

BIG IDEA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small groups that focus on the Big Idea for the week can use this guide to apply the message to life and take action. Feel free to use whatever parts of this guide best fit your group personality and time frame. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

**12.20/21.08 // THE BEST GIFTS FOR KIDS: The Gift of Faith
PASS ON FAITH TO YOUR KIDS...AND TO OTHER KIDS**

// Ice Breaker _____

Option 1: Did you believe in Santa Claus when you were a child? Why/Why not? As a child, did you put your faith in Jesus Christ?

Option 2: When was the last time you truly stepped forward in faith? Describe.

// Questions for Discussion _____

Why do you think many children feel disappointed shortly after all of their gifts have been opened?

What examples or teaching can you remember that your parents passed down to you? Are there things you intentionally chose to imitate about them, or things you chose NOT to imitate?

How has your parents' example in developing or not developing you spiritually affected you?

How do you imagine the household of Joseph and Mary functioned spiritually? What do you think they did to pass on faith to young Jesus?

Read Psalm 78:1-8. What does this tell us about the responsibility of adults to children?

- 1** O my people, listen to my instructions. Open your ears to what I am saying,
- 2** for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—
- 3** stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us.
- 4** We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about his power and his mighty wonders.
- 5** For he issued his laws to Jacob; he gave his instructions to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children,
- 6** so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—and they in turn will teach their own children.
- 7** So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.
- 8** Then they will not be like their ancestors—stubborn, rebellious, and unfaithful, refusing to give their hearts to God.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem after his Triumphal Entry, entered the Temple area and drove out those who were buying and selling, and performed miracles of healing. Read the reactions he got in Matthew 21:15-16

But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

Jesus is quoting from Psalm 8:2. What does he tell us about what God thinks of children's worship?

Brett quoted these statistics: 43% of Americans who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior do so before reaching age 13. Another 21% do so by the age of 18, and another 13% by age 21. That leaves only 23% who decide to follow Christ as adults. **What does this say about the importance of outreach to children and teens?**

Do you think most churches focus too much or too little on youth? Are kids a top priority, or more

of an afterthought? How can you tell? Is it reflected in the number and quality of the adults serving in youth ministry? In the budget allocated?

Read Matthew 18:12-14. What does Jesus think about the importance of evangelism? How does this relate to the focus and mission of the church?

12"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? 13And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. 14In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost."

What can the church do better to help support and partner with parents in passing on the faith to their children?

Jesus tells us how important EVERY child is. How responsible are you for kids besides your own? What can you do to ensure that no child is lost?

What can you do make certain you do not put barriers in front of children? Read Matthew 19:13-14

Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Where does faith come from? How can you pass it along to your children? Read Romans 10:17

"...faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."

We are living in difficult financial times by today's standard of living. This should be viewed as a great opportunity to truly walk in faith. How are you showing children your faith?

Read Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Read Deuteronomy 11:19

19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

// Application _____

Our children are in need of spiritual growth far more that material things, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Have you told your kids how much God loves them and values them, especially by sending His Son into the world for us? Have you told them about God's purpose for their life?**
- **Are you helping your children to develop a biblical worldview, teaching them the history and stories of the Bible, to read and trust the Bible, to rely on its teachings in any given situation? That it affects every area of their lives?**
- **Are you helping to grow them in their faith by helping them experience worship, developing habits of prayer, Bible study, service, how to manage God's money and be givers, and make positive friendships in the community of the church?**
- **Are you bringing them to church consistently, as a main priority for the week? Do they hear you talking positively about church, or only criticizing and complaining?**

Children's and Student ministry are frontline ministries. Would you give some of your time to them?

// Prayer _____

Pray that God will help your faith grow.

Pray that you understand God's Word and how we are to spend time with our children.