



DISCIPLE YOUR KIDS

A Next Steps class at Lazarus Church

Introductions

Name, city, & who you're taking this class for



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Personal introduction:

- 10 years of youth ministry
- Talking with kids about the tough stuff: from faith to dating and sex to
- I loved having this kind of open dialogue with my youth group kids
- I want that dialogue with MY kids... what do I need to do now to get that later? How do we reverse engineer that?
- I am not an expert. I'm honestly just getting started on the parenting side of things. But having worked with MS/HS kids for so long, I am committed to creating a space in our home where deeper conversations are happening on a daily basis. I want my kids to keep following Jesus long after I buckle their carseats and take them there.
- Tonight we're going to talk about one strategy we've been using in our household to facilitate that.

INCREASE IN CHURCH DROPOUTS

Barna



Church
Dropouts



n = 1,816 US adults 18-29 current/former Christians, January 2011;
n = 1,514 US adults 18-29 current/former Christians, February 16-28, 2018

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These are kids who GREW UP in the church

<https://www.barna.com/research/resilient-disciples/#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20the%20percentage%20of,not%20all%20bad%20news%2C%20however.>

The main research examination for the *Faith for Exiles* book was conducted with eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds who grew up as Christian.

What about those that stay?

What about those that stay?

Description of a
"resilient disciple"
(Barna Research)

- Made a commitment to Jesus (for ex. confirmation)
- They believe Jesus died for their sins & rose again
- Involved in a faith community *beyond attending worship*
- Strongly affirm that the Bible IS the authoritative Word of God
- Desire to live as a disciple *outside the "four walls" of a church*

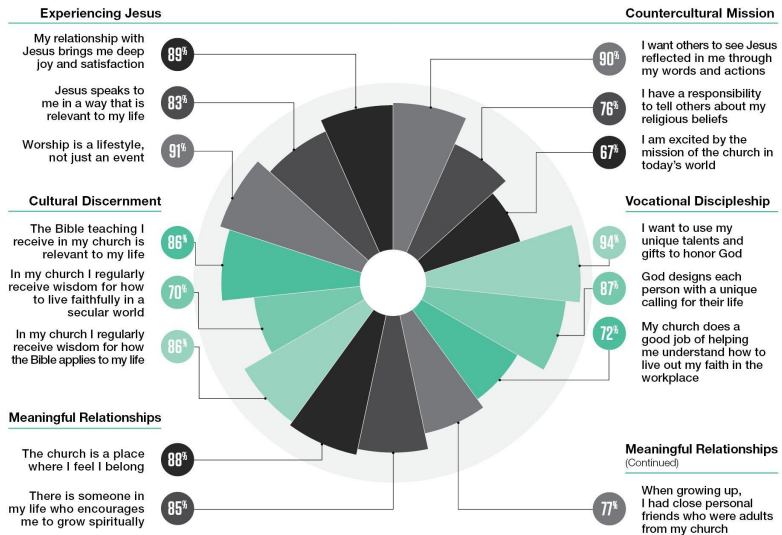
So what does it mean to be a **resilient disciple**? As defined in *Faith for Exiles*, individuals in this group: have made a commitment to Jesus, who they believe was crucified and raised to conquer sin and death; are involved in a faith community beyond attendance at worship services; and strongly affirm that the Bible is inspired by God and contains truth about the world. In addition, they agree with one or more of the following statements that **speak to the exilic conditions** in which their faith still thrives:

- I want to find a way to follow Jesus that connects with the world I live in.
- God is more at work outside the Church than inside, and I want to be a part of that.
- I want to be a Christian without separating myself from the world around me.

WHAT RESILIENCE LOOKS LIKE

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% of resilient disciples



n = 1,514 US adults 18-29 current/former Christians February 16-28, 2018.

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WHAT RESILIENCE LOOKS LIKE

Barna

% of resilient disciples

Experiencing Jesus

- My relationship with Jesus brings me deep joy and satisfaction **89%**
- Jesus speaks to me in a way that is relevant to my life **83%**
- Worship is a lifestyle, not just an event **91%**

Cultural Discernment

- The Bible teaching I receive in my church is relevant to my life **86%**
- In my church I regularly receive wisdom for how to live faithfully in a secular world **70%**
- In my church I regularly receive wisdom for how the Bible applies to my life **86%**

Meaningful Relationships

- The church is a place where I feel I belong **88%**
- There is someone in my life who encourages me to grow spiritually **85%**

Countercultural Mission

- I want others to see Jesus reflected in me through my words and actions **90%**
- I have a responsibility to tell others about my religious beliefs **76%**
- I am excited by the mission of the church in today's world **67%**

Vocational Discipleship

- I want to use my unique talents and gifts to honor God **94%**
- God designs each person with a unique calling for their life **87%**
- My church does a good job of helping me understand how to live out my faith in the workplace **72%**

Meaningful Relationships (Continued)

- When growing up, I had close personal friends who were adults from my church **77%**

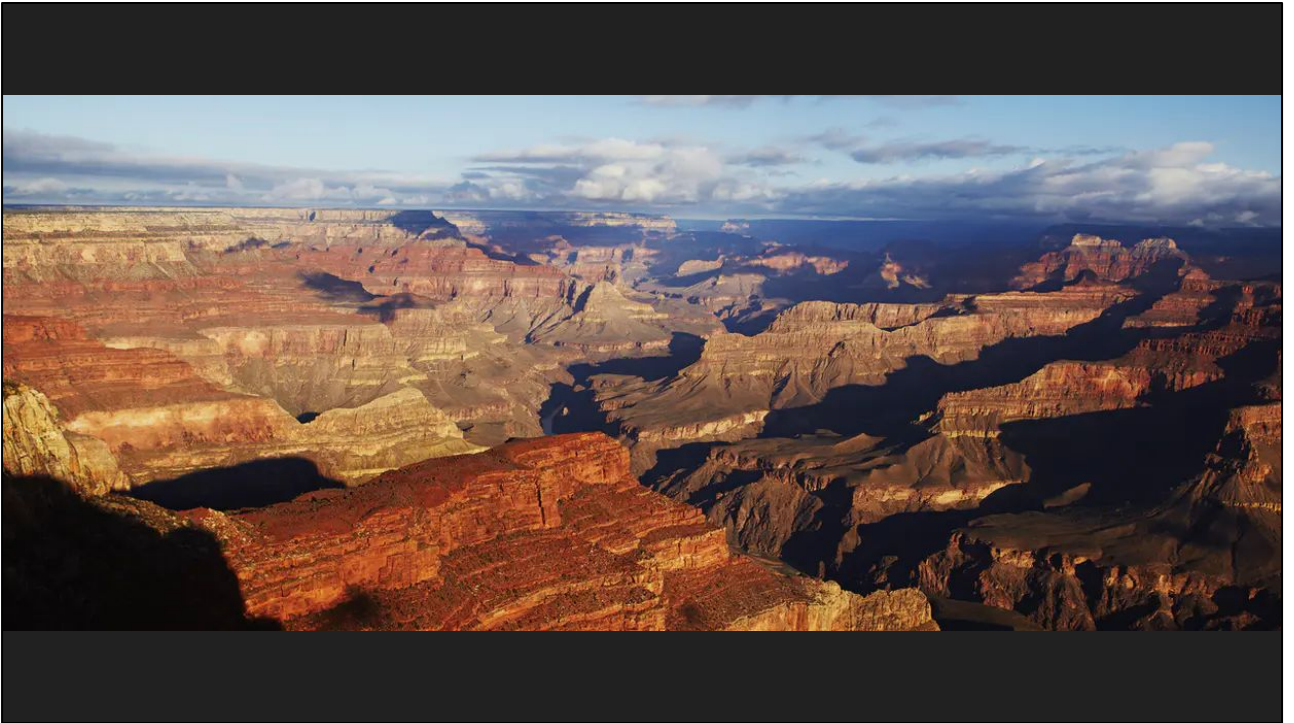
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Notice how many of these do NOT come from the Sunday morning worship gathering

"85% of parents with children under age 13 believe they have primary responsibility for teaching their children about religious beliefs and spiritual matters. However, a majority of parents don't spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials with their children."

Barna Research



I want to address a fear: The task of discipling our kids seems impossibly big. How do we accomplish something so grand?



By starting the task. This is where it starts: Underwhelming, everyday, persistent rhythms. This God asking us to simply obey Him in the task of discipling our kids and trusting Him with the big picture. If the persistence of a river can carve a canyon, could the persistence of reading scripture with your kids change the landscape of your kids' lifetime? God asks us to trust and obey.

**How much time are we
talking here?**

Less time than you'd think.

Defining a "spiritual vibrant household" (Barna Research)

- **Spiritual practices** -- praying every day or two and reading the Bible weekly
- **Spiritual conversations** -- talking about God and faith at least weekly all together
- **Hospitality** -- welcoming non-family guests regularly

<https://www.barna.com/faith-formation-at-home/>

1. What Makes for a Spiritually Vibrant Household?

One of the goals of this study was to learn from households that appear to be exceptionally engaged in communal and consistent faith expression in the home. Barna developed a custom metric that sorts households by reports of collective, frequent engagement in key behaviors:

- **Spiritual practices**—defined here as praying every day or two and reading the Bible weekly all together
- **Spiritual conversations**—defined here as talking about God and faith at least weekly all together
- **Hospitality**—defined here as welcoming non-family guests regularly, or at least several times a month

Households that participate in all of these activities at this frequency are what Barna refers to as **spiritually Vibrant**. A quarter of respondents in this study (25%) describes a household

environment that is Vibrant. Others describe homes that are Devotional (only participate in spiritual practices and spiritual conversations), Hospitable (only practice hospitality) or Dormant (participate in none of the above).

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- **Hospitality** -- welcoming non-family guests regularly

We're going to talk about how to hit these first two tonight. Research shows you can start building a lasting faith legacy for your kids, grandkids, and great grandkids in just the time that it takes to pray every other day, read the Bible and have faith conversations *once per week*. This could be the single most important thing you ever do for your kids and it's simpler than setting up a 529 for their college.

Is it worth it?

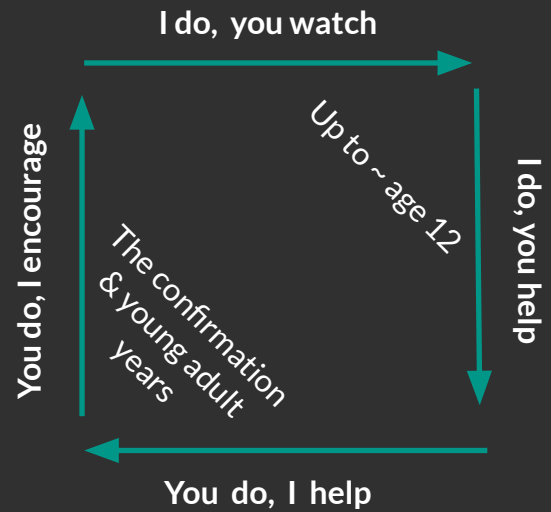
“A majority of practicing Christians tell Barna they became Christians long before adulthood, usually before they were 12 years old.”

<https://www.barna.com/faith-formation-at-home/>: A majority of practicing Christians tells Barna they became Christians long before adulthood, usually before they were 12 years old.

In terms of the “most bang for your parenting buck,” nothing beats what we’re going to learn tonight.

Side note:

Where's confirmation fit in all of this?



Up to age 12 -- I do you watch, I do you help

Age 12-18 (typical confirmation time frame) -- You do, I help.

Age 18+ -- You do, I cheer!

At Lazarus, we see confirmation as a partnership between parents and other faith teachers & pastors.

Family Worship

How to create a consistent place in your home life for spiritual practices & spiritual conversations

Family worship is where that belief that you *should* be the primary faith influence takes shape. It's where the rubber meets the road.

Remember: What makes for a spiritually vibrant household? We're talking about two of the three (third is hospitality, which we could do a completely different session about).

“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.”

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (ESV)

Family worship is CONSISTENT. Remember the earlier stat, a spiritually vibrant household was one that prayed daily or every other day and read the Bible and discussed spiritual matters in the home once per week or more.

“[A house] is actually a school and a church,
and the head of the household is a bishop
and a priest in his house.”

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Family worship is LED BY YOU, the parent. You have the God-given authority to do this... to lovingly lead your family.

“Not only do we live at a hectic pace, but each stage of life has its peculiar pressures.”

Don Carson (1946 -)

Family worship is FLEXIBLE. It changes as your kids change.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Ephesians 6:4 (ESV)

Family worship is DISCIPLESHIP. The root of the word discipline and disciple are the same... they mean to teach.

Three parts to Family Worship

Read, Pray, Sing

Read

Start by reading the Bible.
You can read, guests can read,
and as they get older, your
children can take turns reading!

- Choose a Bible (many children's Bibles available)
- Read one story or section
- Commentate as you read (especially when reading a more advanced translation)
- Read children's Bibles or storybook Bibles cover to cover (younger kids) OR start in the Gospel of Luke (older kids)
- Don't be surprised when kids ask things you don't know. Respond: "That's a great question! I don't know but we can find out."

Pray

You are teaching your child(ren)
to pray simply by praying.
There's no one to impress, so go
for it!

- Rote prayers can work as a place to start.
- Allow children to add prayer requests (and hide your chuckles when they pray for the craziest stuff!)
- Challenge yourself. If you're just getting started with praying from the heart, try these prompts:
 - God, you are ___.
 - Thank you for ___.
 - Help us ___.
- Talking to God is as simple as talking to any other family member!

Sing

Singing's not for everyone.
But maybe that's why God gave
us YouTube?

- You have options!
 - Sing a song you know
 - Look up the lyrics to a song we sing at church and sing acapella
 - Listen to (or sing along with) something on YouTube
- Can't get on board? Read a Psalm, pick up a book of Christian poetry, or swap in a devotional here.

Tips for starting successfully

Addressing common challenges

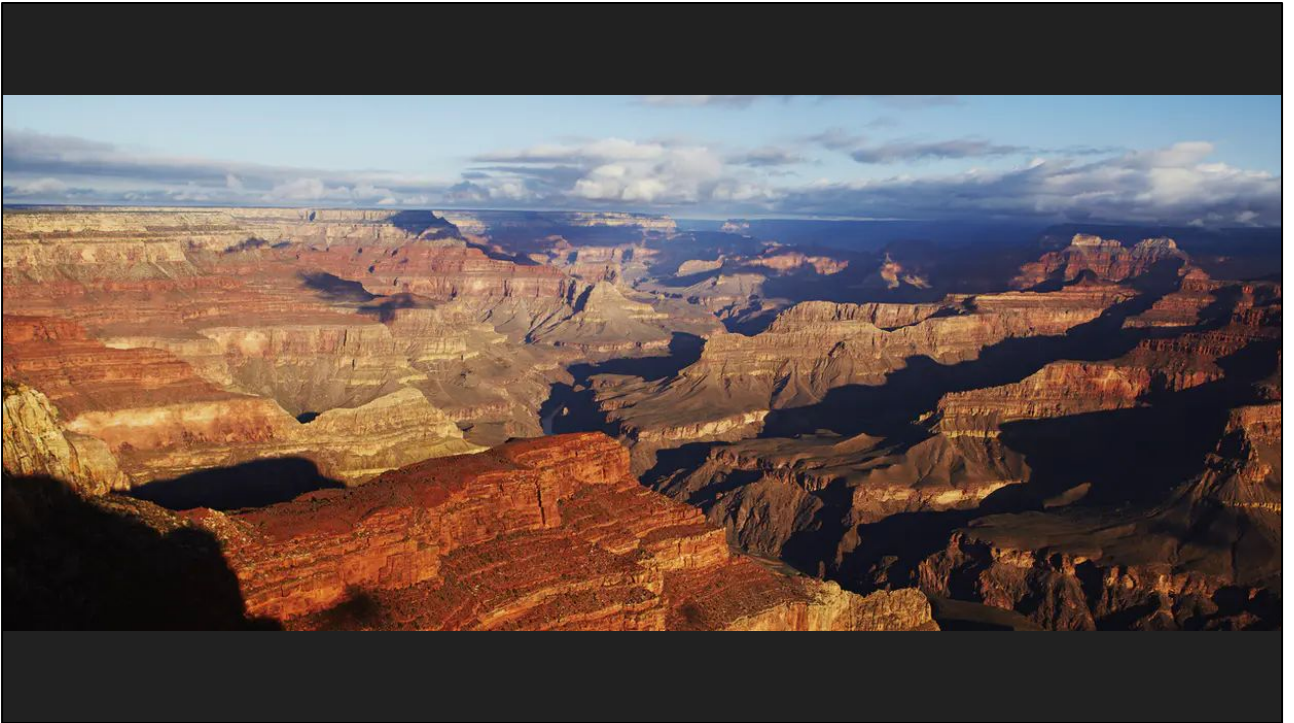
- Embrace the flexibility of the read/pray/sing outline
- Set the bar low
- It's not a big deal when you miss
- Treat goofing off with grace
- Tie it to something your family *already does together*
- Consistency beats length

- Flexibility -- the reason this works is because of the simplicity -- it can grow as your kids grow. And if you want to add or remove things in different seasons of life, that's great! For ex. Someone gave Flint a devotional book for Easter so we're reading that at the beginning before we read the Bible. And when it's done, there's no pressure for us to rush out and find a new one. We'll probably go back to the simple way we were doing it before.
- Bar Low -- Remember that statistic from earlier, spiritually vibrant households pray every day or every other day and do some form of family worship just once per week! Think you can do it on weeknights? Start by aiming for 3x/week and grow from there.
- Miss -- We tied family worship to something we do every single day (bedtime routine), but that doesn't mean it happens every day. We do NOT make a big deal out of it. If you say you're gonna start this next Friday and then it doesn't happen and you feel guilt... that is Satan and not from God. There is nothing God wants more than to spend time with your family. So move on with joy looking forward to the NEXT time you get to do family worship!
- Goofing Off -- Sometimes we just scrap our plans and move on without family worship if the evening is falling to pieces. We'd rather do that than give a negative impression of spending time with God. If you're starting this with older kids, expect resistance. See it through their eyes (they'd rather be doing whatever it is they'd normally be doing).
- Does Together -- Saturday pancakes? Do this right afterwards! Friday movie night? Do this right after dinner and before the movie starts! We tied it to the end of bedtime routine. Experiment with different time frames until you find

- something that consistently works.
- Consistency beats length -- Our goal in starting family worship for our family was to reverse-engineer the kind of relationship we want with them when they're in high school.



See that teeny speck of a river? That's creating a regular time of family worship in your home. Keep your focus here. Your job as a parent or grandparent is faithfulness.



This is what God plans to do with it.

Discipling Your Kids: "Answering Kids' Questions"

Next Week: Same time, same Zoom link

"What does this mean?" Kids like to ask questions. Parents want to feel confident they can answer those questions. When your kids ask questions about faith, where do you go? In this session, we'll learn how to use a tool called the Catechism to answer some of those FAQ's... and also how to respond to our kids when we sometimes don't know the answer.