



the **GOSPEL** PROJECT

how deut. 6
shapes the
mission of
the church

discipling
the post-truth
generation

what makes
the Bible
make sense?

ONE BIG STORY

your guide to what's new for
KIDS, STUDENTS, and ADULTS.



gospel. **it means good news!**

As Christians, we often forget this humble definition.
That's why we created The Gospel Project.

The Gospel Project is all about the gospel because
the gospel is all about Jesus.

The gospel is the lens through which we study Scripture.

The gospel provides the grace-filled foundation on
which we build community.

The gospel is our mission and our message of hope
to the world.

The more we understand it, the better we understand the
goodness and mercy of Jesus Christ. And that's good news.
The best news! And we're here for it, and for your whole
church every time you meet together.

The following pages explain how The Gospel Project
can help your church build a gospel-centered culture
of discipleship, community, and mission through weekly
Bible study for kids, students, and adults.

We invite you to take a look and download complete
sample sessions any time at gospelproject.com/tryit.



the **GOSPELPROJECT**

we're here for good news.

when i was a pastor, the hardest part of writing sermons was always the end, the application. Explaining the meaning of the passage was life-giving and, in a sense, easy. But when it came to explaining what to do in light of it, I struggled. I offered practical guidance on all kinds of different issues, but it always rang hollow to me. Eventually the reality hit me: I was feeding my people the Scriptures, but I was failing to testify to Jesus as I did. I was preaching moralism, telling people to live better lives in their own power. I wanted them to change their behavior, rather than be changed by the gospel.

I know I'm not alone in my experience. Many of us grew up hearing the Bible taught this way, and many of us have taught it that way. And this is why I love being part of The Gospel Project. I am grateful for God's kindness to allow me to be part of a resource that is helping men, women, students, and kids to place the gospel where it belongs—at the center of all we do.


Because that's what we're called to be about, isn't it? We're called to be people who are here for good news with good news to share with the whole world. And that begins not outside in the world, but within the church. We need the gospel just as much as those who do not yet know Jesus. We need to be changed by it, and to continue to be changed by it. And that's why I'm so excited for you to explore everything we have to offer with The Gospel Project for all ages. Whether you're serving the preschoolers or the eldest members of your church, the gospel is for them all. And I hope that this fall, you'll be joining us in pointing them to the gospel week after week.



For His glory,

brian dembowczyk

Managing Editor of The Gospel Project



“Look, the Lamb
of God, who
takes away the
sin of the world!”

John 1:29

- 03 ————— Getting to the Heart of Discipleship
- 06 ————— What Does it Take to Make a Study Plan?
- 10 ————— Kids Can Handle It: The Best Reason
in the World to Serve in Kids Ministry
- 12 ————— **The Gospel Project for Kids:**
New Ages, New Look, New Experiences
- 18 ————— What Makes the Bible Make Sense
- 20 ————— **The Gospel Project for Adults:**
Furthering the Mission
- 24 ————— 7 Arrows for Bible Reading
- 26 ————— Discipling the Post-truth Generation:
Why Sound Doctrine Matters in Student Ministry
- 28 ————— **The Gospel Project for Students:**
Focused on the Essentials
- 31 ————— Fast Facts
- 32 ————— Ordering Guide

getting to the heart of discipleship

BRIAN
DEMBOWCZYK

What are we after—what are we really after—when it comes to discipleship? Or put another way: “What is our goal? What does a ‘win’ in discipleship look like?”

“Well, we want people to learn the Bible,” many might respond. “The job of pastors, small group leaders, and disciplers is to teach God’s Word.”

Certainly true, but is this really the goal? Is just knowing things really what we are after?

Others might chime in, “Learning the Bible is a good start, but it’s more than that. We want people to do what the Bible says too. We want them to live out the Bible.”

Again, certainly true, but is right behavior all we want? More importantly, is that all God wants?

Even a brief survey of Scripture reveals that there is another aspect to discipleship, one that is just as critical as learning and living God’s Word but often neglected: loving God. We see it most clearly in how Jesus responded when He was asked which commandment was the greatest:

He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”

Matthew 22:37-40, CSB

Love. The two greatest commandments center on it—loving God and loving others. Not learning. Not even living. But loving. And all of the other commandments hinge on these two, so all of them are ultimately centered on love. Learning is critical, but it makes no difference if it does not produce love. And living is not full and authentic if it is not prompted by love.

This is what discipleship is all about—helping people learn the gospel story of Scripture, love the Author and Subject of that gospel story, and then live out their part in the ongoing gospel story.

Learn. Love. Live.

While initially, learning must come first of the three, in time they each propel a person toward one another as a person grows to become a more faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Loving Jesus drives a person to spend more time learning from the Scriptures and seeking ways to live out his or her faith. Living on mission leads a person back to the Bible to better understand how to accomplish this task and fuels love for God as he or she experiences God’s work among the nations.

“learn, love, live” in the shema

It shouldn’t be surprising, then, that we see this three-part structure of discipleship woven into what many consider to be the seminal passage on discipling kids in the Bible: Deuteronomy 6:4–9, known as the Shema.

While this passage focuses on discipleship in the home, its principles carry over to discipleship of all ages.

learn.

Notice how the Shema begins:

“Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”

Deuteronomy 6:4, CSB

The foundation of the Shema—of discipling—is rightly knowing who God is, or believing rightly about God, known as orthodoxy. You cannot love whom you do not know and you cannot live out what you do not know, so in many ways discipleship has to begin with us targeting the head. We need to help people understand who God is and His ways. We need to help them engage their minds—to think deeply—about the gospel. But if discipleship ended here, it would be just a matter of information transfer and the demons would be good disciples. (See James 2:19.)

love.

Notice how the Shema continues:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart.”

Deuteronomy 6:5-6, CSB

God’s intention is that the truth of who He is (orthodoxy) and the beauty of what He has done to restore our broken relationship with Him (the gospel) should stir our affections for Him and others. This is why Jesus pointed to the commands to love God and love others as the two greatest in Scripture. Love is the divinely appointed conduit for us to take what we know and put it into practice.

As critical as this part of discipleship is, it is often neglected for some reason. The tendency is to move straight from learning to living, which robs people of the beauty of the gospel and the opportunity to rightly engage their feelings (called orthopathy). Being moved deeply—filled with gratitude, love, and awe—is the only reasonable response to what we learn. We don’t just target the head, then,

we also go after the heart. But if discipleship ended here, it would be incomplete. Love is not love without action.

live.

Notice how the Shema concludes:

“Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:7-9, CSB

Knowing and loving God rightly will result in living rightly, called orthopraxy. What we believe about God and our love for Him will show in how we live before a watching world. Living on mission, then, is not just extra credit for the spiritual elites. It is a requirement of all who believe, and is a test to determine if a person actually has learned and loved.

This is what Jesus had in mind when He explained what separates the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46. Jesus pointed to each group’s action as the reason they were either saved or they perished. Jesus was not teaching a works-based salvation in this passage, but rather He was assuming a holistic discipleship process. His unspoken premise was that the righteous will do what they do because they know and love Him. It will be their natural and reasonable response to being in relationship with God. The inverse is just as true: it is unreasonable to contend that a person is a disciple of Jesus if he or she fails to live any differently. Our goal is not just to aim for the heads and hearts of those we are discipling, but also for their hands. We want people to live differently because of what they have come to learn and who they have come to love.

Again, this is what discipleship is all about. This is holistic discipleship.

“learn, love, live” in the gospel project’s 2021–2024 cycle

Although we have not used the terms learn, love, and live, this model of discipleship has

been part of The Gospel Project's DNA since its launch in 2012. Each session is designed to help people learn the big story of Scripture and come to understand who Jesus is, love Him more as they experience the beauty of the gospel, and then find their place to live on mission for Him. As we begin the fourth three-year cycle of The Gospel Project in September, we believe it is essential that this discipleship model be made clearer than ever before. Here are some ways we are doing that:

application emphasis for adults and students

In both the adult and student studies, this framework is used primarily in the session's application section. Called "Head, Heart, and Hands," both age levels invite group members to consider how to respond intellectually (how does this shape my thinking, understanding, or beliefs?), emotionally (how does this affect my feelings?), and practically (how will I live differently because of these changes?).

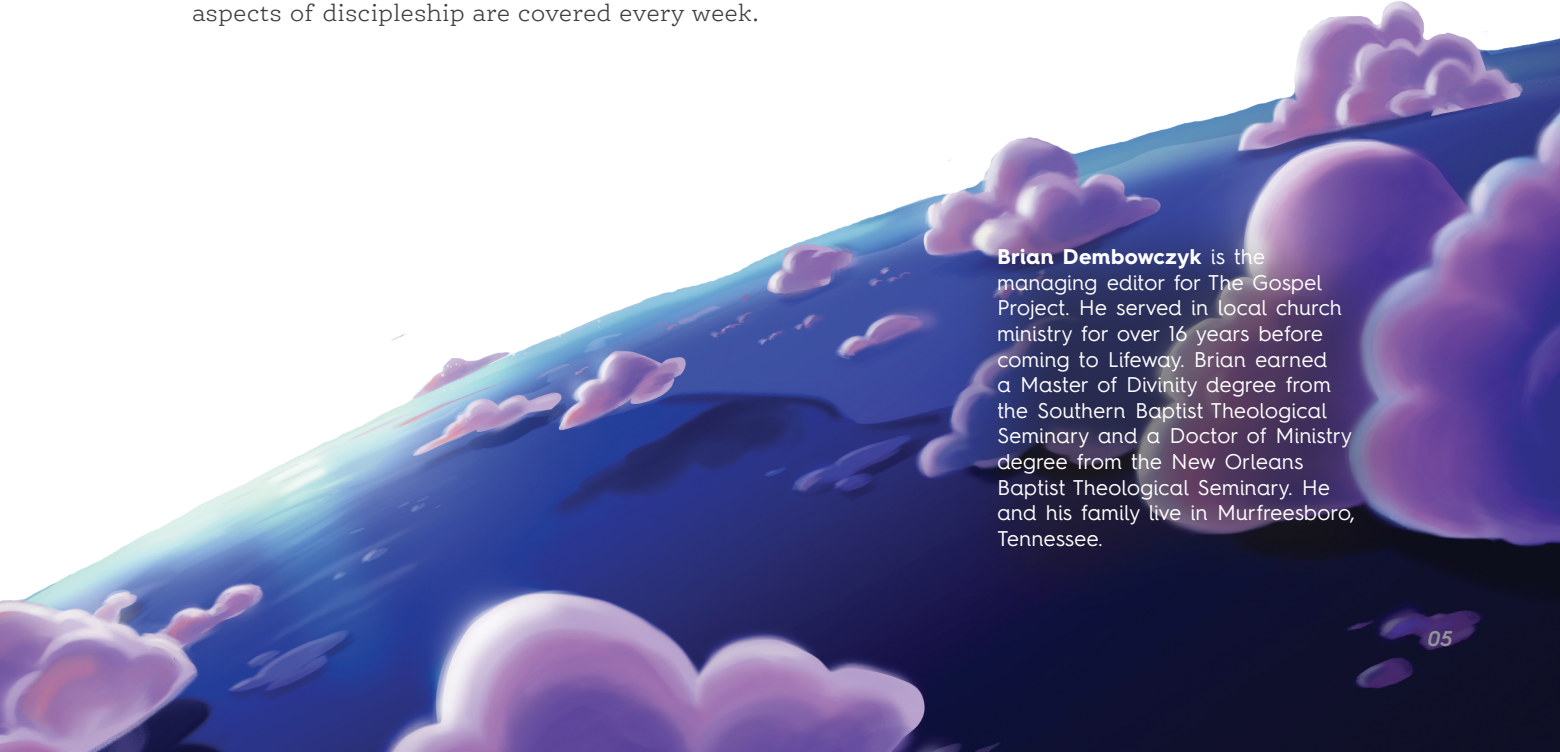
new kids leader guide design

All of the Preschool and Kids Leader Guides have been redesigned to clarify where learn, love, and live are focused. Each session now has four parts: Welcome, which replaces "Introduce the Story," Learn, which replaces "Teach the Story," and Love and Live, which replaces "Apply the Story." Our hope is that these new section headings act as a compass for leaders and teachers—helping them to know the goal of each part and to ensure that all three aspects of discipleship are covered every week.

a new midweek option for kids

A new Kids Midweek option will be provided, allowing a kids ministry to use The Gospel Project resources once, twice, or even three times each week. The Midweek content will introduce kids to the spiritual disciplines and help them develop healthy habits to grow and live as disciples of Jesus Christ. In addition, the Kids Worship time is being changed to provide more of a worship experience, providing kids that important element of discipleship while preparing them to transition to corporate worship as well. These three resources now provide kids ministries with a comprehensive discipleship plan. While the primary Bible study hour content can still stand alone, kids ministries can continue to add the Worship experience and/or the Midweek experience for up to three different hours of programming throughout the week.

- Bible Study Experience: Emphasizes Learn, with Love and Live covered as well
- Worship Experience: Emphasizes Love, with Learn and Live covered as well
- Midweek Experience: Emphasizes Live, with Learn and Love covered as well



Brian Dembowczyk is the managing editor for The Gospel Project. He served in local church ministry for over 16 years before coming to Lifeway. Brian earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry degree from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his family live in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Every Bible study you've ever been a part of has a plan at its foundation. The Gospel Project is no exception. Every three years, we develop a brand-new plan to help the whole church see the story of redemption from Genesis to Revelation.

so, what does it take to make a study plan?

1 story

Every session connects to the one story that runs throughout all Scripture. Our job in crafting a study plan is to show these connections in a way that is faithful to the passage being studied and adds greater understanding to God's rescue plan through Jesus.

Plus unceasing prayers (because exploring the big story of Scripture is a big deal)

18 months

It takes approximately 18 months of meetings, independent work time, and consulting with different voices from within Lifeway and local churches to develop a study plan for The Gospel Project from start to finish.

156 passages

There are certain passages you cannot not include, which work out to about half of its 156 Bible study lessons. Can you imagine trying to tell the story of Scripture without God creating the world (Gen. 1:1–2:3), David's rise from shepherd-poet to Israel's greatest king—apart from Jesus—(1 Sam. 17–2 Sam. 24), Jesus' life, death, and resurrection (the Gospels), God building His church (Acts), or the promise of the new creation (Rev. 21–22)? But within the remaining half, we have a lot of room to adapt as we look at different moments that point us toward Christ and reveal the essential truths of the Christian faith throughout Scripture's big story. This resulted in a study plan that is radically different in scope and feel than any we've had before in The Gospel Project.

1 goal

As we build a study plan, we have one goal in mind: to help your church disciple all ages as they study the big story of Scripture with a study that is different than what you've experienced in the past.

3 concepts

As we work through our goal and commitments, 5–7 different rough concepts start to take shape. Some are set aside fairly early on in the process, but about three make it all the way to a final decision. Ultimately, there can be only one.

9 age groups

While many might be aware of the four major age groups of The Gospel Project—adults, students, kids, and preschool—the last three further separate into age groups. In total we serve adults, high school students, middle school students, preteens, older kids, younger kids, older preschoolers, younger preschoolers, and babies and toddlers. The study plan that we create must serve each of these age groups in a meaningful, age-appropriate way.

(we might be overcaffeinated, but we think you'll like the results.)

church-wide study plan

VOLUME 1: FROM CREATION TO CHAOS

(Genesis)
Fall 2021

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 1:** In the Beginning (Gen. 1–2; Ps. 19)
- unit 2:** Creation Is Ruined (Gen. 3:1–11:9)
- unit 3:** God’s Rescue Plan (Gen. 12–22, 25–33, 37–50; Job; Heb. 5:7)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 1:** The Heavens Declare the Glory of God (Gen. 1–2; Ps. 8, 96; 2 Cor. 4; Heb. 11)
- unit 2:** Let Us Make a Name for Ourselves (Gen. 3–8, 10–11)
- unit 3:** I Will Make Your Name Great (Gen. 11–15, 21–22, 26–29, 32–39, 45–50; Heb. 7; Col. 1; Ps. 103; Matt. 6)

VOLUME 2: FROM CAPTIVITY TO THE WILDERNESS

(Exodus-
Deuteronomy)
Winter 2021–22

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 4:** Out of Egypt (Ex. 5–15; Isa. 9)
- unit 5:** Into the Wilderness (Ex. 16–7, 19–20, 32–40; Lev. 1–4)
- unit 6:** Away from the Land (Num. 13–14, 20–21; 1 Pet. 1)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 4:** Out of Egypt I Called My Son (Ex. 3, 6, 12–14, 19; Lam. 3; Ps. 51; Matt. 2)
- unit 5:** To Dwell in the House of the Lord (Ex. 16–20, 32–40; Lev. 6)
- unit 6:** Be Holy, Because I Am Holy (Num. 13–14, 20–21; 1 Pet. 1)

VOLUME 3: FROM CONQUEST TO A KINGDOM

(Joshua-
1 Samuel)
Spring 2022

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 7:** Back to the Land (Josh. 1–4; 2 Tim. 3)
- unit 8:** Into the Land (Josh. 2, 6–7, 23–24; Mark 16)
- unit 9:** A Pattern of Disobedience (Judg. 2, 13–16; Ruth; 1 Sam. 1–6; Eph. 2)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 7:** Lord, Teach Me Your Statutes (Josh. 1, 3–4; 2 Tim. 3; Ps. 119)
- unit 8:** Fear the Lord and Worship Him (Josh. 2, 6–8, 11, 23–24; Luke 7; Mark 16)
- unit 9:** There Is No Fear of God Before Their Eyes (Judg. 2, 13–16; Ruth; 1 Sam. 1–4; Rom. 3, 5, 7)

VOLUME 4: FROM UNITY TO DIVISION

(1 Samuel-
1 Kings)
Summer 2022

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 10:** King Saul (1 Sam. 8–11, 13; Gen. 18)
- unit 11:** King David (1 Sam. 16–17; 2 Sam. 6–7, 11–12; Ps. 51)
- unit 12:** King Solomon (1 Kings 2–3, 6–9, 10–12; Luke 18)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 10:** Because of Your Hardened Heart (1 Sam. 8–11, 13, 15; Amos 5; Rom. 2, 3)
- unit 11:** Create a Clean Heart for Me (1 Sam. 16–17; 2 Sam. 7, 11–12; Eph. 2; Ps. 51)
- unit 12:** If You Walk Before Me with a Heart of Integrity (1 Kings 2–3, 8–12; Titus 3)

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

**VOLUME 5:
FROM
REBELLION
TO EXILE**

(1 Kings–The
Prophets)
Fall 2022

- unit 13:** The People Disobey (1 Kings 12–13, 16–18; 2 Kings 2, 4–6; Isa. 44)
unit 14: Warnings to the People (2 Kings 12; 2 Chron. 24; Isa. 22, 48; Zeph. 1–3; Matt. 3)
unit 15: Into Captivity (Jonah; Nah. 1–3; 2 Chron. 36; Ps. 139)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 13:** What Comes Out of the Mouth Comes from the Heart (1 Kings 12–13, 16–18; 2 Kings 2–5, 10; Isa. 44; Matt. 15; James 4)
unit 14: Seek the Lord, All You Humble of the Earth (2 Chron. 24; Isa. 22, 25, 30; Zeph. 2–3; 2 Cor. 7; Acts 26; Ps. 119)
unit 15: He Has Made Every Nationality (Jonah; Nah. 1–3; 2 Chron. 36; Gen. 1, 3, 5; Rom. 1; 2 Cor. 3; Luke 10; Acts 17)

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

**VOLUME 6:
FROM
CAPTIVITY TO
RESTORATION**

(The Prophets,
Ezra, Nehemiah)
Winter 2022–23

- unit 16:** In Exile (Jer. 29–30; Dan. 1, 5; Isa. 7)
unit 17: The People Return (Ezra 1, 2–4; Zech. 13–14; Jer. 31)
unit 18: The People Prepare (Esther; Ezra 7–10; Neh. 8–10; Rom. 8)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 16:** The Lord Keeps His Eye on Those Who Fear Him (Jer. 30; Dan. 1, 5; 1 Kings 8; Ps. 33; Isa. 7)
unit 17: Take Refuge in the Lord (Ezra 1–2, 4–6; Zech. 13–14; Ps. 118; Heb. 6)
unit 18: For Look, the Day Is Coming (Esth. 4, 8, 9; Neh. 1–2, 8–9; Mal. 3; James 2)

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

**VOLUME 7:
FROM
HEAVEN TO
EARTH**

(The Gospels)
Spring 2023

- unit 19:** Preparing for Ministry (John 1; Matt. 1–4; Mark 1; Luke 1–4; Heb. 10)
unit 20: Encounters with Jesus (John 3–4; 1 Cor. 13)
unit 21: Early Responses to Jesus (Luke 4–5; Heb. 11)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 19:** Here is the Lamb of God (John 1–2; Luke 2; Mark 1; Matt. 4; 1 Cor. 5; Heb. 10)
unit 20: God’s Love Was Revealed Among Us in This Way (John 3–4; 1 John 4; 1 Cor. 13)
unit 21: Without Faith It Is Impossible to Please God (Luke 4–5; Rom. 5; Heb 11; James 2)

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

**VOLUME 8:
FROM
WONDER TO
REJECTION**

(The Gospels)
Summer 2023

- unit 22:** The Miracles of Jesus (Luke 5, 8; Matt. 8–9, 15; Mark 2, 4–5, 8; John 14)
unit 23: The Teachings of Jesus (Matt. 5–6, 13, 22; Luke 14–15)
unit 24: The Rejection of Jesus (Luke 13; John 11–12; Eph. 6)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 22:** The Works That I Do in My Father’s Name Testify About Me (Mark 4, 8; Luke 5; Matt. 9; John 10; Heb. 1)
unit 23: The Kingdom of God Is in Your Midst (Matt. 5–6, 13, 24; Luke 15, 17)
unit 24: God’s Glory in the Face of Jesus Christ (Luke 13; John 11; 2 Cor. 4; Eph. 6; 1 John 2)

**VOLUME 9:
FROM
DEATH TO
RESURRECTION**

(The Gospels)
Fall 2023

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 25:** The Warnings of Jesus (Matt. 21–23, 25; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12; Deut. 18)
unit 26: The Arrest of Jesus (John 12; Mark 14; Matt. 26; Luke 22; Heb. 7)
unit 27: The Death and Resurrection of Jesus (John 18–20; Matt. 26–28; Luke 22–24; Mark 15–16; Col. 1)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 25:** Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Who Kills the Prophets (Matt. 21–25; Mark 1; Deut. 18; John 6, 14)
unit 26: The Hour Has Come (John 12; Matt. 26; Heb. 7, 9)
unit 27: The King of the Jews (Luke 22–23; Matt. 27–28; Heb. 1; Col. 1; Rev. 22)

**VOLUME 10:
FROM
MANY
PEOPLE TO
ONE PEOPLE**

(The Gospels,
Acts)
Winter 2023–
24

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 28:** Jesus Is Alive (Luke 24; John 20–21; Matt. 28)
unit 29: The Church Begins (Acts 1–2; Gal. 5)
unit 30: Peter’s Ministry (Acts 2–5; Rom. 10)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 28:** I Am with You Always (Luke 24; John 20–21; Matt. 28; Isa. 58)
unit 29: You Will Be My Witnesses (Acts 1–2; John 16; 1 Cor. 2; Rom. 8)
unit 30: Every Day the Lord Added to Their Number (Acts 2–5; Matt. 9–10; Rom. 10)

**VOLUME 11:
FROM
ONE
NATION
TO ALL
NATIONS**

(Acts, Epistles)
Spring 2024

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 31:** The Church Is Opposed (Acts 5–8; Phil. 2)
unit 32: The Church Grows (Acts 9–12; 1 Cor. 12)
unit 33: The Church Goes (Acts 9, 13–14; 2 Cor. 5)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 31:** Every Knee Will Bow (Acts 5–8; Phil. 2; Heb. 4; 2 Cor. 5)
unit 32: The Power and the Wisdom of God (Acts 9–12; 1 Cor. 1, 12)
unit 33: A Prisoner of Christ Jesus (Acts 9, 13–14; Philem. 8:22; 2 Cor. 5)

**VOLUME 11:
FROM THIS
WORLD TO
THE WORLD
TO COME**

(Acts, Epistles,
Revelation)
Summer 2024

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- unit 34:** The Church On Mission (Acts 15–21; Rom. 5)
unit 35: Paul’s Mission to Rome (Acts 21–28; 1 Thess. 4–5)
unit 36: The Church’s Hope (Rev. 4–5, 19–22)

ADULTS & STUDENTS

- unit 34:** Ambassadors for Christ (Acts 15, 17, 18–19; Matt. 16; 2 Cor. 5; Eph. 4)
unit 35: That I May Gain Christ (Acts 20–28; Phil. 3)
unit 36: A New Heaven and a New Earth (Rev. 4–5, 19–22)

For a detailed, session-by-session study plan,
visit gospelproject.com.

KIDS can Handle

AARON
ARMSTRONG

The Best Reason in the World to Serve in Kids Ministry

Let me tell you about why I serve in kids ministry. Correction: let me tell you about the one really good reason I serve in kids ministry. I've been serving in kids ministry more or less from the time I started following Jesus right to the day I'm typing this, with only a few small breaks in between (so, give or take, about 14 years).

That's hundreds of lessons taught to hundreds of children, all with particular needs. It's hundreds of times being asked for a snack or a drink of water. Hundreds of times being asked for a trip to the bathroom. And, of course, hundreds of times being interrupted with a non sequitur about a pet, sibling, or something fun that happened that weekend.

For a lot of us, kids ministry is exhausting. It's the place where we work the hardest to find volunteers and always come up short. It's the place where we are never sure if kids are actually getting anything from our teaching. It is so often seen as little more than an add-on, as childcare at best—glorified babysitting where kids do a craft, hear a story, and maybe get a snack, too.

So why do I serve there? Simple: I serve in kids ministry because it is valuable—it matters! Kids ministry matters because it is all about making disciples of Jesus! It's a place to make sure that kids are getting the same things we all need to grow.

they must be fed

Spiritually speaking, children need all the same things we do in order to grow: they need to know the Bible, too, and sometimes in even greater abundance! But we must remember the command Jesus gave to Peter, to feed His lambs (John 21:15). Like Peter, we are commanded to instruct people in the faith. We are to teach them the truth; to “feed” them from God’s inspired word. And that necessarily includes children.

In his book, *Come Ye Children*, Charles Spurgeon wrote of the necessity of feeding Christian children, and feeding them abundantly. He wrote:

Christian children mainly need to be taught the doctrine, precept, and life of the gospel . . . Teach the little ones the whole truth and nothing but the truth; for instruction is the great want of the child’s nature. A child has not only to live as you and I have, but also to grow; hence he has double need of food. When fathers say of their boys, “What appetites they have!” they should remember that we also would have great appetites if we had not only to keep the machinery going, but to enlarge it at the same time. Children in grace have to grow, rising to greater capacity in knowing, being, doing, and feeling, and to greater power from God; therefore above all things they must be fed.¹

what kids need most

Kids need the truth in order to grow, just as much as we do. No truth, no matter how big or small, should be excluded from their understanding. They need to know:

How God judges the world
 How He demonstrates His love through the sending of His Son Jesus to die for us
 That all stand before God guilty of sin, and only Jesus can take it away
 That Jesus is coming back to judge the living and the dead, and bring about the new creation
 That God sends His Spirit to live within all who believe, giving them new life and desires that please God

They need all these and many more besides. But here’s the truth: whether kids realize this need or not isn’t the point. It also doesn’t matter if they respond right away or not. And while we should never make the gospel or the Bible seem boring, our goal isn’t to be entertainers when we teach. They’re not in our ministries simply to have a good time—they’re here for good news. Just as children need

healthy food in order to grow physically, they need sound teaching to grow spiritually. Teach “the little ones the whole truth and nothing but the truth,” as Spurgeon wrote. That’s what kids need most.

And here’s the good news: they can handle it! Taught in an age-appropriate way, they can handle the tough truths of the Bible. They can handle the big story of Scripture. They can handle the passages that make us adults uncomfortable sometimes. What God has revealed, kids are capable of grasping.

instant gratification

But what kids need often challenges what we desire. We are shaped by an instant gratification culture where social media, important leadership wisdom, and, let’s be honest, our own sin, have transformed us into dopamine junkies, itching to get the next hit of temporary satisfaction. But kids ministry, properly understood, is opposed to the quick hit or the easy win. Kids ministry is intentional, relational evangelism and discipleship. It is a slow burn, with a capital S-L-O-W, where we truly do live in light of the parable of the sower, scattering the seed of the gospel indiscriminately, but not knowing what sort of soil it will ultimately fall upon.

getting a glimpse

Nevertheless, even though instant gratification isn’t a thing in this ministry, it doesn’t change the goal. And it doesn’t mean that we don’t get little glimpses of what God is doing in the hearts and minds of the kids we serve. Sometimes, God, in His kindness, does exactly that. A few years ago, the Christmas before I moved to the United States from Canada, one of the girls I taught stopped me in the hall. She handed me a little card she had made. Inside it simply said, “Thank you for teaching God’s Word to us.” At the time, she hadn’t professed faith in Jesus, but she understood at least one thing: that I cared enough to teach her about Him. And that’s enough. It has to be.

Aaron Armstrong is the Brand Manager of The Gospel Project, a kids ministry & small group leader in his local church, and the author of several books including *Awaiting a Savior, Epic: The Story that Changed the World*, and the *Big Truths Bible Storybook*.

1. C. H. Spurgeon, *Come, Ye Children: A Book for Parents and Teachers on the Christian Training of Children* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 8.

new ages, new look, new experiences

THE GOSPEL PROJECT
FOR KIDS TEAM

An Overview of the New Gospel Project for Preschool & Kids

At its heart, kids ministry is about one thing: discipleship. It's about helping the youngest people attending our churches discover, know, and love Jesus—and learn that they can share Jesus with others too! And over the past year, our team has been hard at work reimagining The Gospel Project for Preschool and Kids to help connect kids and leaders to the big story of Scripture in a deeper way. With new age levels, a new look for our resources, and all-new ministry experiences, the latest iteration of The Gospel Project provides you with the best tools possible to fulfill this unique and essential ministry of the local church.

a new age level to help the youngest in the church know and love Jesus

During the first years of life, children develop emotionally, physically, and mentally at a blistering pace. The needs of babies and toddlers are different from the needs of 3- to 4-year-olds, and those are different from 5- to 6-year-olds. That's why we've created new Younger Preschool materials to more effectively address the developmental needs of 3- to 4-year-olds.

As this new product was being developed, we constantly kept in mind how younger preschoolers learn and develop. Separating the younger preschoolers from the older preschoolers has also allowed us to cater to their shorter attention span. We have created shorter, dynamic sections that help teachers keep their preschoolers engaged throughout the session.

Not only are the activities shaped around younger preschoolers, but the language is as well. At this age, younger preschoolers

tend to be very concrete and literal. We have used specific language to account for this concreteness and literalness as much as possible. **We have also tried to simplify every opportunity we can without compromising the truth of the gospel we are teaching.**

from the product

GOD CREATED PEOPLE

SAY “ God created the whole world. He made the sun, the sky, plants and trees, and many kinds of animals. But God was not finished. On Day 6, God made people. He loves people most of all.!

God made a man out of dust of the ground. God named the man Adam. Then God made a garden for Adam. It was Adam’s home. God gave Adam a job taking care of the garden.

God told Adam that he could eat food from any tree in the garden, except for one.

Then God said it was not good for Adam to be alone. So God made a helper for him. God brought to Adam the animals He had created. Adam gave the animals names. But none of these animals made a good helper for Adam.

So God made Adam fall asleep. God made a woman. Adam woke up, saw the woman, and was happy! The woman was Adam’s wife. Adam named her Eve.

God put Adam and Eve in charge of the animals and gave them everything they needed. God looked at everything He had made. Everything was very good! So on Day 7 of creation, God rested from His work. ”

how?

Bigger, harder words are substituted for smaller, easier ones and when slightly more challenging words are used, they are defined in ways a younger preschooler can understand.

With this in mind, the Bible story is shorter and simpler for Younger Preschool, as is the **Christ Connection**, and the Key Passage is a briefer phrase.

younger preschool

People are special because God made us to know and love Him. Through Jesus, we can know and love God.

older preschool

God created people in His own image. He loves us and gives us everything we need. People are special because God made us to know and love Him. Through Jesus, we can know and love God just as He planned.

One thing we also wanted to address was the separation anxiety younger preschoolers often feel when leaving their families. Because of this, we’ve added a welcome activity that happens at the door. This gives younger preschoolers the opportunity to warm up to the class and teachers before their families leave.

With this new resource, we’ve also kept the different levels of experience of the teachers in mind. Some have been teaching for only a month, some for 30 years or more, and many some length in between. Each section features clear steps, clear “say” portions, and clear activity directions so that no matter their level of experience, teachers feel equipped.

suggested age levels for The Gospel Project

PRESCHOOL

Babies and Toddlers: 0–2
Younger Preschool: 3–4
Older Preschool: 5–6

KIDS

Younger Kids: 6–8
Older Kids: 9–11
Preteen Supplement: 10–11

a leader-friendly leader guide to help kids learn the Bible's big story

Leaders need to spend as much time focused on their kids as possible every week. We've structured The Gospel Project for Preschool & Kids' Leader Guides with this in mind, allowing leaders to know where they are and what they need at a glance with an easy-to-use, easy-to-follow structure.

easy-to-use (and easy-to-print) size

Every session is 10 pages long, designed at a user (and printer) friendly 8.5" x 11" size. This page count and size means less page turning for leaders and more time focusing on ministry.

a simple structure for ministry

Every session is broken up into four sections—Welcome, Learn, Love, and Live. These sections are identified by a unique icon



We teach kids the gospel story so they can learn about God and His ways



We help kids see that what we know about God leads to love for God



We show kids that our love for God is displayed in how we live for God



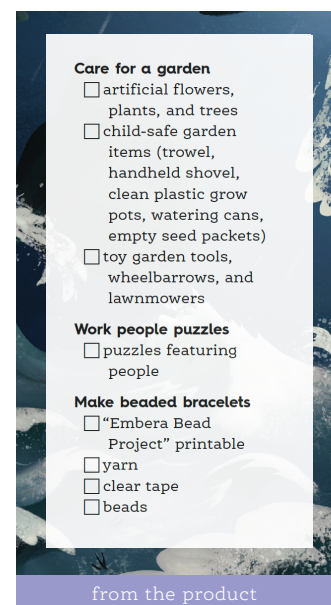
(and color for digital resources too!), that leaders will always know where they are at a quick glance. The steps in each section are numbered, making it easy for the leader to always know where he or she is at any given time. And speaking prompts are clearly identified to help leaders find them and read them at a glance.

easy-to-find supplies & activities

Supply lists for activities are found at the beginning of each session to make gathering supplies easy. Activities are highlighted to make them easy to identify, and checkmark boxes enable ministry leaders to clarify which activity option leaders should do with their kids.

a new midweek experience to help kids live the disciplines of discipleship

One of the newest resources in The Gospel Project family is the Midweek experience. This experience loosely follows the



weekly Bible Study sessions, but it doesn't repeat it. Instead, it focuses on the "live" portion of the "learn, love, live" structure as it equips kids to understand and practice the spiritual disciplines of the Christian faith.

Throughout the 2021–2024 study cycle, The Gospel Project for Kids Midweek will feature two units on each of the following topics: worship, Bible study, and prayer. One unit will be featured on each of these topics: evangelism, fellowship, rest, service, generosity, and fasting/celebration/silence. As kids go through the units, they will learn what it means to practice these disciplines in everyday life. Finally, the Midweek experience also features a discipleship group component. This is a space where kids will have the opportunity to share with one another what they are learning and ask the leader questions.

With this new Midweek resource, our desire is to give churches a comprehensive discipleship strategy for kids.

midweek highlights

Available for the
Kids age level only

Focuses on 9
spiritual disciplines
over 3 years

Kids will learn
the practices of
a disciple for
everyday life

a new worship experience to help kids express love for God

When kids hear the word "worship", they often think of singing songs. While singing is a part of worship, the new Kids Worship Hour Add-On will take kids deeper to help them connect what they learn about God in the Bible to their emotions and different ways to worship in response.

Think about some of the familiar Bible stories and the different ways we might respond to them. When we read about God parting the Red Sea, we might respond with a sense of awe at His power, or concern about what happened to the Egyptians. When we read of the flood and Noah's ark, we might respond with gratitude of God's grace or perhaps fear of His judgment.

When we read of the birth of Jesus, we might be filled with love, or even confusion—how can God become a baby? The new Kids Worship Hour Add-On is designed to position leaders to talk through these different responses and see how no matter what the response is, to turn it into worship of God. That worship might be singing, or it might be reading the Bible more, serving others, or even enjoying God's creation.

Practically, the Kids Worship Guide is a worship experience more like what most churches provide on Sunday mornings. Times of musical worship are provided as well as a group demonstration and teaching time. In addition to reading the Bible story or

showing the Bible story video, leaders have the option to preach to the kids using a suggested basic sermon outline in the guide. Each worship time ends with a response, including a challenge for the kids to live out what they learned that week.

video updates

Each new cycle of The Gospel Project provides the opportunity for the videos to be updated and new styles added. In addition to keeping the favorites around—that would be the paper bags—several exciting changes are in store for the 2021–2024 cycle.

maegan and jesse



One of the most notable changes for kids will be a new storyteller, Julian. Along with Priyah, Julian will tell all of the kids Bible stories. Julian provides a sense of warmth and joy in his narration that will keep the kids engaged and help them develop a deeper love for the Scriptures.

Preschoolers will also see a major change right away—an all-new, preschool-specific Bible story style. In the past, the preschool videos used the same footage as the kids stories, only edited for content and often narrated by Maegan after her introduction with Jesse. Starting this fall, Maegan will tell preschoolers the Bible story in a fun and inviting space, using props and illustrations. As always, Jesse will be joining her to start each video off right.

Both the kids and preschool videos will also feature a new way to note the Christ Connection at the end of the video. This critical component has been highlighted in the past through a color saturation technique, but that was too subtle at times. This round of videos will feature a black border around the video image during this Christ Connection, making it crystal clear each time.

One other important video change will be a new host for the Questions from Kids videos. Pastor Kevin will be answering questions from kids, drawing from his experience as an educator, father, and pastor and from his love of Christ and the gospel. Your kids can submit their questions online at gospelproject.com/questions-from-kids.

The goal of each of these video elements is not just to entertain (there is nothing wrong with that!) but more importantly, to help kids understand the story of Scripture so that they might come to love its Author all the more.



You've seen the highlights, now see the whole thing!

Try the first unit of The Gospel Project for Preschool and Kids at gospelproject.com/tryit

what makes the Bible make sense

AARON
ARMSTRONG

The Key to the Puzzle the Bible Can Seem to Be

The first time I read the Bible—and I mean really read the Bible, not just random snippets that showed up on TV shows and in comic books and novels—was when I was 25. It wasn't a book I had grown up around; it never even occurred to me that I should read it. And I'll be honest, when I did read it the first time, it was because I wanted to make fun of a Christian friend.

God, with His divine sense of irony, had other plans. I walked down the street from my home to a Christian bookstore that happened to be a mere two blocks away. I purchased a Bible with the help of a bewildered employee, then returned home to start reading. Several people, including the woman at the store, encouraged starting with John's Gospel (because I'm a contrarian by nature, I started with Mark).

As I read, I was fascinated by this Jesus person, this man who claimed to be God, who was so different than the Jesus pop culture mocked so incessantly, which up to that point was the only Jesus I knew. This Jesus was not like that one. He was a man who had power over evil, could heal the sick, and taught with authority. A man of whom His own disciples said, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him" (Matt. 8:27). He was a man that everyone who encountered Him had a reaction to, because they couldn't not.

what is the Bible about?

And then I became a Christian, and as a new believer, I was amazed by what I was reading. But I was also confused. Part of my confusion actually came from what I was being taught. I was learning good and biblical principles for living. I was exposed to several different verses every week, but I didn't entirely know how to fit it all together. Was the Bible a collection of principles, inspirational sayings, and moral examples, like an instruction manual for life? I couldn't shake the feeling that I was missing something. One day, I realized what while reading about Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees in John 5.

The Pharisees were, of course, the "Bible guys" of their day. They loved the Law; they studied it diligently. They poured over every word. But when Jesus began His ministry, they were at first confused about Him—and soon their confusion turned to anger. Who was this man to violate the Law, or at least their approach to it? Who was this man who was a "friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Matt. 11:19)? They tried to turn people against Him, to trap Him with questions over biblical interpretation, and

more. They attacked His character, and even His family. They even tried to kill Him. But Jesus' assessment of them was earth-shattering:

"You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me."

John 5:39, CSB

what—or who—makes the Bible make sense?

And there it was, the thing that I had been missing: the key to the puzzle that the Bible can seem to be for many of us—even those who grew up with it. Many Christians spend their whole lives approaching the Bible as basically a big book of rules, morality tales, and inspirational sayings. And although there is much to be inspired by, many moral truths, and many wise commands contained within it, if that's all we see the Bible as, we're missing its point. We'll diligently study the book searching for the secret of eternal life, and may miss the One who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

But seeing that all Scripture testifies about Jesus changes everything about how we understand the Bible—and how we live in light of it. We recognize the Old Testament, not as a wholly separate collection of writings, but as the foundation and foreshadowing of everything that happens in the New Testament, the first part of one big story told from Genesis to Revelation. We see the New Testament for what it is, as good news of great joy for all people—because Jesus came to fulfill the Law, to rescue us through His death and resurrection, and restore the relationship with

our Creator that sin ruined. And we can live faithfully in the world right now, as good news people in a bad news world. People who live knowing how the story God is telling ends, a story that says that all the bad we experience right now in this world will come to an end in the world to come, when Jesus returns to make all things new, to put an end to sin and sadness and suffering. When death will die, and God's people will all rejoice.

good news too good to keep to ourselves

This is the understanding we need to fully make sense of the Bible in the way God intended (Luke 24:27; John 5:39). As much as the Bible encourages us, helps us to live wisely, and provides powerful examples of courage and compassion, we need to turn away from our tendencies to reduce it to being about such things. God wants us to see something so much more than that, something so much bigger—that the gospel is at work from beginning to end. That Jesus is at its center. We need His help to see this—and we need His help so that we might help others see it as well. To be people who say with John the Baptist, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b).

This good news is too good to keep to ourselves. It is meant to be shared with the whole world. It needs to be shared with the whole world. May God help us to do it.

furthering the mission

THE GOSPEL PROJECT
FOR ADULTS TEAM

An Overview of the New Gospel Project for Adults

If you had to boil down adult ministry—whether in Sunday Schools, seminars, or small groups—it all comes down to one thing: helping them make disciple-making disciples. No matter our background, no matter our familiarity or comfort with the Bible, that’s what we’re all meant to be. And over the past year, our team has been hard at work reimagining The Gospel Project for Adults to help further that end as groups engage with the story of Scripture and the essential truths of the Christian faith in a more profound way. With a refreshing new look and group experience, the latest iteration of The Gospel Project provides you with the best tools possible to equip your groups.

focusing on the Word with the daily discipleship guide

Central to the group experience of The Gospel Project for Adults is the *Daily Discipleship Guide*. The *Daily Discipleship Guide* is divided into three units, with 3–6 sessions in each. Each unit begins with a reflective introduction that connects the major themes that will be studied throughout. Following the unit introduction, each session is divided into three parts:

session overview. The Session Overview provides context for your groups’ time reading and studying the Bible individually and together. This overview is divided into three parts:

a one-sentence summary of the study

the session’s focal passage(s)

one paragraph setting the scene for the week

daily devotions. Because reading and studying the Bible personally is key to our growth as believers—standing heads and shoulders above any other spiritual discipline—we have chosen to prioritize this in the *Daily Discipleship Guide*. The daily devotions comprise the

+ SESSION IN A SENTENCE:

God created everything out of nothing, and all of creation reveals Him.

+ BACKGROUND PASSAGES:

Genesis 1:1–2:3; Hebrews 11

+ SETTING:

Before “In the beginning,” there was God. Before time and space was, there was the timeless, boundless, infinite Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The triune God—one God in three Persons, perfect in love, unity, and holiness—creates. All that we see, all the science we study, all the history we know and experience—everything owes its existence to the One who created everything out of nothing, and everything serves the purpose of bringing Him glory.

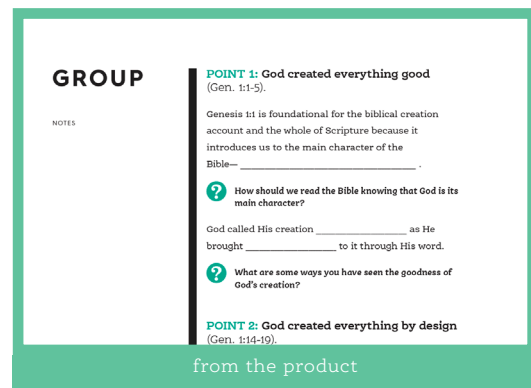
from the product

majority of the content for each Bible study session, each featuring a Bible passage reference, a short reflection on the passage, and a personal application question. These devotions connect directly to the study by highlighting the study’s focal passages and drawing from the larger body of Scripture to address larger themes within the session.

group time. The final segment of the Daily Discipleship Guide is the two-page discussion guide. This guide includes the key points of the session, along with interactive questions and activities to address the needs of a variety of learning styles. Also included in the Group Time are the session application questions, which follow the head, heart, and hands model that runs throughout The Gospel Project across all ages—helping your groups to consider how they will think, feel, and live differently in light of what they’ve learned in Scripture.

learning to study the Bible with your Bible.

We are absolutely committed to the fact that reading and studying the Bible is absolutely life-changing, but it is increasingly clear that fewer Christians than ever know how to do so effectively. And we want to do our part to help change that—to equip Christians to be more effective students of the Bible. That’s why we are incorporating a simple Bible study tool called the Seven Arrows into the *Daily Discipleship Guide*. This tool will help group members learn the basic mechanics of Bible study by asking a few basic questions of any passage (you can read about this in more detail on page 24).



But that's not the only way we are working to address peoples' struggles with reading and studying the Bible, nor even the most important way. The most important way is by choosing not to print Bible text in the *Daily Discipleship Guide* itself (yes, you read that correctly). While it seems counterintuitive, the fact is, the best way to help people read and study the Bible is to encourage them to read the Bible they actually own—the Bible and Bible translation they chose for themselves.

Whether your group members read from the CSB (our preferred choice), ESV, NIV, KJV, or any other translation, this helps them read focal passages in context and to see their place in the larger story. To learn the landscape of their Bibles as they study the Bible. To, instead of reading a passage from our book, read it from the Book.

equipping you to teach and lead effectively

Group leaders will find everything they need to effectively teach and lead the discussion for each session in the *Leader Guide*. Available in two translations, CSB and ESV, the *Leader Guide* provides teaching outlines, biblical commentary, and optional illustrations all in one convenient package. Each unit begins with a reflective introduction that connects the major themes that will be studied throughout. From there, each session is divided into four components:

session overview. The overview outlines the big ideas of the entire session, helping leaders see:

what their groups will learn

how they will see Christ

how they should respond

group time. The core component of the *Leader Guide*, the group time section is broken up into five parts (introduction, three main points, and application). The introduction helps set the scene for the session and provides some introductory questions to help your group get started.

The three main points are divided into two sections: the teaching outline and biblical commentary. Here group leaders will find everything they need to effectively prepare and lead a meaningful discussion. Throughout the teaching outline, leaders will find several discussion questions and interactive moments, including opportunities to engage groups with free video content focused on the session's Essential Doctrine. The biblical commentary features a deep-but-accessible exploration of each focal passage, revealing its meaning and its overall place in the storyline of Scripture. That desire for accessibility isn't limited to how the biblical commentary is written. Because there are some theological terms that cannot not be used, we are including definitions of terms that may be unfamiliar

to some leaders. Our goal in this is simple: no matter your familiarity or background, you can use The Gospel Project for Adults to effectively disciple your groups.

my response. The application portion of the session focuses on how knowing God leads to changed affections or emotions which leads to changed lives—in other words, clear, Christ-centered Bible study will shape the head, heart, and hands of a Christian. Each question in the response component is intended to focus on one of these three aspects, along with a short explanation of the implications of the study in each of these areas.

extras. The final section of the session includes additional commentary for those who want to dig even deeper on a key point, as well as optional interactive activities or illustrations.

EXTRA

POINT 2: WE BEAR GOD'S IMAGE THROUGH OUR RELATIONSHIPS (GEN. 2:18-23).

+ COMMENTARY

"The first two chapters of Genesis give us two different but quite complementary portrayals of what it means to be male and female. Genesis 1, on the one hand, tells us that for human beings being male and female is closely linked to being created in God's image [Gen. 1:27]. ... The way this verse [v. 27] is structured, with its tight parallelism, shows that there is something about our gender complementarity (male and female) that reflects something true about God ... Human sexuality is part of what it means to be the image of God (says the verse). Not that God is gendered or sexually differentiated, but that personal relationship is part of the essential nature of God and therefore also part of the essential nature of humanity, since we were created in his image. Human sexual complementarity and the personal relationships it enables reflect within the created order something that is true about God within his uncreated, divine being.

from the product



You've seen the highlights, now see the whole thing!

Try the first unit of The Gospel Project for Adults at gospelproject.com/tryit



7 arrows for Bible reading

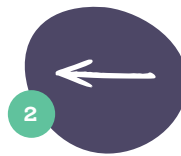
MATT
ROGERS

There is often a vast disconnect between the awareness of the need for disciple-making and practical tools that actually aid in this work. Three factors are essential: Scripture, relationships, and time. Discipleship happens when the life-changing truth of Scripture is infused into genuine relationships over an extended period of time. Our desire was to create a simple, reproducible strategy that would facilitate this process. This led us to develop a simple strategy for small clusters (2–3 people) to meet together regularly and talk about the Scriptures and apply them to their lives.

The seven arrows of Bible reading were an attempt at developing a tool for proper hermeneutics to power these relationships. We did not want our people to simply talk about the Bible. We wanted them to understand the Bible and know how to apply it to their lives. Each cluster would read a predetermined passage of Scripture and discuss it using these seven arrows.



The goal was for the clusters to start by summarizing the main point of the passage as succinctly as possible, ideally in one sentence.



Next, the clusters sought to discern authorial intent for the passage by asking what it meant to its original audience. Since a text of Scripture can never mean what it never meant, it is necessary to begin by discerning what the text meant. Often this may require the clusters to consult other study tools or cross-reference other biblical texts to arrive at the meaning of the text.

Thirdly, we asked what the text tells us about the nature and character of God and specifically His work through the person and work of Jesus Christ.



Fourthly, the text was analyzed to see what it tells us about humanity. Bryan Chappell refers to this as the “fallen condition focus” of the text. What does the text reveal about sin and mankind’s need for the gospel?



Matt Rogers is the teaching pastor at The Church at Cherrydale in Greenville, SC. His church developed the Seven Arrows tool to help people read and understand Scripture within their small groups. The concept has gone on to form the basis of a 52-week devotional for teens from Lifeway Students, the Seven Arrows Bible from B&H, and is now featured in The Gospel Project for Adults and Students.

5



Then we moved the clusters to application. Since we had now rooted the clusters in the meaning of the text, they were now positioned to rightly apply its meaning to their lives.

From there we wanted our clusters to apply the Scripture to their relationships with others. Ideally, they would discuss how the text shaped both how they related to other believers and how they lived on mission in the world.

6



Finally, the clusters rooted their prayers in the Scriptures. Hopefully, the previous six arrows kindled the flames of passionate prayer in the lives of the clusters—both for their own sanctification and for their mission to the lost.

7



With this model, we touched on three important areas for discipleship:

scripture. Disciple-making was rooted in a rightful understanding of Scripture and not in simply doing life together, unpacking another sermon, or dependence on classroom instruction.

simplicity. Disciple-making was simple enough for everyone to get involved. All believers could take these principles, a Bible, and a relationship with a young Christian and get to work.

stickiness. Disciple-making through understanding and applying Scripture was etched in the minds of our young church. They could use these same arrows to not only guide their cluster discussions, but also their personal Bible study, small group leadership, and comprehension of sermons.

These arrows have proven to be a unique tool in our disciple-making toolbox that the Lord is using to call and build faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus.

DISCIPLING
THE POST-TRUTH
GENERATION:

why sound doctrine matters in student ministry

DREW
DIXON

What do your students actually believe about God? Jesus? The Bible? Themselves?

Imagine if you were able to get the teenagers at your church to honestly answer those questions. If they told you what they really thought, rather than what they think you want them to believe, what kinds of answers do you think you'd get?

As a former student pastor and now an editor of student ministry curriculum, I think I have a tendency to assume my students understand the essentials of the faith. I think this way because I work really hard, and I am sure you do too, to teach students good theology and to encourage them to study the Bible. Truthfully, however, I don't think I adequately grapple with the reality in which students live today. There are more distractions at their fingertips and more forces competing for their attention than ever before. I don't think we can assume our students know the essentials of our faith because I don't think we should ever assume they are paying good attention. And furthermore, when students feel free to say what they actually believe, a recent study




has shown that it often doesn't coincide with the clear teaching of Scripture.

More than half of teens (52%) believe all religions teach equally valid truths and more shockingly, the percentage is not any less when looking at teens who profess to be Christians. Additionally, 31% of Christian teens disagree that forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ. These statistics, from One Hope's study on Global Youth Culture, tell a story: teens today live in a post-truth culture. Most teens don't talk about what they believe, in part, because they live in a culture that doesn't value truth.

When we read stats like this, we are tempted to think, "Okay, sure, that might be true of most students, but not the ones at my church!" Culture, however, is like oxygen—it is all around us and we are constantly breathing it in, but we rarely acknowledge it. So whether they realize it or not, our students' views of the world, themselves, and God are being influenced by their interactions on social media, their interactions with their peers, and their time at school. This isn't to say that we should be afraid of any of these things, but rather to say that we have our work cut out for us when it comes to teaching and instilling the essentials of our faith to teenagers.

This is why 99 Essential Doctrines were developed for The Gospel Project—we believe theology matters. We live in a culture where key Christian beliefs are not only contradicted



Jesus answered,
"I am the way
and the truth
and the life. No
one comes to
the Father except
through me."

John 14:6

but where truth itself is devalued. So we're digging in our heels to say what we and our students believe about God, Jesus, the Bible, and themselves matters greatly. Jesus, after all, is the way, the truth, the life, and the only way to God (John 14:6). There is only one gospel (Gal. 1:8).

I think the problem many student leaders run into when it comes to teaching doctrine is that it can sound like a really dry or academic undertaking. We are convinced, however, that well-taught theology is beautiful, compelling, and engaging. We believe this so firmly that we have created videos that teach the Essential Doctrines in a concise and compelling manner that speaks the language of students. Each unit of The Gospel Project for Students now has one Essential Doctrine session in which we dive into a crucial belief of our faith and unpack why it matters to teenagers today. These sessions are accompanied by optional videos in which student ministry practitioners explain each Essential Doctrine in an engaging and student-friendly manner.

Don't make the mistake of assuming your students know the important truths of the Christian faith. Teach them, guide them, and talk to them.

focused on the essentials

THE GOSPEL PROJECT
FOR STUDENTS TEAM

Developing Depth with The New Gospel Project for Students

What is the secret to a great student ministry? Maybe it's a great experience, with plenty of opportunities for laughter and fun. Perhaps it's strong teaching that helps students get a grip on a growing faith. While some might think these two are opposed, we like to ask: why can't it be both? Deep, faithful teaching and fun experiences aren't in conflict. And our team has been hard at work reimagining The Gospel Project for Students to make that clear—offering students a great experience as they dive into the story of Scripture and explore the essential truths of the Christian faith.

a fresh look

The Leader Guide and Daily Discipleship Guide for The Gospel Project for Students have been fully redesigned, with new eye-catching visuals, vibrant colors, and an easy-to-follow layout for leaders and group members of any experience level. These are resources your group leaders—and members—will have a hard time keeping their eyes off!



The Gospel Project's focus on the big story of Scripture helps students see how the Bible ties together as it points to Jesus. Within that story, students discover the essential truths of the faith, seeing them drawn out from the pages of Scripture. In this cycle of The Gospel Project for Students, we want to help students gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the essentials. That is, the essential truths of the Christian faith—to know what Christians believe and how to meaningfully engage in discussions about real questions people have about the faith (including their own).

Because many students, especially those who grew up going to church, feel reticent about asking hard questions, we've included a Big Question feature that addresses the most difficult questions that may come from the study, and tackles them head on. We want to help you nurture an environment where asking hard questions and finding honest answers are not only possible but encouraged, and this is one of the ways that we can do that.

As part of the new scope and sequence for all ages, each unit tells a chapter of the story of



Scripture, with its final session devoted to a deeper dive into how a specific essential truth of the faith is revealed throughout. In the first volume alone, as we explore God's work in creating the world and then people, we see how He did it all for His glory. As we see humanity rebel against Him, we will explore how sin has become the default

mode of the human heart. And as we begin a survey of the family of Abraham down to Joseph, we will see how God providentially worked to preserve and build a nation from their descendants. These sessions have a distinct look and feel from the rest of the unit to better allow for students to engage with our new doctrine discussion videos.

And speaking of doctrine discussion videos...

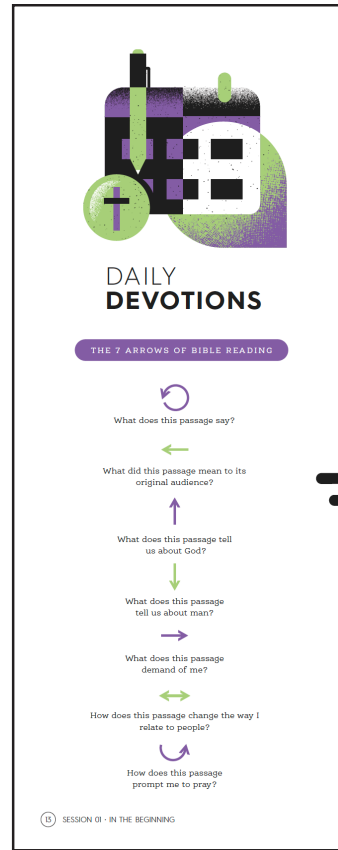
One of the new features we are most excited about is the new doctrine video series that has been developed for The Gospel Project for Students. These videos are available in the Essential Doctrine Video Bundle and connect directly to the final session of each unit. These videos feature engaging discussions

with student ministry practitioners with one goal in mind: to bring these core truths of the faith to life and show why they matter to teenagers right now.

discipleship personally and in community

Discipleship happens both personally and in community. The Gospel Project for Students is designed with both in mind. The *Leader Guide* provides student ministry leaders with everything they need to lead an effective, meaningful, and fun Bible study experience, with discussion questions, biblical commentary, and activity ideas.

The *Daily Discipleship Guide* gives students an outline for each session's discussion and guidance on how they will apply what they've learned to their whole lives using the "Head, Heart, and Hands" model—addressing how what they've learned shapes their thinking, their emotions, and their actions. To connect each session more deeply, students are encouraged to read and engage with five daily devotions that are included in the *Daily Discipleship Guide* and study the Bible for themselves using the Seven Arrows method (see page 24 for more information).

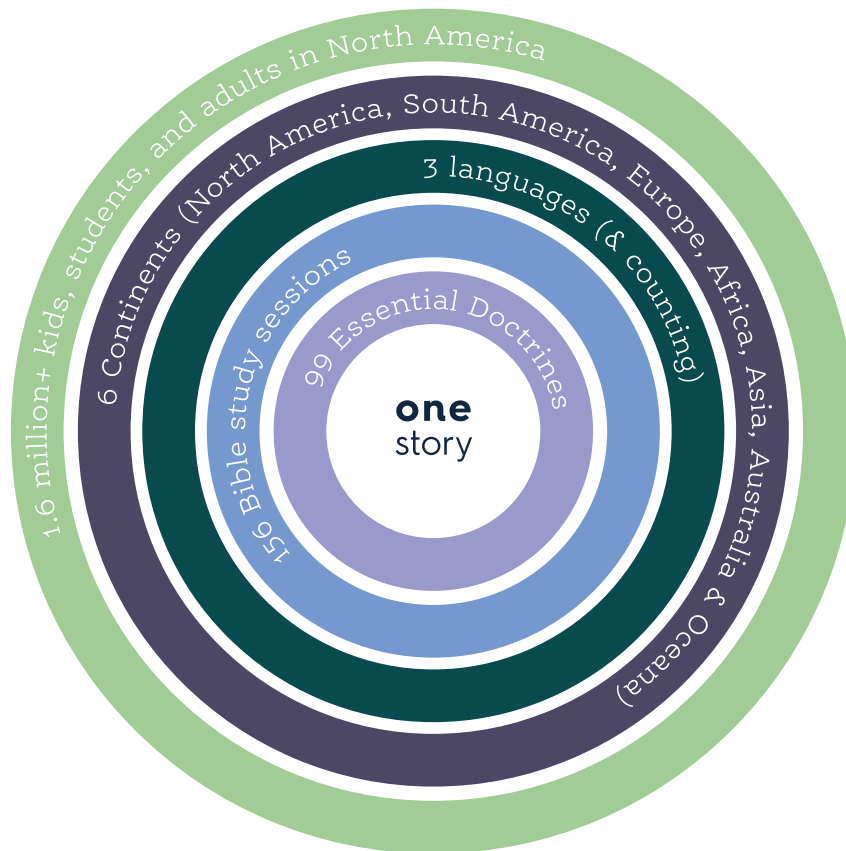


You've seen the highlights, now see the whole thing!

Try the first unit of The Gospel Project for Students at gospelproject.com/tryit

fast facts about The Gospel Project

Since 2012, The Gospel Project has been helping the whole church see the big story and big truths of Scripture. Today, that means:



When you choose The Gospel Project, you're not picking a Bible study curriculum. You're joining with Christians around the world to say, "We're here for good news!"

GET THE TOOLS TO
SHARE GOOD NEWS
WITH YOUR GROUPS:

ordering guide

Whether you're discipling the youngest or eldest members of your church, The Gospel Project offers everything you need to share the good news from the whole Bible with easy-to-use, cost-effective print and digital options! See below for our recommended resources by age level.

print:

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

Ministry Starter Kit

(one per ministry, includes one Leader Guide for each age group, printables, Bible story videos, Questions from Kids videos, and more)

Additional Leader Guides

(one per leader per age group)

Activity Packs

(one per child in each group)

Go big with these classroom visuals:

[Giant Timeline](#) (one per ministry), the [Small Group Timeline](#) (one per group), and the [Books of the Bible Poster](#) (one per group).

ADULTS

Daily Discipleship Guide

(one per group member)

[Leader Guide](#) (one per leader)

[Leader Pack](#) (one per group)

[Simplify your order and save with the Group Box!](#)

STUDENTS

Daily Discipleship Guide

(one per group member)

[Leader Guide](#) (one per leader)

[Leader Pack](#) (one per group)

[Simplify your order and save with the Group Bundle!](#)



digital:

Subscribe to The Gospel Project through Ministry Grid and get all the resources you need for an affordable monthly fee. The Basic Package includes:

PRESCHOOL & KIDS

- Leader Audio Training
- Leader Guide PDFs and RTFs
- Activity Page PDFs
- Preteen supplement Leader and Learner Guides
- Bible Story Pictures
- Story Point Posters
- Countdown Videos
- Bible Story Videos
- Missions Videos
- PowerPoint® Presentations
- At Home Resources for Family Worship

Get the Worship Hour Add-On Pack (Worship Guide PDFs and RTFs, worship videos, and audio) and the *Midweek Add-On Pack (Midweek Guide PDFs and RTFs, and printables) as part of the Plus Package.

*Midweek option available for Kids only

Bundle and save
with the preschool
& kids combined
subscription!

ADULTS

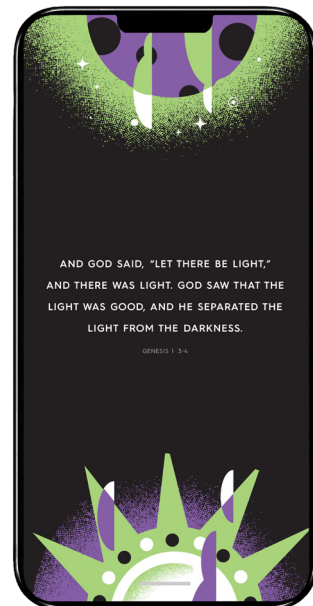
- Leader Training
- Daily Discipleship Guide PDFs
- Leader Guide PDFs (CSB and ESV options)
- Customizable Leader Guide Files

Get the visual aids, presentation resources, and other printable handouts as part of the Plus Package.

STUDENTS

- Leader Audio Training
- Leader Guide PDFs
- Daily Discipleship Guide PDFs
- Customizable Leader Guide and Daily Discipleship Guide files in CSB & ESV options

Get the Middle School resources, One Sheet and Family Connection printables, Midweek plans, visual aids, and presentation resources as part of the Plus Package.



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