

NEXT >>>>>>>> GENERATION MINISTRIES

Our mission in Next Gen Ministries is to partner with parents to share Jesus with kids and teens.

Here's how that plays out in some specific age groups:

Kids – We help kids know God's story and God's heart and teach them that they can have a vibrant relationship with Jesus at any age.

Middle School – We help students ground their identity in Christ.

High School – We help students make their faith their own and live it out

We hope that your whole family will get involved with the Next Gen Ministry at Covenant Church and we trust that, as you do, we'll grow in Christ together.

Please take time to carefully read through the following important considerations and recommended practices. As you seek to faithfully carry out your God-given call to parenting we look forward to partnering with you in that calling.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (0-3) Precious and unforgettable.

Important Consideration: Infant baptism or infant dedication? This is a meaningful sacrament/ceremony to consider. Learn more about infant baptism and infant dedication at these links: [Infant Baptism at Covenant](#) / [Biblical Teaching about Baptism](#)

Recommended Practice: Read Bible stories to your child(ren) daily.

Recommended Resources:

(For parents)

- *Sacred Parenting* by Gary Thomas
- *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp

(For parents to read to kids)

- *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones
- *The BIG Picture Story Bible* by David R. Helm and Gail Schoonmaker

PRESCHOOL / PRE-K (4-6) Soaking up learning like sponges

Important Consideration: Consider the sacrament of Communion. When and why might it be right for your children to take communion? Learn more about kids and Communion at this link: [Kids and Communion](#)

Recommended Practices:

- Keep reading Bible stories to your child(ren) daily.
- Bring your children to worship services with you. This will accustom them to being with the church family as men and women of all ages lift praises up to God.
- Share the gospel in age appropriate ways with your child and encourage him/her to commit to following Jesus. Learn more by reading [Sharing the Gospel with Your Children](#).

Recommended Resources:

(For parents)

- *14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family* by Paul Tripp

(For parents to read to kids)

- *Indescribable: 100 Devotions for Kids about God and Science* by Louie Giglio and Nicola Anderson

- *God's Design For Sex: Book 1 and 2* by Stan and Brenna Jones – This may work well to read to your child or it may work be better for you to familiarize yourself with the material and then share it with them without the visual of pictures of formality of reading word for word. You know your child best.

ELEMENTARY (7-10) Ready to explore new things

Important Consideration: Gary Thomas says, “*One of the greatest gifts a parent can give to his or her children is to enjoy them, to cherish them, to laugh with them, to give them the satisfaction that we feel so very thankful to walk this life with them*”. Ages 7-10 in a child’s life gives parents endless opportunities to play with and enjoy their children. Please play with and enjoy your kiddos during this developmental phase; it will pay dividends for the rest of their life.

Recommended Practices:

- Be intentional about your child’s church involvement. Don’t just do the bare minimum. Work to incorporate your child into the life of the church family. Go to our [webpage](#) and click on *Event Calendar Overview*.
- Have fun; play lots of indoor and outdoor games with your children.
- Work through a daily devotional with your family. You could use the questions in the [Children’s Bulletin](#) or the Daily Discussion in the [Amplify Guide](#).
- Read great books to your child (see some of the recommendations below).
- Be discerning about the media you allow your child to see.

Recommended Resources:

(For parents)

- *The Purity Principle* by Randy Alcorn
- Helpful websites: purehope.net / cpyu.org / pluggedin.com

(For parents to read to their children)

- *God's Design For Sex: Book 3* by Stan and Brenna Jones – This may work well to read to your child or it may work better for you to familiarize yourself with the material and then share it with them without the visual of pictures of formality of reading word for word. You know your child best.
- *New City Catechism* by Kathy Keller
- *The Chronicles of Narnia* series by C.S. Lewis
- *The Wingfeather Saga* by Andrew Peterson
- *The Dream Traveler's Quest* by Ted Dekker

MIDDLE SCHOOL (11-14) Navigating Identity

Important Consideration: Is your son/daughter ready to be baptized (if they've not before been baptized) or publically profess their faith? Contact the Student Ministry Director to learn more about these opportunities.

Recommended Practices:

- Facilitate opportunities for your son/daughter to form relationships with other Christian adults and with Christian peers. [Covenant Student Ministry opportunities](#)
- Continue regular spiritual conversations with your son/daughter.
- Family devotional time may evolve into personal devotional time – equip your son/daughter to have personal devotions.

Recommended Resources:

(For parents)

- *Growing With* by Kara Powell and Steve Argue
- Helpful products: covenanteyes.com

(For middle school boys/girls)

- *3 Minute Devotions for Boys* by Tim Baker
- *3 Minute Devotions for Girls* by Janice Thompson
- *Devotions for the God Girl* by Haley DiMarco
- *Devotions for the God Guy* by Michael DiMarco

- *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young
- *The Applause of Heaven, When God Whispers, In the Grip of Grace* – all by Max Lucado

TEEN YEARS (15-18) Taking ownership of choices

Important to Consider: Is your son/daughter ready to be baptized (if not before baptized) or publically profess their faith? Contact the Student Ministry Director to learn more about these opportunities.

Recommended Practices:

- Facilitate opportunities for your son/daughter to form relationships with other Christian adults and with Christian peers. [Covenant Student Ministry opportunities](#)
- Continue regular spiritual conversations with your son/daughter. In this season you'll need to master the art of listening.
- Allow your teenager to wrestle with things. Don't jump to judgment or worry. You've laid the foundation of a Christian worldview. You're living an example as a follower of Jesus. Now let them use their growing thinking skills to process how all of this fits with life in the broken world that they are experiencing. You are by no means done influencing them; you're simply giving them new space to wrestle with things.
- Help your son/daughter find a place to serve/volunteer within the church family.
- Model the practice of daily personal devotions. Equip your son/daughter to have their own.

Recommended Resources:

(For parents)

- *True Purity* by Haley & Michael DiMarco
- *Meet Generation Z* by James Emery White
- *Generation Z Unfiltered* by Tim Elmore
- Helpful products: covenanteyes.com

(For teenagers)

- *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers
- *3 Minute Devotions for Guys* by Glenn Hascall
- *3 Minute Devotions for Teen Girls* by April Frazier
- *New Morning Mercies* by Paul David Tripp
- *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren
- *More Than a Carpenter* by Josh D. McDowell
- *A Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel

COLLEGE YEARS (9-22) Launching into adulthood

Important to Consider: You're son/daughter still needs you as supporter and counselor; they always will. However, they no longer need you (in most cases) as guardian. Live into your evolving role with joy. Don't distance yourself; just allow your role to evolve. You will/can/should continue to be one of the strongest influences in your child's life for the rest of your days. Don't abandon your role as influencer; allow it to evolve.

Recommended Practices:

Embark on this new season of parenting with the same tenacity and intentionality that you had (or wish you had) when you were a parent of an infant. Keep cultivating a personal relationship with your son/daughter for the rest of your life. Never stop pursuing them. Allow your pursuit of them to change with seasons of life but never stop pursuing them. Parenting is a "for the rest of your life role" not a "ages 0-18 of my kids' life" role.

Recommended Resources:

(For parents)

- *Face to Face* by Kenneth Boa

(For young adults)

- *Experiencing God (Workbook)* by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King
- *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer

- *Invitation to a Journey* by Robert Mulholland
- *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* by Henri J. M. Nouwen