



Riverwood
Chapel

**CHILDHOOD
DISCIPLESHIP
AT RIVERWOOD**

Inspired by

IT'S JUST A
PHASE
SO DON'T MISS IT

WHY EVERY LIFE STAGE OF A KID MATTERS

.....
BY REGGIE JOINER & KRISTEN IVY

PHASE

A TIMEFRAME

— IN A — **KID'S LIFE** — WHEN YOU CAN —

LEVERAGE

DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE

THEIR **FUTURE.**



INTRO

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PRESCHOOL

- » 0–1 year olds 6
- » 1–2 year olds 8
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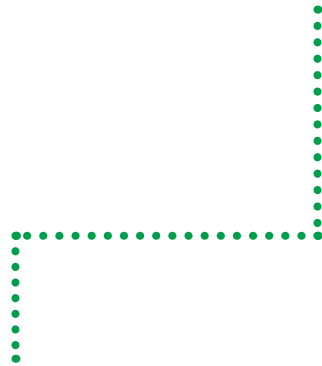
ELEMENTARY

- » Kindergarten – 1st Grade 12
- » 2nd Grade – 3rd Grade 14
- » 4th Grade 16

Parents and guardians,

Very few things in life just happen, and very rarely (if ever) does something improve on its own by chance. Almost always, things happen in life as a **result of intentionality and planning**.

The sobering reality is that this is true of parenting as well. We as parents and guardians have hopes for our children but too often neglect to have a plan for our children to grow into those hopes. Specifically, many of us desire to see our children grow in their knowledge, love and awe of God as they grow up, but we lack a plan to see that come about. It is our hope that the plan for childhood discipleship at Riverwood would **encourage and enhance the discipleship efforts of the parents and guardians** of Riverwood children.



At Riverwood, this is our plan for the discipleship of your child. This plan is a work in progress, but it is a plan nonetheless. It is the backbone to the structure of our ministry. It is why we do the things we do. Understanding that the spiritual growth of your child will most likely not happen without a plan, we want to share with you our plan and ask you to consider joining us on the mission of modeling and communicating to every child that **“it’s all about Jesus.”**

This plan is an **overflow of the research done by Kristin Ivy and Reggie Joiner’s “It’s Just A Phase” project**. The project examines the typical physical, mental, emotional and educational development of children in every age and grade phase of their lives. There is a mountain of research and information in the “It’s Just A Phase” project, and we hope that this booklet gives you an overview. For more in depth information on the project, we encourage you to visit justaphase.com or purchase Ivy and Joiner’s book titled *It’s Just A Phase: So Don’t Miss It*. We believe that understanding the phase your child is in will help you and us **communicate God’s truth in a way that each child can understand and respond to**.





At Riverwood, we believe **discipleship happens best in the context of relationships**. First, we believe the most important discipleship relationship a child can have is with their own parents or guardians. Parents and guardians have profound influence on the spiritual life of a child and are the God-assigned primary discipler of the child. Riverwood's **Kids Ministry aims to come alongside parents and guardians** to help disciple their kids in God's word and to provide a larger sphere of spiritual influence in their lives. This is why we have consistent nursery workers, caring preschool teachers and assistants and passionate elementary teachers and assistants who can help kids grow in their relationship with Jesus and with their peers. When kids enter into relationships with other adults and peers of their own who also love Jesus, they can see that the Christian faith is bigger than their own family.

The **VISION** of the **Childhood Discipleship at Riverwood** is this:

- » What would happen if Riverwood's staff, volunteers and parents encouraged every child to learn to love the Lord their God with all their heart, all their soul, all their mind and all their strength, so that they would know Jesus, be known, and make Him known?
- » What if we saw every kid in every phase as God's child who was made in his image?
- » And what if Riverwood's staff, volunteers and parents all prayed the same prayers and communicated the same truths to each child in every phase?

..... We believe that this plan could lead to a generation of Riverwood kids who are rooted in a relationship with Jesus based on truth and love in the midst of a rapidly changing culture that is pulling young people away from God.

The reality is that your kid(s) will be disciplined. The question is, will they be disciplined by you and the church or by the world?

Josh Miller
Kids & Middle School Pastor

EVERY
KID TO

LOVE GOD WITH ALL THEIR



HEART



SOUL

THINKS LIKE AN ARTIST

THINKS LIKE A SCIENTIST



BEGINNING
(Baby dedication)



WISDOM
(First day of school)



FAITH
(Trust Jesus)

AM I SAFE?

AM I ABLE?

AM I OKAY?

DO I HAVE
YOUR
ATTENTION?

DO I HAVE
WHAT IT
TAKES?

DO I HAVE
FRIENDS?

ZERO
TO ONE

ONE
& TWO

THREE
& FOUR

K &
FIRST

SECOND
& THIRD

FOURTH
& FIFTH

MOTIVATED BY SAFETY

EMBRACE their physical needs

To Know God's Love

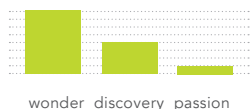
To Meet God's Family

MOTIVATED BY FUN

ENGAGE their interests

To Trust God's Character

To Experience God's Family



PSALM 78:4B

"Tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."

PSALM 90:12

"So teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom"

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall **teach them diligently to your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."





MIND



STRENGTH

TO

KNOW
JESUS

BE
KNOWN

MAKE HIM
KNOWN

THINKS LIKE AN ENGINEER

THINKS LIKE A PHILOSOPHER



IDENTITY
(Coming of age)



FREEDOM
(Driver's license)



GRADUATION
(Moving on)

WHO DO I LIKE?

WHO AM I?

WHERE
DO I
BELONG?

WHY
SHOULD I
BELIEVE?

HOW CAN
I MATTER?

WHAT WILL
I DO?

SIXTH

SEVENTH
& EIGHTH

NINTH

TENTH

ELEVENTH

TWELFTH

18+

MOTIVATED BY ACCEPTANCE

AFFIRM their personal journey

MOTIVATED BY FREEDOM

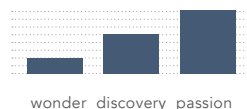
MOBILIZE their potential

To Own Their Own Faith

To Value A Faith Community

To Keep Pursuing Authentic Faith

To Discover A Personal Mission



EVERY KID, AT EVERY PHASE NEEDS...

- » **LOVE** to give them a sense of **worth**
- » **STORIES** to give them a bigger **perspective**
- » **WORK** to give them **significance**
- » **FUN** to give them **connection**
- » **TRIBES** to give them **belonging**
- » **WORDS** to give them **direction**



EVERY
KID TO

LOVE GOD WITH
ALL THEIR



HEART



SOUL

ZERO
TO
ONE



THE PHASE
WHEN

AND ONE
MESMERIZING BABY

CONVINCES YOU,

NOBODY
SLEEPS,

EVERYBODY SMELLS,

"I NEED YOU NOW."

IN THIS PHASE

Their Crisis:

BIRTH

Relational Question:

AM I SAFE?

Our Response: When adults consistently respond to a baby's needs, babies establish trust.

WHAT ARE

0-1 YEAR OLDS LIKE?

Present realities: Has sympathetic emotions, but not true empathy.

Thinks like: an **ARTIST**.

They learn best when they can make it with their hands. Preschoolers blend reality with imagination and learn through participation.

Are motivated by: **SAFETY**, so it is important to give them consistent boundaries and loving relationships.





MIND



STRENGTH

TO

KNOW
JESUS

BE
KNOWN

MAKE HIM
KNOWN

BASIC TRUTHS TO COMMUNICATE TO 0-1 YEAR OLDS

- » God made you.
- » God loves you.
- » God is big.
- » God is good.

WAYS FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS TO DISCIPLE 0-1 YEAR OLDS

EMBRACE their physical needs. When you embrace their physical needs, you help a preschooler know God's love and meet God's family.

PRAY

- » That God would watch over and protect their fragile body, mind and soul.
- » That their lives would be in God's hands.
- » That God would protect them from evil.
- » That they would grow in godly wisdom and understanding.
- » That God would make them a blessing to others now and in the future.

WAYS RIVERWOOD IS COMMITTED TO DISCIPLING 0-1 YEAR OLDS

- » By creating a welcoming, safe, warm and consistent environment in the Nursery.
- » By introducing babies to Bible stories and songs.
- » By giving parents/guardians the opportunity to dedicate their children to the Lord.
- » By providing child care for various adult discipleship opportunities.
- » By celebrating a child's first birthday with a gift.



EVERY
KID

TO

LOVE GOD WITH
ALL THEIR



ONE
&
TWO



THE PHASE
WHEN

AND ONE
EAGER TODDLER

WILL INSIST,

NOBODY'S
ON TIME,

EVERYTHING'S A MESS,

"I CAN DO IT."

IN THIS PHASE

Their Crisis:

ABILITY

Relational Question:

AM I ABLE?

Our Response: When adults patiently allow toddlers to try new things, toddlers develop confidence.

WHAT ARE

1-2 YEAR OLDS LIKE?

Present realities: Begins to develop shame and self doubt, has difficulty talking about emotions in the moment, and doesn't fully understand "lying" because actions count more than words.

Thinks like: an **ARTIST**.

They learn best when they can make it with their hands. Preschoolers blend reality with imagination and learn through participation.

Are motivated by: **SAFETY**,

so it is important to give them consistent boundaries and loving relationships.





MIND



STRENGTH

TO

KNOW
JESUS

BE
KNOWN

MAKE HIM
KNOWN

BASIC TRUTHS TO COMMUNICATE TO 1-2 YEAR OLDS

- » God made you.
- » God loves you so much.
- » God is so big.
- » God is good all the time.
- » God can help you do it.
- » God is always with you.

WAYS FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS TO DISCIPLE 1-2 YEAR OLDS

EMBRACE their physical needs. When you embrace their physical needs, you help a preschooler know God's love and meet God's family.

PRAY

- » That God would begin revealing himself to them.
- » That God would give them grateful hearts for all he has given them.
- » That God would give them physical, emotional, and spiritual health, and that God would protect them from any physical or spiritual evil or harm.
- » That they would grow in the fruit of the Spirit, and that godly character qualities would be evident in their lives.
- » That they would bring joy to those around them.
- » That God would use them for his kingdom purposes now and in the future.

WAYS RIVERWOOD IS COMMITTED TO DISCIPLING 1-2 YEAR OLDS

- » By creating a welcoming, safe, warm and consistent environment in the Nursery.
- » By introducing toddlers to Bible stories and songs.
- » By giving parents/guardians the opportunity to dedicate their children to the Lord.
- » By providing child care for various adult discipleship opportunities.



EVERY
KID

TO

LOVE GOD WITH
ALL THEIR



HEART



SOUL

THREE & FOUR



THE PHASE
WHEN



ANYTHING CAN BE
IMAGINED,

AND ONE
CURIOUS PRESCHOOLER



EVERYTHING CAN BE A GAME,

↓
WANTS TO KNOW,

"WHY?"

IN THIS PHASE

Their Crisis:

DISCIPLINE

Relational Question:

AM I OK?

AM I GOOD OR BAD?

Our Response: When adults set boundaries and discipline with love, preschoolers cultivate self control.

WHAT ARE

3-5 YEAR OLDS LIKE?

Present realities: Understands emotions best through storytelling, may have trouble having more than one friend at a time, are naturally optimistic in spite of failing previously, and 90% tell lies but 100% believe that all lying is bad.

Thinks like: an **ARTIST**.

They learn best when they can make it with their hands. Preschoolers blend reality with imagination and learn through participation.

Are motivated by: **SAFETY**,

so it is important to give them consistent boundaries and loving relationships.





MIND



STRENGTH

TO

KNOW
JESUS

BE
KNOWN

MAKE HIM
KNOWN

BASIC TRUTHS TO COMMUNICATE TO 3-5 YEAR OLDS

- » God made everything.
- » God always loves you.
- » God always hears us when we pray.
- » Even though you can't see God, he is always with you.
- » It is good to be in God's family.
- » God is big and strong. He can do anything.
- » Jesus is God's son.
- » God gives us everything.
- » The Bible is God's word to us.

WAYS FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS TO DISCIPLE 3-5 YEAR OLDS

EMBRACE their physical needs. When you embrace their physical needs, you help a preschooler know God's love and meet God's family.

PRAY

- » That they would be confident in God's love for them.
- » That when the time is right, they would respond in faith to the gospel of Jesus.
- » That God would develop in them a keen sense of right and wrong.
- » That God would teach them self-control.
- » That God would give them kind, compassionate loving hearts toward others.
- » That God would begin to develop passions and abilities that he will use for his glory in the future.

WAYS RIVERWOOD IS COMMITTED TO DISCIPLING 3-5 YEAR OLDS

- » By creating a welcoming, safe, warm and consistent environment in the preschool rooms.
- » By teaching about Jesus through the Bible-centered *The Gospel Project* curriculum.
- » By giving parents/guardians the opportunity to dedicate their child to the Lord.
- » By providing quarterly Kids' Fun Nights to help preschoolers see church as a fun place to be.
- » By providing child care for various adult discipleship opportunities.



EVERY
KID TO

LOVE GOD WITH
ALL THEIR



HEART



SOUL

KINDERGARTEN & FIRST



THE PHASE
WHEN

AND LIFE BECOMES
A STAGE

WHERE YOUR KID SHOUTS,

UNFILTERED WORDS
MAKE YOU LAUGH,

HOMEWORK MAKES YOU CRY,

"LOOK AT ME."

IN THIS PHASE

Their Crisis:

SCHOOL

Relational Question:

**DO I HAVE YOUR
ATTENTION?**

Our Response: When adults demonstrate interest in a kid's progress, kids improve abilities.

WHAT ARE KINDERGARTEN – 1ST GRADERS LIKE?

Present realities: Can name all of the major emotions, has a hard time regulating fear and wants to win and be first.

Thinks like: a **SCIENTIST**.

They learn best when they can observe something in their present environment. They discover how things work through repetition and clear application.

Are motivated by: **FUN**,
so it is important to introduce transferable principles that will help them win in life and friendship.





MIND



STRENGTH

TO

KNOW
JESUS

BE
KNOWN

MAKE HIM
KNOWN

BASIC TRUTHS TO COMMUNICATE TO KINDERGARTEN – 1ST GRADERS

- » God made you unique and special.
- » Jesus is God's only son.
- » God made everything and knows everything.
- » Jesus loves you and likes you.
- » God's word is always true and right.
- » God gives us rules that we must obey.
- » Everything we have is God's.
- » Sin is not doing what God wants us to do.
- » Even when you feel alone, God is with you.
- » God is sad when we do bad things.
- » God always keeps his promises.
- » Jesus can forgive us when we do bad things.

WAYS FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS TO DISCIPLE KINDERGARTEN – 1ST GRADERS

ENGAGE their interests. When you engage their interests, you help a kid trust God's character and experience God's family.

PRAY

- » That God would reveal to them their need for him.
- » That when the time is right, they would respond in faith to the gospel of Jesus.
- » That the Holy Spirit would make them aware of their own sin.
- » That God would give them confidence when they encounter new or unanticipated circumstances.
- » That God would surround them with godly friends and relationships, both now and in the future.
- » That God would plant something in their hearts or life experience that he will use for his kingdom in the future.

WAYS RIVERWOOD IS COMMITTED TO DISCIPLING KINDERGARTEN – 1ST GRADERS

- » By creating a welcoming, safe and fun environment in the Sunday School rooms.
- » By teaching about Jesus through the Bible-centered *The Gospel Project* curriculum.
- » By providing quarterly Kids' Fun Nights to help elementary students see church as a fun place to be.
- » By providing Camp Riverwood to invite the lost to experience the gospel of Jesus Christ in a fun and compelling way.



EVERY
KID

TO

LOVE GOD WITH
ALL THEIR



HEART



SOUL

SECOND & THIRD



THE PHASE
WHEN

AND YOUR
ENTHUSIASTIC KID

THINKS ANYTHING

FAIRNESS
MATTERS MOST,

DIFFERENCES GET NOTICED,

"SOUNDS LIKE FUN!"

IN THIS PHASE

Their Crisis:

COMPARISON

Relational Question:

**DO I HAVE
WHAT IT TAKES?**

Our Response: When adults praise a kid's persistence and efforts, kids broaden competence.

WHAT ARE

2ND – 3RD GRADERS LIKE?

Present realities: Confuses "I feel" with "I am," emphasizes fairness and sensitive to blame, and privacy becomes a power struggle.

Thinks like: a **SCIENTIST.**

They learn best when they can observe something in their present environment. They discover how things work through repetition and clear application.

Are motivated by: **FUN,** so it is important to introduce transferable principles that will help them win in life and friendship.





MIND



STRENGTH

TO

KNOW
JESUS

BE
KNOWN

MAKE HIM
KNOWN

BASIC TRUTHS TO COMMUNICATE TO 2ND – 3RD GRADERS

- » God made you just the way he wanted you to be.
- » Jesus left heaven, came to the earth, died on the cross and rose back to life.
- » Jesus is the only way to God.
- » Because Jesus is perfect, he can forgive us.
- » We all sin, and so we all need Jesus to forgive us.
- » Jesus died on the cross to forgive us of our sins.
- » Christians are people who believe, trust and follow Jesus.

WAYS FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS TO DISCIPLE 2ND – 3RD GRADERS

ENGAGE their interests. When you engage their interests, you help a kid trust God's character and experience God's family.

PRAY

- » That their knowledge and awe of the bigness of God would increase and that he would capture their imagination.
- » That God would give them hearts to cherish, desire and believe his word.
- » That God would use any hardships in their lives for good.
- » That God would teach them to be humble.
- » That God would provide peer and mentor relationships that are fun, meaningful and beneficial to their soul.
- » That God would give them a sense of justice – to stand up for what is right and to defend the weak.

WAYS RIVERWOOD IS COMMITTED TO DISCIPLING 2ND – 3RD GRADERS

- » By creating a welcoming, safe and fun environment in the Sunday School rooms.
- » By teaching about Jesus through the Bible-centered *The Gospel Project* curriculum.
- » By providing quarterly Kids' Fun Nights to help elementary students see church as a fun place to be.
- » By providing Camp Riverwood to invite the lost to experience the gospel of Jesus Christ in a fun and compelling way.



EVERY
KID TO

LOVE GOD WITH
ALL THEIR



HEART



SOUL

FOURTH



THE PHASE
WHEN

AND YOUR
CONFIDENT KID

FRIENDS ARE
BEST FRIENDS,

GAMES ARE FOR COMPETITION,

WILL INSIST,

"I'VE GOT THIS."

IN THIS PHASE

Their Crisis:

PUBERTY

Relational Question:

DO I HAVE FRIENDS?

Our Response: When adults make introductions and include peers, kids develop friendships.

WHAT ARE 4TH GRADERS LIKE?

Present realities: Can see the point of view of someone other than themselves, experience increased pressure to conform to social norms and finds identity in groups like "my team."

Thinks like: a **SCIENTIST**.

They learn best when they can observe something in their present environment. They discover how things work through repetition and clear application.

Are motivated by: **FUN**,
so it is important to introduce transferable principles that will help them win in life and friendship.





MIND



STRENGTH

TO

KNOW
JESUS

BE
KNOWN

MAKE HIM
KNOWN

BASIC TRUTHS TO COMMUNICATE TO 4TH GRADERS

- » God made you to have a relationship with him.
- » God gives us rules to follow because he loves us.
- » Jesus is the only way to God.
- » Sin is disobeying God's rules.
- » The Bible is one big story from God.
- » Our sin separates us from God because God is holy and perfect.
- » You can trust that the Bible is true.
- » Jesus took the punishment for our sins when he died on the cross.
- » God uses us to tell other people about Jesus.
- » People who believe and trust Jesus to forgive their sins become Christians and are adopted into God's family.

WAYS FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS TO DISCIPLE 4TH GRADERS

ENGAGE their interests. When you engage their interests, you help a kid trust God's character and experience God's family.

PRAY

- » That they would recognize God's grace for them.
- » That they would respond to God's love by obeying him.
- » That God would open their eyes to the dangers and consequences of sin.
- » That they would grow more confident in who God has created them to be.
- » That they will show compassion to those in need and who have less than they do.
- » That God would grow their desire to serve others without expecting anything in return.

WAYS RIVERWOOD IS COMMITTED TO DISCIPLING 4TH GRADERS

- » By creating a welcoming, safe and fun environment in the Sunday School rooms.
- » By ensuring that peer relationships begin and grow through Riverwood's programs and events.
- » By teaching about Jesus through the Bible-centered *The Gospel Project* curriculum.
- » By providing quarterly Kids' Fun Nights to help elementary students see church as a fun place to be.
- » By providing Camp Riverwood for children to experience the gospel of Jesus Christ in a fun and compelling way.





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Sunday Worship: 8am • 9:30am • 11am

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