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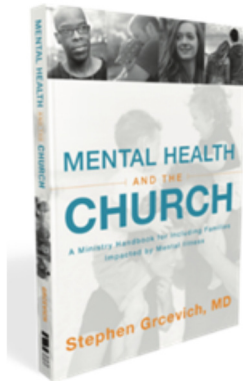
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# DISCIPLESHIP NOW!

West Virginia Baptist Convention

June 2018

DISCIPLESHIP NOW is a  
periodic resource provided  
for local churches from the  
office of Discipleship  
Ministries.

**This issue:**

- ◆ Children
- ◆ Youth
- ◆ Parchment Valley
- ◆ Book Recommendations



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## The Special Eye Glasses

When I was about three years old I got my first pair of glasses. I do not remember getting them, but I do remember being very protective of them and I never had trouble wanting to put them on in the mornings. Being able to see correctly was a big deal and I did not want to ever break them or lose them. I remember “falling apart” the first time I broke the frames (long before the almost indestructible glasses of today). I cried and cried and I remember my heart was broken too. I remember being protective of my glasses when playing outside with other kids. I was more protective of the glasses than any other part of me. I loved being able to see and even today I have a “love” relationship with my glasses because of what they help me do.

I recently watched a short video on [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D38S9o_6qnc) (see viewing information at the end of this paragraph). Essentially the main character is a working guy and spends a lot of time complaining about people that are in his way and who are making life miserable for him on his way to work. A stranger appears to him while he is waiting for a cup of coffee and gives him a gift, a glasses case with a pair of glasses inside. The fellow puts them on and miraculously with them he sees the life situation of the people around him. He begins to learn that everyone has burdens, concerns and needs. He realizes that others have reasons for their actions and that the world is not out to ruin his day. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D38S9o\\_6qnc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D38S9o_6qnc))

Being faithful in the workplace means wearing those “special glasses” God gives us that allows us to see those around us as human beings who, like ourselves, have problems, issues, hurts, pain and insecurities. What is the place of the Christian in these instances? What would God have us do and how do we show His love to others while on the job? What opportunities do we have to speak a word of hope, forgiveness and Godly love into a situation or to an individual? What is our response and action towards those who push God aside? When should a Christian become involved in helping a coworker and how?

These questions must be wrestled with by each of us. The answers will be different and as customized as our jobs, but be sure of this – God wants us to clearly see and act out of God's love for the world.

Blessings,  
Lisa

*Our mission is to empower local churches to be Christ honoring communities of faith, and to help them fulfill their mission by enabling them to do together what they cannot do alone.*



## Parchment Valley



A disciple is a personal follower of Jesus Christ. Discipleship is an incredible gift from God that enables those followers to grow together and achieve great results for the Lord’s kingdom work. One of my favorite pictures of Parchment Valley is of an AB Women’s Ministries member playing the piano and the caption over the black and white picture reads, “Bloom where you are planted.”

While pausing daily to take in the beauty of Parchment Valley, I see how the Lord’s disciples have made a great difference in so many lives by their dedicated contributions. They prepared the soil, faithfully sent their gifts and from their trusted work, God built a Christian conference center that is like no other. It is by those

calloused hands of our great staff and talented volunteers, who continually pray and give thanks to God for what He has provided and prepare us for the beautiful days ahead.

On May 1, 2018, I began my tenth year of leading the greatest ministry I could ever imagine here for the Parchment Valley Conference Center. During this season, my experience of God moments ranges from people becoming disciples - first time decisions made during Twelve Pole Valley Association church camp - to a host of many wonderful prayer requests answered.

Our ongoing list of planned projects continues to be completed at a commendable pace. We have learned to manage group meal times to accommodate larger groups. Now, we can accommodate several registered guest events at the same time.

I truly believe God places people in our lives to mentor and share their gifts for His Glory. Because of these gifted individuals following their call to serve, many have completed their seminary degree from the Palmer Seminary MDIV/DM programs and others graduated from the West Virginia Baptist School of Christian Studies.

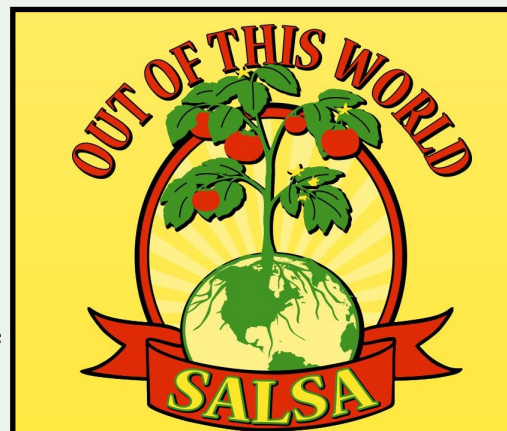
New Christian groups are regularly booking their events with us. One of our most successful program events is Brother’s Keeper. This missional work camp is in its 18th year of making disciples and being empowered by the Holy Spirit to go and minister to those in need of home repair. More importantly, our Brother’s Keeper teams share the gospel of Jesus Christ and are led to win souls for the Lord. An amazing discovery happened when the chief of the Jackson County Emergency Medical Systems discovered when all the BK projects were completed across Jackson County, that department received less calls to assist homeowners and made for safer working conditions for the first responders resulting in significant savings to the department budget for eighteen years.

**Faith in the workplace** encourages fellow believers to share their faith while working alongside others. This great gift of sharing is witnessed from a blessed spectrum of servants here at PV and throughout the WVBC. Whether its painting lodges, attending class, leading worship, cutting grass or preparing “Out of this World Salsa” that supports Hispanic families in need, each of us together can accomplish a greater work that pleases our Father in heaven.

As we embark upon another summer season, we invite you to come alongside us and spend time at this blessed land the Lord has given us to faithfully serve him and bless others. Being a disciple is not an easy task, but the dividends are “out of this world.”

**Matthew 28:19 (NIV)** <sup>19</sup> therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Be a blessing today,  
Frank Miller



## THREE CHEERS FOR CURRICULUM - cont.

### BEFORE:

**GET LEADERSHIP INPUT.** Begin the process of gathering information. Ask your pastor and other church leaders what they hope for in a curriculum.

**ASK YOUR VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF.** Meet with your team to discuss what they’d ideally like to see in a new curriculum. What makes their roles easier? What could be better executed? What do they see that makes the most positive impact on kids’ learning? What would they get rid of or keep? Create a wish list, and then prioritize it.

**MEET WITH PARENTS.** Invite the input on what works well for their families currently and what doesn’t. Ask for honest feedback and invite parents to help create a wish list. Prioritize what matters most to parents.

**LOOK FOR WHAT’S LACKING.** Identify current shortfalls and areas you want to fix. You have a unique perspective about what curriculum has been used or is currently being used. Create your own wish list and prioritize it for the new curriculum.

**SOLVE PROBLEMS.** Determine the current problems and needs. List problems you are attempting to fix along with the potential solution your curriculum choice might help with.

**ALIGN WITH THE VISION.** What’s your ministry vision statement or mission? What would a new curriculum need to provide to help deliver on the mission?

**SET EXPECTATIONS.** Once you’ve selected a curriculum, prepare your leaders, team, parents and kids for what’s coming. Explain the choice based on input from everyone. Describe what people can expect from the change, and ask for feedback along the way.

### DURING:

**INVITE CONVERSATIONS AND FEEDBACK.** As you begin the new curriculum, let people know there’ll be challenges and moments when it’s uncomfortable. Invite open dialogue, and ask regularly for feedback.

**UPDATE YOUR TEAM AND LEADERS.** Be flexible and open to adjustments. Keep everyone in the loop when there’s an issue or something to celebrate. And be sure to celebrate the wins – no matter how small they seem.

**CHECK OFTEN.** Keep a close eye on your team, and monitor how things are going. Do your best to respond to issues and concerns promptly.

**ASK PARENTS AND KIDS TO GIVE FEEDBACK.** Your ongoing dialogue with all key players will help ensure that a new curriculum’s implementation is successful. When parents raise a concern, address it.

### AFTER

**STAY IN TOUCH.** Keep in close contact with your team. What benefits are they seeing? What do they like or dislike? What would make their roles easier?

**UPDATE YOUR LEADERS.** Work to keep your leadership team updated about how the curriculum is working. Be open about challenges and solutions. Point out success stories.

**CELEBRATE!** It’s important to take time to point out specifics about the positive changes the curriculum has made possible. It’s also important to acknowledge the efforts and achievements of everyone involved – including kids, parents, teams and leaders.

# THREE CHEERS FOR CURRICULUM

Is it time for a new curriculum? Here’s a list of benefits of published curriculum as well as a comprehensive checklist on how you can effectively implement a new curriculum. Curriculum providers today offer a variety of quality options. You must use a discerning eye and take the time to investigate the options and how they’ll fit with your ministry, families and the larger church. Here are key elements to look for in a curriculum:

**SCRIPTURE:** First and foremost, you need a curriculum that’s built on a basis of biblical truths and solid theology. Review a sample lesson to see how Scripture shows up throughout the curriculum and whether it meets your ministry expectations.

**FAMILY-FRIENDLY:** We recognize that parents are central to kids’ faith development. A solid curriculum choice will recognize this as well. Faith-based, family focused interaction outside of church is a real strength in a curriculum.

**TEACHER-FRIENDLY:** Most good programs are very practical. They walk teachers through what to expect from a lesson, the specific supplies they need, the Scripture basis and how to prep and pray beforehand.

**DISCIPLESHIP PLAN:** One of the greatest advantages to curriculum is that it typically offers a developed plan for kids’ discipleship-from their early years through preteen years. Review the scope and sequence, evaluate how well the discipleship plan equips kids with biblical training and faith growth.

**BEST PRACTICES:** Curriculum development teams often include ministry experts, writers and editors equipped with ministry experience and educational expertise that meets a solid curriculum, focuses on spiritually sound faith development and that’s infused with educational best practices.

**MEDIA:** Kids are multisensory learners with a variety of learning styles. Good media is key to enhancing kids’ learning. View samples of the media whenever possible. Assess the production value and relevance. This includes music.



**A CHECKLIST**  
When you decide it’s time to make the curriculum leap, establish a plan for how you’ll approach the change for the best results. Follow this checklist for before, during, and after you make the change.

# CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES

## Ten Ways to Have an Effective and Healthy Children’s Ministry in a Small Church

by Dave Jacobs; disciple.com

It’s a real challenge to have an effective and healthy children’s ministry when you only have a handful of children and, as is so often the case, even fewer volunteers. But there is hope. You can have an effective and healthy children’s ministry, and here’s how:

**1. Work with what you have, not with what you don’t have.**

In smaller churches, doing ministry with limited resources (money, time, volunteers, etc.) is always a challenge. Children’s ministry is no exception. Begin by asking, “What resources do I have today that I could start with?” You may only have a budget of one hundred dollars and two volunteers. Start there. Don’t get bogged down with what you don’t have. You have to start somewhere. Start with what you have.

**2. Do a few things well.**

This is similar to the above. It would be better to do only three things well than five things half-baked. You probably can’t duplicate the children’s ministry that is offered at that big church down the street. Don’t try to.

**3. Cast a compelling vision for Children’s Ministry.**

Children are important to God. If children’s ministry is important to you and your church, then you will need to cast a compelling vision for it. If you don’t make children’s ministry a ‘big deal’ in your church, it will never be a big deal in your church.

**4. Recruit, recruit, recruit.**

Sorry, but you can never stop recruiting. Even if you are fortunate to have enough, you don’t have enough. Eventually, someone will leave. Someone will want to take a break. You will always need more, and it’s always better to be proactive towards the need that is coming rather than always being reactive when people’s commitments shift.

**5. Don’t sacrifice someone on the altar of Children’s Ministry.**

It’s commendable that your spouse or some other person in your church is willing to work with children every week, but it’s not advisable. It might take a while, but eventually, they are going to burn-out. Again, be ahead of that and protect people who might be giving too much.

**6. Sometimes all you can offer is glorified babysitting.**

If that is all you can do, do it well.

**7. Don’t apologize.**

Be honest with families that visit your church. Don’t apologize because you don’t currently have much in the way of children’s ministry. Reassure them that you truly value children. They can always go down the street to that mega-church and find something great for their kids. But ask them to stay and help you build something.

**8. Accept that some will leave, and some will stay.**

Every once in a while, I was able to convince a family to stay and help develop a Children’s Ministry. And, the other times...they left for that other church. It happens. Accept it.

**9. Cast a compelling vision for Children’s Ministry.**

Wait, you’re thinking, “You already said this.” You’re right, I did, and I’m repeating it. Similar to recruiting, you can never stop casting vision for children’s ministry.

**10. Prayer-focus.**

Pray. Organize prayer for children’s ministry. Ask God for volunteers. Ask God to give you a compelling vision for Children’s Ministry. Ask God to bring families to your church that will be willing to partner with you in building a great ministry to children.

I know I don’t have to convince you that children are important to God. Some say they are important because they are the future church. I say they are important because they are the church...right now, just as they are, even if there is only a few of them. If this is true, and I believe it is, our Father wants to help you have the healthiest and most effective children’s ministry possible. And it is possible. Keep encouraged. Don’t give up, and don’t give in to those voices that say you can’t have a great ministry to children because you are a smaller church. You can. And with God’s help and the right focus, you will.



# WHEN AM I EVER GOING TO USE THIS?



Hello summer! That glorious time when kids around the world rejoice that they don't have to get up early, eat school lunches, take spelling tests, or remember strange math equations. What's the deal with all of that anyway? (You know MANY kids are asking that.) When am I ever going to use this anyway?

I can't really look down upon kids for thinking that. After all, thinking back to my own middle/high school years and how that mentality spilled over into college courses. You know the "When am I ever going to use this in real life?" mentality which facilitates apathy towards course material and helps to justify ambivalence towards effort in learning. It seemed to rear its ugly head mostly in math but in other liberal arts areas as well. Making a quick search of the internet it is easy to find many memes, articles, blog posts and cartoons about this issue. Some in support, others looking to debunk this type of thinking.

As someone who works in youth ministry whether on the state level or in my home... I wonder if this type of thinking translates to how people view the things of God we teach, model and look to instill in their lives. Do they think of discipleship: When am I ever going to need to know this in real life?

Over the years I've heard youth leaders, church members, parents, pastors, Sunday school teachers and the like express frustration and exasperation at how little seems to "sink in." And for a while I've been pondering this thought: "What if we are unable to adequately teach the 'head knowledge' of our faith because we aren't showing a life lived in faith? What is the purpose of learning without life application? These two go hand in hand."

It doesn't take long reading in the Bible to see the consequences of forgetting: sin, anger, temptation, wandering away from God, hurting one another, and the like. God knew it was important for His people to remember so **he told them** in Deuteronomy Chapter 6:

<sup>6</sup>*These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup>Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.*

How do we approach "Christian Education" so that it is not only about head knowledge but also about discipleship - a life lived? I've been known to say when teaching, "I'm not teaching you this so you can pass a Bible 101 test at the end of this lesson. I'm teaching it so that in knowing the truth of who God is, of who you are in Him and how your life is meant to be lived... that in knowing all that it changes you, it guides your life."

# YOUTH MINISTRIES - cont.

Discipleship is about a life lived. In knowing who God was (what he did) in the past it helps us to know who God is in our present. In learning the Bible, we come to know who we are in God. Putting all of this together, step by step, day by day as God works sanctification and righteousness in us, we come to know how then we should live.

Focusing on who God is, the attributes of God/the names of God: God is Holy, righteous, infinite, sovereign, triune, faithful, just, trustworthy, good, wise, comfort, grace, love... and on and on.

Knowing who we are, the Bible is clear that we are all sinners, that we are loved by God, that through Jesus we are given the gift of new life, in Christ we are a new creation, we are God's children through Christ.

How then shall we live? In view of all of this, Romans 12:1-2 beckons us:

<sup>1</sup>*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

In Mark 12:28-31 Jesus tells of the most important commandment:

<sup>28</sup>*One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

<sup>29</sup>*"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup>Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup>The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*

In Ephesians 4, Paul writes on what it means to "live a life worthy of the calling" we have received as children of God. And there is no better time than right now and no better place than right here when you are to live a life worthy of the calling. God doesn't ask to us to wait until we're adults to follow Him. He doesn't expect that the only people to share the truth of the saving grace of Christ will be pastors or missionaries. No, instead God offers us a chance, every day, right where we're at, doing whatever we do to live faithfully by loving God and loving others.

When are you ever going to use all this discipleship stuff? Right now. The summer is calling, live a life worthy of the calling today.

Jill Narraway  
Associate Director of Camping and Youth

