

GRACE @ HOME

Group Discussion Guide



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Series Overview

Our children are too important to God for us to fail as parents. We must do all we can to form their character before we let them go. Parenting is a ministry, not just a blessing. Parents are responsible for connecting their children to God. Now is the time to follow God and invest in the spiritual development of your children.

Purpose of This Guide

The primary purpose of this group guide is to reinforce and deepen the lessons of the Grace Church message series: Grace@Home.

1-Too Important to Fail

Scripture: Psalm 127

1 Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep.

3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward.

4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.

5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate. (NKJV)

Icebreaker: Center of Warmth

Ask each person to answer these questions.

- * Name one place you lived as a child.
- * What heat source did the house have?
- * What person was a source of personal warmth for you as a child?
- * When did God become a source of warmth for your heart and soul?

Discussion Questions

- * Based on **Psalm 127:1**, what is the foundation of a godly home? Discuss ways to ensure that the spiritual foundation of your home is solid.
- * Children are a gift of God [**Psa 127:3**]. He holds you accountable for what you do with everything He gives you [**Mat 25:14-29**]. Do you think God holds you accountable for the way you raise your children? Why or why not?

- * While your children are in your home, they are like arrows in the hand of a mighty man [**Psa 127:4**]. Discuss the effort it takes to make the arrows straight. Discuss what happens when you release arrows that are not straight.
- * According to **Proverbs 22:6** what is the result of training your children in godly behaviors?

Application Exercise: Pray for Your Children

During the coming week, pray for your physical and spiritual children. (Spiritual children are those people who have come to Christ under your influence.) Thank Him for entrusting you with the care of your children. Ask God to guide you in creating arrows that are straight.

2-The Ministry of Parenting

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6-9

6 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (NKJV)

Icebreaker: Whose Job is It?

Discuss the varying views in our society regarding who is responsible for the physical, educational, and spiritual care of our children.

- * If teenagers are bored, is the local government responsible for providing them recreational activities to keep them out of trouble?
- * Should parents assume that a local school board knows what curriculum is best for their children?
- * Does God want the local church to be the primary faith influencers in the lives of children?

Discussion Questions

- * **Deuteronomy 6:7** tells us to teach God's words "diligently" to our children. The Hebrew phrase for "teach" in this verse means "cause to learn." It is different than lecture-based education. What would teaching **diligently** look like in your home? Discuss ways to make it easier to be more diligent in teaching God's Word.
 - ▶ In what locations or settings is it appropriate to talk about God's Word?
 - ▶ At what times of the day is it good to talk about God's Word? (Ex. meal time, drive time, bed time, morning time)

- * **Deuteronomy 6:8-9** gives ways to help us remember God's Word. What could we use as modern day equivalents to frontlets between our eyes, a sign on our hands, or writing God's Word on our doorposts?
- * What can you do to be sure your teaching is sound (**Pro 4:1-2**)?
- * Think about how you approach teaching your children. Is your teaching like a gentle rain to tender plants (**Deu 32:2**)? Discuss ways to make your teaching gentle and nourishing.

Application Exercise: Your Plan

During the coming week, create or review your plan for diligently teaching your children about God and His Word.

Bonus Material

In his book "Think Orange," Reggie Joiner points out four key times all families can leverage to build the faith of their children (**Deuteronomy 6:7**). Make a plan to use these times in your family.

1	Meal Time	"when you sit in your house" (focused discussions as a teacher to establish core values)
2	Drive Time	"when you walk by the way" (informal dialogue as a friend to help your child interpret life)
3	Bed Time	"when you lie down" (intimate conversations as a counselor to listen to the heart of your child)
4	Morning Time	"when you rise up" (encouraging words as a coach who gives a sense of value and instills purpose)

3-Our 4 Spiritual Stages

Scripture: 1John 2:12-14

12 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

13 I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.

14 I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one. (NKJV)

Icebreaker: Two Things I Like, One I Don't

For each spiritual stage, state two things you like and one thing you do not like.

<i>children</i>	<i>teens (young men)</i>	<i>adults (fathers)</i>

Discussion Questions

- * According to **1John 2:12**, what is the entry point into the **spiritual child** (little children) stage? Discuss ways to recognize when someone is ready to transition from pre-faith to spiritual child.
- * John writes to encourage believers who were doubting themselves and their relationship with God. He had confidence:
 - ▶ in the spiritual **children** because they had made a **commitment** to Jesus and He had paid for their sins
 - ▶ in the spiritual **teens** because the evil one had challenged their faith and through God's strength and Word they had **overcome** the threat

- ▶ in the spiritual **adults** because they demonstrated an **ongoing relationship** with God and trusted Him

Discuss ways to remind ourselves what God has done for us and where we are in our spiritual development.

- *What are some ways to help spiritual **children** get to know God as their Father and learn what is right and wrong according to God?
- *What are some ways to help spiritual **teens** keep things in perspective and continue to grow in their relationship with God?
 - ▶ Do you participate in service activities as a family?
 - ▶ Do you tell your children what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear?
 - ▶ In what ways are you helping your children discover their spiritual gifts?
 - ▶ Do you praise your children for taking initiative in praying, praising God, and reading the Bible?
 - ▶ Do your children see you praying, praising God, and reading the Bible?
 - ▶ How do you help your children learn from mistakes and get back on track?
- *What are some ways to encourage spiritual **adults** in their walk?
 - ▶ Study **1Corinthians 4:15-16** with them and discuss the difference between being a teacher and a shepherd.
 - ▶ Invite them to share how much they care about and have concern for those under their care.

Application Exercise: Spiritual Stages

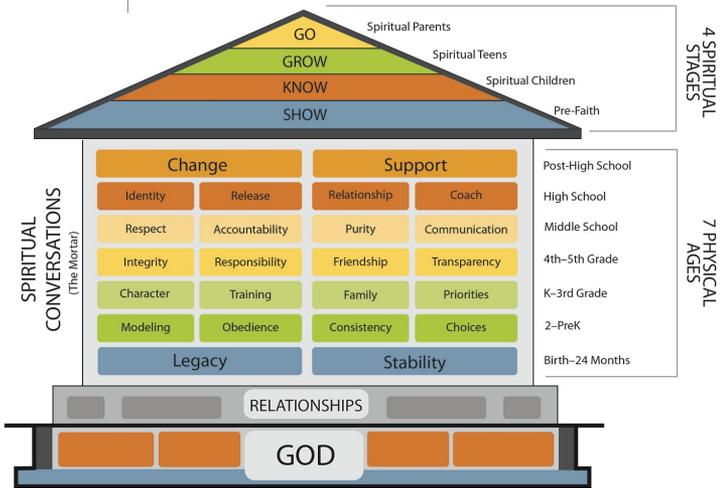
During the next week, watch for indicators that tell you the spiritual stage of your children, your disciples, and yourself. Make a plan to strengthen them (and yourself) at whatever stage they are.

Grace@Home Overview

Vision: A culture of parents having primary faith influence in the lives of their children while being resourced and supported by the local church.

Mission: Develop a 20+ year discipleship model that resources and supports parents in becoming the primary faith influencers of their children that results in lifetime followers of Christ.

BUILDING BLOCKS MODEL



4-Our 7 Physical Ages

Scripture: John 15:4-7

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (NKJV)

Icebreaker: Fun & Frustrating

Brainstorm two lists:

<i>Things about being a parent that are fun</i>	<i>Things about being a parent that are frustrating</i>

Discussion Questions

- * We all want our children to experience love, joy, peace, kindness, and the other aspects of the fruit of the Spirit ([Gal 5:22-23](#)).
 - ▶ Where does the fruit grow ([John 15:4-5](#))?
 - ▶ What can you do to help your children become branches attached to the Vine?

- * Discuss how Jesus is like a Vine. What does He provide for the branches?
- * What types of things can disrupt the connection between a branch and the Vine? How will you know when there has been a disruption (**John 15:5-6**)? What can you do as a parent to assist a child in reattaching to the Vine?
- * In what way has your view of your role as primary faith influencer in your child's life changed over the past few weeks?

Application Exercise: Reattach to the Vine

This week, do one thing to reattach your child to the Vine (or take precautions to prevent disruption of their attachment).

5-The Time is Now

Scripture: 2Tim 3:10-17

10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,

11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NKJV)

Icebreaker: What If?

As a group, speculate how things would have been different in the following scenarios.

- * What if Johannes Gutenberg had not invented the printing press?
- * What if Martin Luther's theses had not started the Protestant Reformation?
- * What if someone had not been a faith influencer in your life?
- * What if you had not accepted Christ as Savior?

Discussion Questions

- * How comfortable would you be if someone carefully followed the way you live, the evidence of your faith, and your response to trials (**2Tim 3:10-11**)? In your life right now, is there someone who is observing your life in that way?

- * Timothy's mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, had a big influence on his faith [2Tim 1:5]. Paul describes them as having genuine faith. What can you do to invest in your own spiritual development and, in turn, be able to influence your children for Christ?
- * When you point out someone's faults or correct their behavior, what role does the Word of God play [2Tim 3:16]? How do you know if your reproof or correction are appropriate according to God?
- * Discuss how parents can measure their success.

Application Exercise: Long-Term Plan

This week, consider your long-term plan as a parent.

- * What character qualities would you like your children to possess as adults?
- * What will you need to do as a parent over the years to develop those character qualities in your children?
- * Where can you go to get good advice?
- * What are your priorities?
- * How can you establish a routine in your home that optimizes your effectiveness as a parent?
- * What will you do to ensure that you are growing spiritually?
- * What will you do to model the character qualities you want to develop in your children?
- * How will you pray for your children?
- * What sacrifices will you make to be sure you maintain a close relationship with your children?



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