Sept—May)	skill development, Christian service	closely-graded classes (K—grade 6)
AT HOME (daily, 24/7)	Christian formation, nurturing	parents, one-on-one (birth—grade 6)
SPECIAL* (seasonal/occasional)	evangelism, missions, family	multi-age groups (varies)

**Vacation Bible School, family conference, missions awareness, etc.*

2. Draft Your Dream Team (2 Tim 2:2; 1 Thess 2:11-12)

Gather a "circle of champions" who share God's vision for discipling kids.

- A.** Pray for discernment as you consider individuals to direct each ministry program.
- B.** Select the very best ministry leaders. Seek people who are capable, faithful, and respected "team players." Meet with each person one-on-one. Enthusiastically communicate the Lord's

vision and challenge him or her to supervise a ministry. Provide job descriptions, as appropriate. Assure leaders of your encouragement and support. Ask each person to pray for God's direction and to get back with you soon with a decision.

3. Makeover Your Ministries *(Deut 6:5-9; Matt 28:18-20)*

Restructure each program to contribute to your purpose—building lifelong disciples.

- A.** Pray for wisdom as you establish goals, train workers, and consider ministry needs.
- B.** Choose the very best resources to accomplish your ministry goals for each child. Tailor curriculum for each ministry. Carefully scrutinize learning objectives. Ensure that the “scope-and-sequence” for each curriculum includes the skills, knowledge, and character traits that you want to develop in your disciples. All curricula are not created equal! Remember, no curriculum will completely satisfy your needs. Adapt resources to your church situation.
- C.** Recruit workers for each ministry position. Invite your “Dream Team” to creatively enlist teachers and helpers, ensuring that everyone embraces the discipleship vision. For help, download “Your Recruiting Remedy” by Judy Wortley at DiscipleLand.com/training.
- D.** Train your team to make disciples. Challenge everyone to realize that you expect more than “business as usual.” Discipleship exacts a higher commitment—and yields higher rewards. Schedule training sessions that equip your ministry teams to focus on making disciples. Help your staff see their

new role from a biblical point of view. Show each person how his or her individual responsibility fits into the overall discipleship effort. These resources will help: Kidology Leadership Lab “Kid-Focused Leadership Foundations” by Karl Bastian (kidology.org/training), “Your Training Remedy” by Judy Wortley (download at DiscipleLand.com/training).

- E.** Guide parents to take primary responsibility for their kids’ spiritual growth. Plan special training sessions for parents, encouraging them to evaluate their existing family activities in view of the lifelong discipleship objective. Show parents how to disciple their own children at home. Download parent resources: “What Kids *Really* Need” and “How to Disciple Your Child” at DiscipleLand.com/training. Also see the National Center for Biblical Parenting at biblicalparenting.org.
- F.** Give facilities a face-lift. Configure classroom space according to anticipated needs. Create environments that enhance learning. Some areas of your building may need to be renovated or updated.
- G.** Anticipate financial needs and adjust your budget to accommodate your new ministry plans.

4. Promote Your Programs *(Deut 31:12-13; Eph 3:20-21)*

Generate church-wide passion for discipleship of children.

- A.** Pray that God will ignite fires of enthusiasm for discipling kids throughout your fellowship.
- B.** Schedule launch dates for each ministry on the church calendar. Begin with a bang!
- C.** Explain your revised programs to your pastoral team, making sure that each person understands and embraces the disciple-making vision. Communicate that this is not a one-time activity, but a new direction for the church’s educational ministries.

- D.** Expose your entire church to the importance of discipleship and Christian education. Communicate the vision to everyone: adults, parents, teens, and kids! Use flyers, powerpoint, bulletin inserts, brochures, posters, cards, banners, etc. Get the word out via Sunday School, Kids’ Church, Club, Homes, and in other venues.
- E.** Integrate family discipleship with other church ministries. Provide parents with an outline of things they can do to disciple their kids at each age-level. Download “Reach Your Potential” at DiscipleLand.com/training.

5. Maintain Your Momentum *(Neh 4:7-9; Heb 12:1-2)*

Keep your eyes on the Lord and the goal—building lifelong disciples for His glory!

- A.** Pray for focus and stamina so the enemy will not sidetrack or block your progress.
- B.** Stay on task, keeping the goal uppermost in the minds of teachers, parents, and kids. Lifelong disciples—that’s what Jesus has called His followers to be and to do! From now on, view everything you do through this strategic lens.
- C.** Fine-tune each ministry. Solve problems and address issues as soon as they spring up. Keep improving each week.

- D.** Build your team. Encourage and support every leader every week. Challenge teachers to affirm every parent and child every week. Urge parents to affirm every child every day!

How Does DiscipleLand Build Disciples?

Here's how DiscipleLand helps you equip kids to reach their peak potential as Jesus' disciples. DiscipleLand's family of resources forms a complete Children's Discipleship System™ with five components:



Preschool

DISCIPLELAND PRESCHOOL

launches children ages 2-5 to begin walking with God.

Preschoolers establish a solid foundation through 200 different Bible stories.



Kindergarten

DISCIPLELAND KINDERGARTEN

inspires kids ages 5-6 to follow amazing Bible heroes.

Children grasp God's plan and purpose as they overview the entire Bible.



Core Bible

DISCIPLELAND CORE BIBLE

challenges children in grades 1-6 to become victorious disciples.

Kids are equipped for Christian service through 24 quarters of sequential Bible curriculum.



DiscipleTown

DISCIPLETOWN

equips kids in grades 1-6 with essential discipleship skills.

Children enjoy group learning in a creative Kids Church format.



Adventure

DISCIPLELAND ADVENTURE

motivates kids in grades 1-6 to pursue their discipleship journey.

Children travel to exciting locations around the world to experience topical Bible adventures.

DiscipleLand
Disciples for Life™

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DiscipleLand—Children's ministry curriculum, ideas, and discipleship resources for life.

This free Children's Ministry tool is provided for parents, teachers, and others who want to help make disciples for life!

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