



THE FORMATIONAL  
**HOME**  
EVENT KIT

A Step-By-Step Family  
Discipleship Journey



# Facilitator Guide

WEEK 1

# Vision



Discipleship Drives Direction

While people gather:



Once you begin:

Welcome!

*[Introduce yourself, your children's ministry team and your church's vision for discipleship. Explain how child discipleship is an integral part of your church's vision for discipleship.]*

Welcome! We are so glad you are here to talk about creating a formational home! While I recognize many familiar faces, I am thrilled to meet those of you I haven't yet had the pleasure of knowing. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I serve as *[insert your title here]* here at our church. It is my privilege to work alongside an amazing staff and a dedicated team of volunteers, all deeply passionate about guiding your wonderful children on their discipleship journey.

Insert your church's mission statement here.

Insert your children's ministry mission statement here.

*[Read your church mission statement and your children's ministry mission statement.]*

Our church cherishes the incredible blessing of a child born into a family of faith, recognizing that it takes a partnership between parents and the church community to nurture their discipleship. Even in less-than-ideal circumstances, when parents are absent or do not share faith in Christ, God works powerfully. In such cases, we, as a church body, step in to support and stand alongside these children and their families.

Option 1:



*[Option 1] Before we go any further, I'd like to show you a video.<sup>1</sup>*

*[Show this funny video clip to start your event with laughter!]*

Option 2:

Hopefully, your day wasn't this bad. *[Ask the question below Option 2.]*

*[Option 2: If you choose not to show the video, jump down to the question below.]*

What one word would you use to describe how you feel as a parent right now?



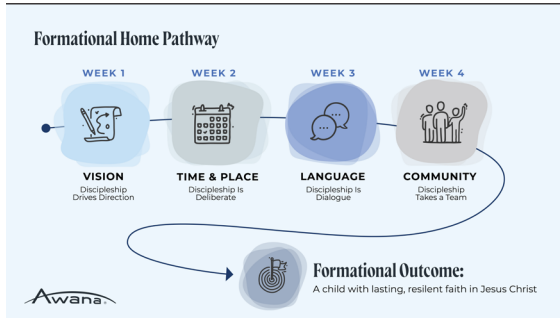
What one word would you use to describe how you feel as a parent right now? Go ahead and think for a minute.

*[Give parents time to think.]*

I'd love for you to call out the word you wrote down.

[Let parents respond. Example: tired, overwhelmed, busy, excited, intrigued.]

No matter how you are feeling, we are thankful for you and so glad you have joined us. We know it was a sacrifice of precious time to be here today, and we want to make sure you leave encouraged and equipped to create a culture of discipleship in your home.



Throughout the next four sessions together, we're going to introduce the Formational Home Pathway, which can be used to develop a culture of discipleship in your home. This pathway was originally developed in the book *Forming Faith*,<sup>2</sup> written by Awana President and CEO Matt Markins, Awana Chief Innovation Officer Mike Handler and Pastor Sam Luce. Think of the Formational Home Pathway as a framework that can shape the culture of discipleship in your home.

We'll also delve into the bigger conversations and planning that shape and guide daily discipleship rhythms, helping you to grow a robust and enduring faith in your children. We'll start today by providing an introduction and overview of what we'll cover throughout these four sessions.



**The first step on the Formational Home Pathway is vision.** In this session, we will discuss how having a vision for discipleship drives our direction.

As parents, we want the best for our children. It's natural for an expectant or new parent to think about the greatness their child might aspire to and achieve. From athletic greatness to academic achievement to marriage, wealth and fame, we begin to think about a vision for our children while they're often still in the womb! Yet, do we have the same vision for their faith as we do for their futures?



**The second step on the Formational Home Pathway is time and place.** In this session we'll consider how discipleship is deliberate, and we'll think through the times and places discipleship occurs.

Our schedules and our bank accounts are the ultimate tell when it comes to the priorities of the home. What we spend time and money on indicates what we value. As we consider discipleship in the home, we must realize it will take deliberate choices and oftentimes saying "no" to arguably good pursuits of extracurricular activities to pursue the greatness of faith in Jesus.

### WEEK 3



**LANGUAGE**  
Discipleship Is Dialogue

Awana

**The third step on the Formational Home Pathway we'll cover is language.** In this session, we'll observe that often, discipleship is dialogue.

One of the most beautiful passages in the Bible is John 1:14, where John writes about Jesus: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14a, ESV).*<sup>3</sup> Jesus is the Word of God; but His coming into the world wasn't a monologue, it was a dialogue lived out in his "dwelling among us." The love of God and the amazing, eternity-changing power of the Gospel can be found in the big and small moments of life. However it won't truly take hold in the hearts of children until we talk with them and not just at them.

### WEEK 4



**COMMUNITY**  
Discipleship Takes a Team

Awana

**In our last session together, we will discuss the importance of community and how discipleship takes a team.**

The Christian life was never meant to be lived in isolation. There has never been and will never be a solo disciple of Jesus; discipleship is a total team sport. When we are intentional in discipling the children in our lives, we quickly find out we need the help of others. The African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child" can be translated into it takes a team to disciple a child. Who are the men and women walking with Jesus in the life of your family and the lives of your children?

The path you take to develop a culture of discipleship in your home will look different from the path other families take.



Awana

The path you take to develop a culture of discipleship in your home will look different from the path other families take.

For example, you might not have family time together around the Bible every night. Instead, because of the varied ages of your kids, you might meet individually with each one to talk about a specific passage of Scripture.

You may set up a prayer chair in your home for anyone to talk to God at any time. Or your family may enjoy listening to sermons or podcasts together.

You are the expert God has called to disciple your family. You know your children and love them as no one else can. God has sovereignly placed your children in your home so you can help them know Him.



# Vision

Discipleship Drives Direction



Awana

Speaking of experts, let's take a minute to talk about the things we are passionate about and that we're learning to be an expert in. Perhaps it's woodworking, sourdough bread, painting or running.

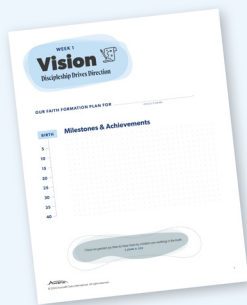
Call it out – what is yours?

*[Take 1–2 minutes to listen to people share their areas of interest and learning.]*

These are great! But let's talk about this important distinction: Are you interested in running or are you a runner? Do you enjoy making sourdough bread or are you a baker? Do you enjoy painting or are you a painter? How we speak about ourselves matters because it changes how we think; it drives our direction.

Let's pretend we decide to take up running. By the very nature of that decision, we start thinking like a runner. We eat to fuel our muscles. We read articles to improve our time and endurance. We strengthen our lungs with breathing exercises. We make deliberate decisions to be better at our craft.

We're all in this room because we're interested in our children's discipleship and their faith formation. Our hope is that over the next four sessions together, like a novice runner dedicated to increasing his stride, we will declare ourselves disciplinators of our children, and that decision will drive our direction!

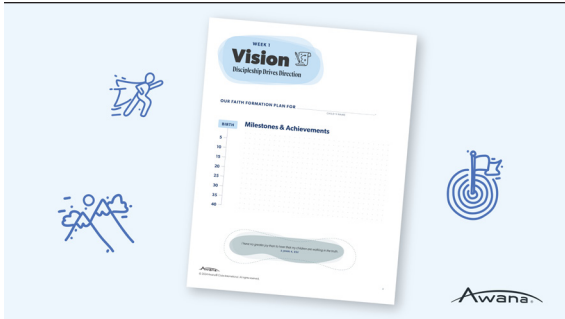


Awana

I'd like you to look at the timeline at the top of your handout and think for a few minutes about each of your kids — not what they're doing right now, not what they might eat for supper tonight or whether their homework is done. As parents, you spend a significant amount of time thinking about the logistics of where your kids are and what they need. Set that aside for just a few minutes because right now we have the opportunity to dream and plan.

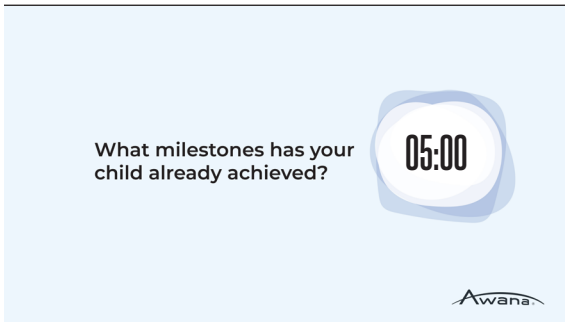
I'm going to take you through an exercise you can do for each of your children. But for the sake of time, I'd like you to focus on one child. If you and your spouse are both present tonight, each of you can choose a different child. If you have more than two children, we will provide extra handouts at the end of this session.

**On your handout you'll see a timeline from birth to 40 years of age. Start by writing your child's name at the top of the page.**



Next, we're going to write down on the timeline any significant milestones you remember. These milestones will be different from child to child and family to family. Examples are their first word or the first time they wrote their name. Maybe it was your family's first vacation or trip to the zoo, graduating to a "big girl bed" or sending them off to school for the first time. If your kids are older, you might remember their first middle school dance, their first time driving or their first job!

For your child to grow in Christlikeness, they must have spiritual milestones on their journey, too. What has impacted them spiritually? Who has helped them deeply love Jesus? Examples may be the day they were baptized, when they received Christ as their Savior or received their first Bible.



I'll give you 5 minutes to think about the milestones in your child's life and write them down on your handout, by the age they were achieved.

*[Give parents 5 minutes to write down milestones.]*



Now, let's dream. Imagine your child is 40 years old.

05:00

Who is the adult you see your child growing into? When you think of your child as a 40-year-old adult, what does your heart long for as you think of their future?



Awana

Who has your child become? To help you dream, ask yourself these questions:

- Who is the adult you see your child growing into?
- When you think of your child as a 40-year-old adult, what does your heart long for as you think of their future?

I'll give you 5 minutes to jot your thoughts down on your handout.

[Give participants 5 minutes to complete these questions.]



Awana

How was that process for you? Thinking about your child's future may bring up all kinds of emotions. You may have been excited, you may have been nervous, maybe you even felt a little bit sad thinking of them as a grown-up. When we consider the vision for what our children are going to become, let's acknowledge an oversight.

Many times, when we consider our adult children's future, we dream of their professional and personal lives, perhaps their academic or business success, the number of kids they have, or even their involvement in their community. But we can also look forward to and dream of their spiritual achievements, eager to see all the ways God will use our adult children to glorify Him.

"When you think about your child's future, does your picture of success look more like that of a man who built a big barn or of the disciples who followed Jesus at great cost?"

Josh and Jen Mulvihill,  
*50 Things Every Child Needs to Know Before Leaving Home*

Awana

In the book *50 Things Every Child Needs to Know Before Leaving Home*, authors Josh and Jen Mulvihill make this interesting statement:

"When you think about your child's future, does your picture of success look more like that of a man who built a big barn or of the disciples who followed Jesus at great cost?"<sup>4</sup>

05:00

How would you describe their values, priorities and convictions?

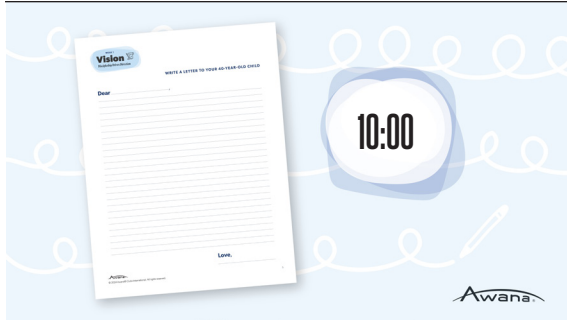


Awana

Look at your handout and consider how your child's faith has impacted their achievements at 40 years old. What does it look like for them to shine the light of Christ in their profession? How are they discipling their children? Are they involved in a church or ministry work?

Write down on your handout a few words that might describe the values, priorities and convictions of your child at 40. How might your child become an adult with a vibrant faith centered on Christ?

[Give participants 5 minutes to complete these questions.]

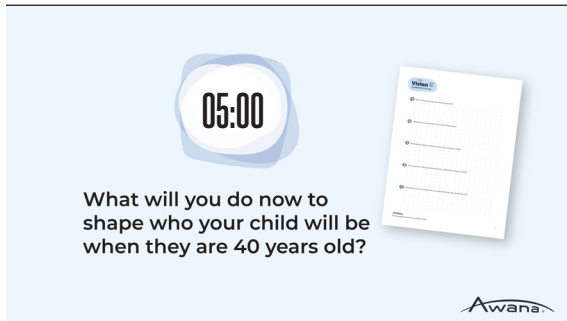


Our last activity today will be to write a letter to your 40-year-old child. Celebrate them!

- What do you see in them?
- What are you proud of?
- How have they handled hardship, pain and grief?
- Include who they are professionally, personally and spiritually in this letter.

You don't need to save this letter, you don't need to give it to them; just use this activity to connect to the vision of who your child might mature into!

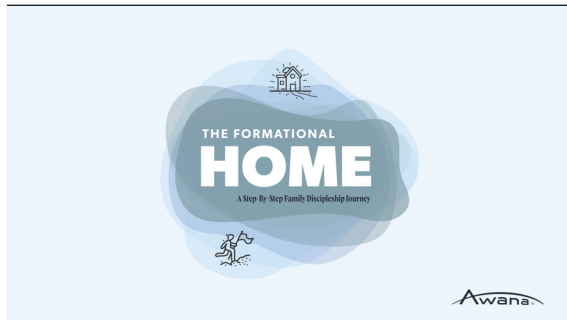
*[Give participants 10 minutes to write letters to their children.]*



We've spent most of our time casting vision of who our child will become, beginning with the end in mind, knowing that discipleship will drive the direction of our family. As parents, we aren't just interested in discipleship, we are disciplinators! As we close, I'd like you to take the next five minutes and consider this question:

What will you do now to shape who your child will be when they are 40 years old?

*[Give participants 5 minutes to reflect on or discuss this question.]*



Let's take time together to commit these things to prayer.

*[Consider reading Psalm 96:1-4 as you close.]*

*[Each session will end with a time of corporate prayer. Allow this time to be authentic, encouraging and hopeful. Close your time together encouraging them to return on the next scheduled date to discuss the next stop on the Formational Home Pathway: Discipleship Is Deliberate!]*



WEEK 2

# Time & Place

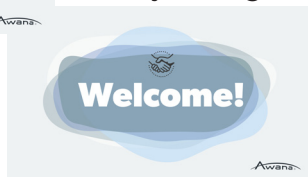


Discipleship Is Deliberate

While people gather:



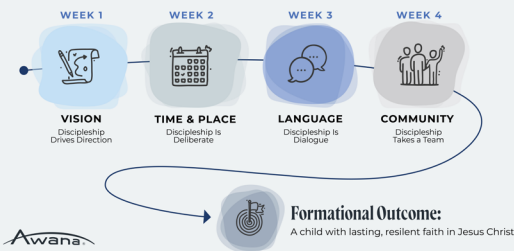
Once you begin:



[Greet everyone in attendance. Open this session with a recap of what was talked about the past week – Discipleship Drives Direction. Remind them they are disciplemakers of their children, not simply parents interested in seeing their kids disciplined.]

Welcome back, disciplemakers! Thank you for showing up today; it's going to be a great conversation! Let's recap where we are on the Formational Home Pathway:

Formational Home Pathway



As we build a culture of discipleship in our home, we need to remember that discipleship drives direction:

- As parents, we have more than just an interest in discipleship. We are the disciplemakers of our children.
- Vision casting who your child will be at 40 years old will influence what we do today.



What will you do now to shape who your child will be when they are 40 years old?

We finished the past session by asking the question: What will you do now to shape who your child will be when they are 40 years old?

Have you incorporated any of your ideas into your family rhythm?

[All parents can share if desired.]

## Time & Place

Discipleship Is Deliberate



Awana

Today, we will discuss another step along the Formational Home Pathway: time and place — and how, as disciplemakers, we can be deliberate about discipleship. Let's pray.

*[Pray for yourself, the lesson and the attendees, and that God would speak to your hearts during your time together.]*

When you decided to show up today, you invested a precious commodity: your time. We know we will never feel like we have enough time, especially with our kids. While we all have the same number of hours in the day, how those hours are spent may look drastically different from family to family.

What are typical activities that fill your day? Call them out!

*[Encourage everyone to name activities in a typical day – baseball, library, play dates, naps, lunch dates, tech time, etc – and record their responses on a whiteboard, if one is available, so everyone can see them.]*



“Busyness is to the home like water is to fish—it is simply the environment we’re surrounded by and swimming in.”

*Forming Faith, page 205*

Awana

Wow! Your days sound filled with fun — and sometimes tiring — activities! But, talk about BUSY!

Check out this quote from the book *Forming Faith*:

“Busyness is to the home like water is to fish—it is simply the environment we’re surrounded by and swimming in.”<sup>1</sup>



“Hard work is good. The same can be said of love, family, fitness, sports, church, and so many other things we idolize. In their place and in proportion, they are all good — but not one of them is God.”

*Jon Tyson, Beautiful Resistance, page 24*

Awana

Here’s another quote worth considering, this one by pastor and author Jon Tyson in his book *Beautiful Resistance*:

“Hard work is good. The same can be said of love, family, fitness, sports, church, and so many other things we idolize. In their place and in proportion, they are all good—but not one of them is God.”<sup>2</sup>



Awana

As we know, there are many ways to spend our time — most of which are good:

- Making meals for our family is *good*.
- Driving our kids back and forth to school, church and events is *good*.
- Sports and music lessons and drama club are *good*.

However we all know that when we say “yes” to one thing, we are also saying “no” to everything else. If we’re honest, we often can’t just add another thing to our schedule without compromising something else we could do.

How does your family decide what to say “yes” to?

15:00



If you could press reset on your calendar, given the goal of forming children with lasting faith in Jesus, what would you do differently?

Awana

Let’s reflect on how you make decisions for your family schedule. How intentional are you about identifying what you’re saying no to when you say yes to something else?

On your handout, spend a few minutes reflecting on and answering these two questions:

How does your family decide what to say “yes” to?

If you could press reset on your calendar, given the goal of forming children with lasting faith in Jesus, what would you do differently?

Take the next 15 minutes to write down your thoughts.



“What are our calendars and commitments describing in terms of our discipleship? ... If our schedules are allowed to grow without intention, we will no longer own our calendars, but rather they will own us as well as our family members and their faith.”

*Forming Faith*, page 209

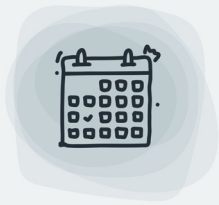
Awana

[At the end of 15 minutes, get everyone’s attention.]

Here’s another quote from the book *Forming Faith* that might resonate with you!

“What are our calendars and commitments describing in terms of our discipleship? ... If our schedules are allowed to grow without intention, we will no longer own our calendars, but rather they will own us as well as our family members and their faith.”<sup>3</sup>

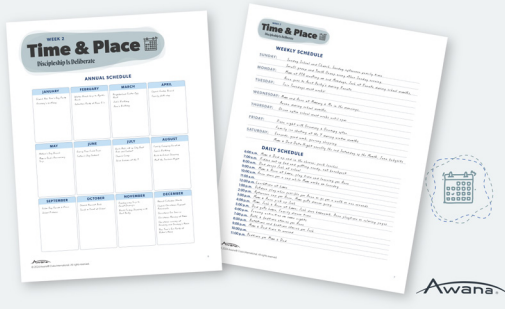




Awana

Rest assured, the goal isn't to discourage you. Instead, I want to encourage you to find ways to make the best use of the time God has given you.

One way to make the most of your time is to observe daily, monthly and yearly rhythms, and use those regular moments for faith formation. Instead of adding something to your calendar, look at your current daily routine and see how you can use those regularly occurring moments as moments for discipleship rhythms!



Awana

On your handout, you will see three schedules: one annual, one weekly and one daily. I'd like you to think of organic rhythms your family already has in place — things you do regularly — and write them down in the appropriate places.

For example, you may drive your kids to school every morning. Write that down on the daily schedule. You likely celebrate your child's birthday every year; write that down on the annual schedule. And maybe your family goes out to breakfast every Saturday. That can go on the weekly schedules.

Each of these activities is an *opportunity for discipleship*.

Car rides can become a time to share prayer requests and pray together.

Birthdays can become a time of family prayer and blessing over your child.

Saturday breakfast can become breakfast with the Bible.

Consider your family's organic rhythms. Write them on the annual, weekly and daily schedules. Then, consider ways you can turn those everyday activities into moments for discipleship.



Awana

Take the next 10 minutes to consider your family's organic rhythms. Write them on the annual, weekly and daily schedules. Then, consider ways you can turn those everyday activities into moments for discipleship.





Awana

Now that we have identified *organic rhythms*, those that occur naturally in your schedule, let's talk about investing in *intentional discipleship rhythms*. Intentional discipleship rhythms are the moments you strategically choose to engage in discipleship with your children. Some intentional discipleship rhythms are really, really approachable, such as a dad taking his daughter out for donuts and conversation or a mom praying and singing worship music with kids on the way to school.

Others might require a more significant investment of time and money.

One example of intentional discipleship rhythms is creating rites of passage for your children. In many cultures worldwide, rites of passage are celebrated as children reach certain milestones.



What rites of passage did you experience growing up?



Awana

[Discuss the following question as a group.]

What rites of passage did you experience growing up? This might be spiritual, such as receiving a cross necklace when you were baptized, or it might be developmental, such as receiving a cell phone once you started driving on your own.

Now let's apply this to your family: What rites of passage do you want for your kids? What would it look like for your family to be intentional about these milestones?

Here are a few examples:

- When your child enters first grade and has started learning to read, purchase a new children's Bible. Present it to your child and pray for God's blessing on their life.
- When your child receives Christ as their Savior, celebrate! Then, each year, continue celebrating their spiritual birthday.
- When your child enters high school, help them create a list of five adults they can turn to for prayer and encouragement. Invite those five adults over for dinner and fellowship.

Determine a family milestone.



- Choose a milestone.
- What special activity do you want to do to celebrate this milestone?
- What gift or keepsake would you like to give to commemorate this milestone?



Awana

Take 15 minutes to consider one right of passage your family could implement this year and plan it out on your handout.

- Choose a milestone.
- What special activity do you want to do to celebrate this milestone?
- What gift or keepsake would you like to give to commemorate this milestone?

If you have time after identifying your first milestone, plan out another! Together, these milestones make up your unique rites of passage.



*When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.'" Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe.*

Awana

*[After 15 minutes, call participants back together.]*

These milestones make up the rites of passage on your child's pathway and serve as a monument to what God is doing physically, developmentally and spiritually in your children — just like God commanded Joshua to set up a monument of 12 stones to commemorate how He led the Israelites over the Jordan.

Let's read Joshua 4:1–9:

*When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.'" Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe.*

*And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever."*



Awana

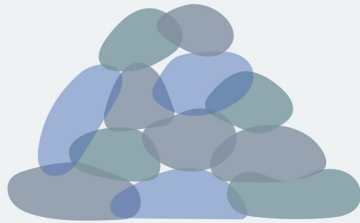
*And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever."*



And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the Lord told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day (Joshua 4:1-9).

Awana

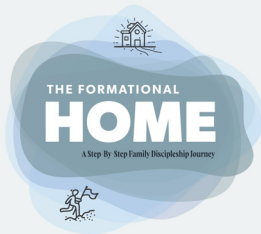
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Awana

At the time of writing, those stones were still visible — a testament to what God had done for His people. The everyday moments of discipleship and the rites of passage you include in your child’s pathway will stand as a testament. And not only will it be a testament for the child experiencing the milestone; your other children will watch and remember these sacred celebrations and what they mean.

Just as the Israelites could see the stones and recall God’s faithfulness and power, your children will see the evidence of God’s work in their lives and in the lives of their family. These moments will anchor their faith, serving as tangible reminders of God’s presence and promises. By intentionally marking these milestones and sharing these stories, you are creating spiritual landmarks that will guide and encourage your children throughout their lives, reinforcing their trust in God’s unchanging nature and His continual work in their lives.



Awana

*[Take time together to commit to prayer the time and places your families use for discipleship. Ask God to guide each family as they continue to build a culture of discipleship in their homes.]*

*[Allow this time to be authentic, encouraging and hopeful. Close out your time together encouraging them to come back on the next scheduled date to talk about how discipleship is an ongoing conversation with their kids!]*

NEXT SESSION:

WEEK 3

**Language**

Discipleship Is Dialogue

Awana

WEEK 3

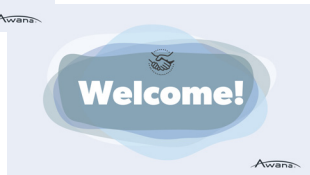
# Language

Discipleship Is Dialogue

While people gather:

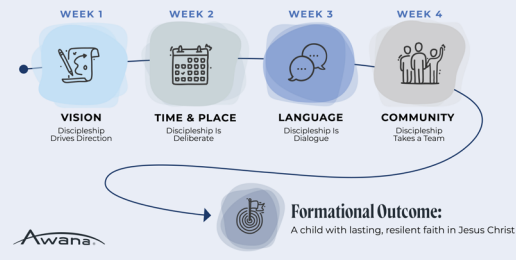


Once you begin:



*[Greet everyone who is attending. Open this session with a recap of what was discussed in the past sessions. Remind them they are disciplemakers of their children, not simply parents who are interested in seeing their kids disciplined. Encourage them to understand they are choosing to be deliberate with their time by attending these sessions, and their choice is driving the direction of how they disciple their kids!]*

Formational Home Pathway



Welcome back! I'm so glad you've joined us today. So far during on our journey together, we've learned that we are disciplemakers and our vision for what our children will become will help us decide what we do today. We've also identified times and places to intentionally set aside for discipleship.

What discipleship moments do you want to celebrate?

Before we move forward, let's pause and celebrate.

Who can share a discipleship moment — big or small — you experienced with your kids this week?

*[Take 10–15 minutes and allow families to share. Make this an encouraging time to recognize God's hand in their family's life!]*



# Language

Discipleship Is Dialogue

Awana

Thank you for sharing! During today's session, we will focus on language and how God uses dialogue to build a culture of discipleship in our homes. Let's pray before we go any further.

*[Pray for yourself, the lesson and the attendees, and that God would speak to your hearts during your time together.]*



What family discipleship practices have you tried, either successfully or not?

Awana

Depending on our own formational pathways, we all have very different ideas of what family discipleship looks like and what we're supposed to do during discipleship time. While your family of origin has impacted your view of family discipleship, you've also developed a unique system based on what your children need. Or perhaps you have no idea what faith conversations could look like in your family because that's something you've never experienced.

Let's kick off today's conversation by highlighting the good, the bad and the ugly of family discipleship practices we've seen or participated in! What have you seen or tried? What worked for you, and what felt like a failure?

*[Spend the next 5–10 minutes talking through their various experiences, good and bad. Acknowledge the diversity of practices among the families. What didn't work for one family might be a smashing success for another!]*



*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done.*

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Regardless of your prior experience, rest assured God has equipped you with exactly what you need. Let's read what He says in Psalm 78:1–8:

*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done.*

He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God (Psalm 78:1-8).



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*He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God (Psalm 78:1-8).<sup>1</sup>*

Did you notice how the psalmist encourages us to tell the next generation about Him through conversation?

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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).



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Now, let's look at Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

*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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).<sup>2</sup>*

Discipleship is the *conversational* means of faith formation.



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Again, the example given in Scripture is conversation. So many times we put so much pressure on ourselves to have carefully crafted activities or devotions, but discipleship is about conversation.

Discipleship is the conversational means of faith formation. In a time when digital communication often takes precedence — does anyone else text their spouse from across the room?! — it's crucial to remember that meaningful dialogue is at the core of discipleship. It's not merely about lecturing children on faith in Jesus but about the ongoing process of everyday conversation.





“Parents practicing their own religion ... is crucial. **JUST AS POWERFUL** is their talking with children about religious matters during the week, outside of designated officially religious times and settings.”

*Handing Down the Faith*  
Christian Smith & Amy Adamczyk



In 2021, Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk wrote the book *Handing Down the Faith* about present factors typically found in households where a child embraces their parents' faith. The authors made this powerful observation after surveying and studying more than 200 teenagers.

*[Read Slide.]* “Parents practicing their own religion ... is crucial. Just as powerful is their talking with children about religious matters during the week, outside of designated officially religious times and settings.”<sup>3</sup>

By looking for organic and intentional ways to turn everyday moments into dialogues of discipleship, you can help shape the hearts and minds of your children. Even the smallest exchanges can make a lifetime of difference. Sometimes the conversations begin when our kids come to us with conversation; other times we will need to use a framework to help guide the questions we ask them.



*What kind of questions do your children ask you, and how do their questions lead to conversations about God and faith?*



So, if dialogue is the means of discipleship, what do you talk about with your kids?

What kind of questions do your children ask you, and how do their questions lead to conversations about God and faith?

*[Use the next 5 minutes to discuss this as a group.]*

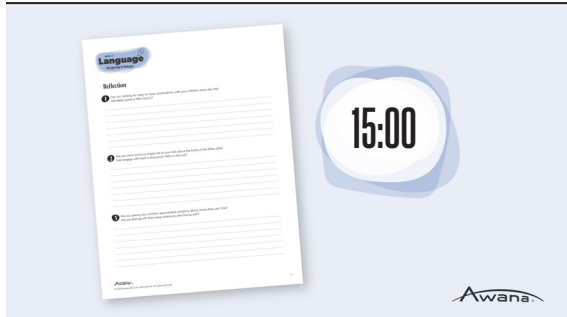


What can we do if our children don't initiate the conversation? Well, there is a framework we can use to guide the questions we have for our kids.

On your handout, you'll see five categories of conversations you can have with your kids.

- **Wonder:** Conversations that help young hearts begin to grasp the wonder of Who God is and what He's capable of.
- **Wisdom:** Conversations that help children understand God and His wonderful wisdom.
- **Grace:** Conversations that show forgiveness, consequence, love and mercy.
- **Purpose:** Conversations about who our children are becoming.
- **Perspective:** Conversations about God's sovereignty and our responsibility.

Under each category, there are conversation starters and activity ideas for you to share with your family.



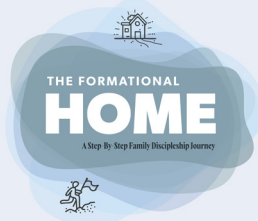
For the next 15 minutes reflect on the following questions:

- Are you looking for ways to have conversations with your children every day that ultimately speak to Who God is?
- Are you more prone to simply talk to your kids about the truths of the Bible rather than engage with them in discussion? Why or why not?
- Are you asking your children open-ended questions about where they see God? Are you sharing with them areas where you see God as well?



As you continue to build a culture of discipleship in your home, be on the lookout for daily opportunities for discipleship to be the conversational means of faith formation.





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*[Take time together to commit these things to prayer. Ask the Lord to bless the conversations that will take place this week. Ask for His abundant wisdom to grace our conversations and lead to sweet discipleship moments.]*

*[Allow this time to be authentic, encouraging and hopeful. Close your time together by encouraging them to return on the next scheduled date for the final stop on the Formational Home Pathway, at which time you will discuss the team of people who come around them and their children.]*

NEXT SESSION:

WEEK 4

# Community



Discipleship Takes a Team

Awana

WEEK 4

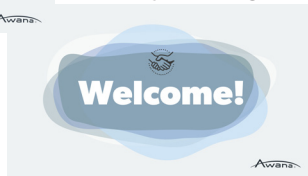
# Community

Discipleship Takes a Team

While people gather:



Once you begin:



*[Greet everyone who is attending. Open this session with a recap of what was talked about the past sessions: Discipleship drives direction, discipleship is deliberate and discipleship as dialogue. Remind participants they are disciplemakers of their children, not simply parents interested in seeing their kids disciplined. Encourage them to see they are choosing to be deliberate with their time by attending these sessions, and that their choice is driving the direction of how they disciple their kids! Also, remind them that they can weave discipleship conversations into all aspects of daily life.]*

**Welcome back! I'm so glad you've joined us today. So far during on our journey together, we've identified that we are disciplemakers and our vision for what our children will become will help us decide what we do today. We identified times and places to intentionally set aside for discipleship. We also considered how conversation is one of the primary ways faith formation can take place in our homes.**

**Let's share: Who had a discipleship conversation with their kids at some point since our last session?**

**Tell us about the conversation, how long it took and where it took place.**

*[Take 5–10 minutes to discuss. The point of sharing these stories is to show that they can happen anywhere: in the car, in the bleachers at a sporting event or at the dinner table. Conversations might last a handful of minutes or be as fleeting as a 30-second interaction. All of them are important and valid discipleship moments!]*

  
What conversations have you had with your kids about faith and God?

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# Community

Discipleship Takes a Team



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[Before you go further, ask everyone to join you in prayer for your time together.]

Today we are going to discuss the last stop on our Formational Home Pathway: Community. We'll discover that discipleship takes a team. To be honest, this might be the hardest stop on the discipleship Formational Home Pathway because it includes engaging trusted members of your community to walk this journey with you! Throughout our lives, God gives us invested individuals who mentor us, encourage us and pray for us.



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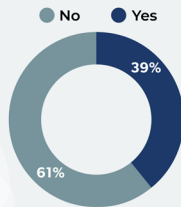
While you, as a parent, are the number one influence in your child's life, other sources — youth leaders, teachers, coaches, friends' parents and family members — can validate your children as they grow, mature and seek to belong.

In the book *Sticky Faith*,<sup>1</sup> authors Kara Powell and Chap Clark discuss the importance of intentionally building a "web" or a team of at least five adults who can pour into your child.

Imagine for a minute the comfort and confidence your child will feel when they know five adults, in addition to you, are praying for and encouraging them. Picture their first day of high school being bathed in prayer, and their weddings being witnessed by people who watched them grow.

Two in five children in children's ministry have a meaningful relationship with an adult.

Children who have a meaningful relationship with an adult at church are more likely to be rooted in Scripture.



Children's Ministry in a New Reality, page 72

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According to a recent research study Awana did in partnership with Barna,<sup>2</sup> children who have a meaningful relationship with an adult at church are more likely to be rooted in Scripture. Unfortunately, only two in five children in children's ministry have that meaningful relationship.

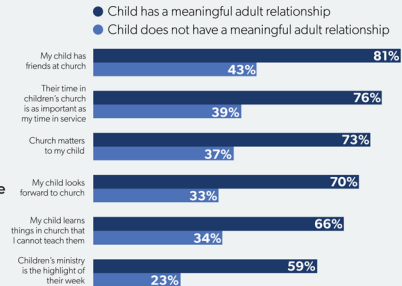
Something as simple as a meaningful relationship with a loving, caring adult can lead to an increased understanding of God's Word and a desire to attend church services.

**WE ASKED**

**Parents of 5- to 14-year-olds: Thinking about how your children interact with church and children's ministry, how much would you agree or disagree with the following?**

% strongly agree

Children's Ministry in a New Reality, page 75



But that's not the only benefit of having a team of believers around your child. The dark blue lines on this chart represent a child who has a meaningful adult in their life. The lighter blue lines represent a child who does not.<sup>3</sup>

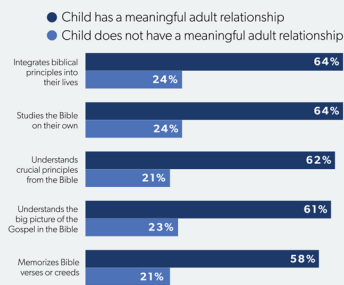
*[Read the slide and point out statistics you find significant.]*

**WE ASKED**

**Parents of 5- to 14-year-olds: Thinking about your child and their experience at church, how true are the following about them?**

"My child..." % say "completely true"

Children's Ministry in a New Reality, page 74



*[Read the slide<sup>4</sup> and point out statistics you find significant.]*

Isn't it amazing how a loving, caring adult nurtures a child's faith formation?



Who has influenced your spiritual development?



Take a minute to reflect on your childhood. Who was that person in your life who made an impact on you? Whether you came to faith as a child or as an adult, who would you identify as someone who significantly formed your faith in Christ? It might have been a coach, Sunday school teacher, music teacher or the parent of a close friend.

**Take a moment to think of who that person was and why their impact was so profound.**

*[Allow participants 1-2 minutes to reflect. Then, take 5 minutes and ask participants to share with the group who they thought of and how those people influenced their faith journeys.]*

### Build your child's team.

- Who is already investing in my child?
- Who do I want my child to emulate?



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Now, let's turn the focus back to our kids.

On your handout, you'll find a picture of a child with six lines orbiting them. We've already put you on one of the blank lines, but now I'd like you to consider who could the five other adults be on your child's team? You can use the chart if you need space to brainstorm.

By thinking through the people already investing in your child, the family members you want them to emulate or the friends you can call in the middle of the night, you'll be able to build a team that surrounds your child.

Also consider these questions: What are the spiritual gifts of the individuals you named? What are their unique qualities? This will help build a robust and diverse group of people who will invest in your child.

Every child in every family needs a team. While that team roster might change from time to time or at different ages, the key to successful faith formation will be found in the consistency of having multiple, trusted, godly voices speaking into the lives of each child in each home.



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Spend the next 15 minutes making a list of who might be on your child's team. Think of aunts and uncles, grandparents, trusted friends and mentors, etc.

Consider these questions as you reflect.

- *Who is already investing in your child? Who regularly encourages and prays for them?*
- *Who are you doing life with? Are there people you can call in the middle of the night if you need something?*
- *Who are the leaders you would love to see your child emulate? As you think about your child, who would you like to see them become like?*
- *How will you set expectations for the home team to come around your child? What natural rhythms exist, and how can you capitalize on them?*



"The word 'parenting' was essentially never used until the 1950s, and only became popular in the 1970s. For nearly all of human history, people grew up in environments where they observed many people caring for many children."

*The Anxious Generation*  
Jonathan Haidt



In our society, there's a prevailing notion that you can find an expert to mold your children into successful members of society. This is a recent cultural development. In Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*, he states, "The word 'parenting' was essentially never used until the 1950s and only became popular in the 1970s. For nearly all of human history, people grew up in environments where they observed *many people caring for many children*."<sup>5</sup>

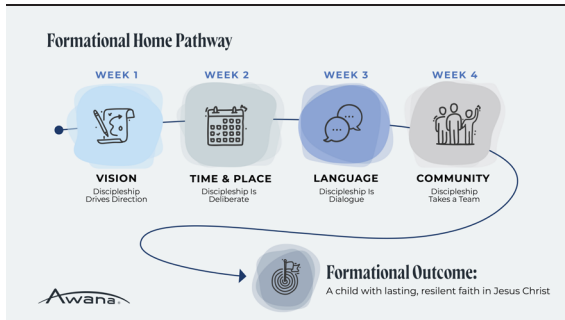
This community-based approach is not only rooted in our cultural history but also in our faith.

Historically, Christians raised children in environments where the entire community came together. Today, society and culture encourage families to be isolated from community, myopic in their thinking and family rhythms. However, we are part of the family of God.

We are your faith community.



Take a moment to look around this room; this is your faith community. When it comes to the faith formation of your children, this church body wants to be part of your team.



As we conclude these four sessions on building a Formational Home Pathway for your children, remember the vital truths and practical strategies you've learned:

- **Vision:** Discipleship Drives Direction: The faith formation of your children sets the course for their entire lives.
- **Time and Place:** Discipleship Is Deliberate: Make a conscious effort to incorporate faith into your everyday moments, choosing milestones that mark your rites of passage and stand as a testament to the work of God in your family!
- **Language:** Discipleship Is Dialogue: Open, ongoing conversations about faith are crucial. Encourage your children to ask questions and express their thoughts and doubts.
- **Community:** Discipleship Takes a Team: You are not alone in this journey. Surround yourself and your children with a community that shares your commitment to spiritual growth. Lean on the team around your child to support and reinforce the spiritual growth of your kids.

As you apply these principles, trust that God is working in and through you to shape the hearts and minds of your children. He is faithful to honor your efforts and will guide your family every step of the way.

**1: Take home the booklet.**  
**2: Sign up for the Friday Family Email.**  
**3: Connect with us.**

Awana

Finally, here are three action steps:

1. **Read the *Creating a Culture of Discipleship in the Home* booklet.** We've prepared a booklet outlining everything we covered during the past four sessions together. This will help your household continue building a Formational Home Pathway for the children in your home.
2. **Sign up for the Friday Family Email.** If you're looking for an easy way to start those everyday discipleship moments with your kids, sign up for the Friday Family Email from Awana. This weekly email includes simple questions and conversation guides to help turn everyday moments into meaningful ones.
3. **Connect with Us.** As we've emphasized, when it comes to discipling your kids, the church and the home are better together. We are committed to providing you with the resources you need for the vital work you're doing in your kids' lives, but we need your insight to do so effectively. Please come talk to us.

Thank you for your time and investment in the faith formation of your children. Together, we can raise a generation of children who experience lasting faith in Christ. All glory to Him!



*[Conclude your time together in prayer. If possible, pray over each family unit specifically.]*



### Session 1

1. *Cheaper by the Dozen* 3/5 Movie Clip — Dinner Complications (2003) YouTube video, June 16, 2015, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZVwo\\_eIP7Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZVwo_eIP7Y).
2. Matt Markins, Mike Handler and Sam Luce, *Forming Faith: Discipling the Next Generation in a Post-Christian Culture* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2024).
3. *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*®, 2016, John 1:14.
4. Josh Mulvihill and Jen Mulvihill, *50 Things Every Child Needs to Know Before Leaving Home: Raising Children to Be Godly Adults*, (Roanoke, Virginia: Renewation, 2021).

### Session 2

1. Markins, Handler and Luce, *Forming Faith*, 205.
2. Jon Tyson, *Beautiful Resistance: The Joy of Conviction in a Culture of Compromise* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Multnomah, 2020), 24.
3. Markins, Handler and Luce, *Forming Faith*, 209.
4. Joshua 4:1–9 (ESV).

### Session 3

1. Psalm 78:1–8 (ESV).
2. Deuteronomy 6:4–9.
3. Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk, *Handing Down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the Next Generation* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

### Session 4

1. Kara Powell and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011).
2. *Children's Ministry in a New Reality: Building Church Communities That Cultivate Lasting Faith* (Barna Group, 2022), 72.
3. *Children's Ministry in a New Reality*, 75.
4. *Children's Ministry in a New Reality*, 74.
5. Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* (Penguin Press, 2024).