5 WAYS TO HELP KIDS GROW IN THEIR FAITH

How much time do you spend thinking about how to help kids grow closer to Jesus? If you're a kids ministry leader, it's probably very often. Part of your role is discipleship, or helping kids develop their relationship with God. And as much as we might want it to, discipleship doesn't happen right away. So, you might devote time in your week to think about ...

- Strategies for helping kids grow closer to God.
- Habits kids can develop to strengthen their faith.
- And all the different ways you can partner with parents to help kids grow at home.

There are so many ideas out there, and it can be challenging to know where to start or how to sort through what can work best for you and your ministry. But here's the good news—**you're not on this journey alone!**

That's one of the reasons why we host GrowCon every year. It's an online conference where we offer practical strategies, ideas, and resources for kids ministry leaders just like you—and **it's completely free!**

This year, for GrowCon24, we invited Dr. Linda Moon to share tips for helping kids grow in their faith. Not only does Linda have years of experience working in children's ministry, but **she's also the Director of Grow Kids Curriculum!**

Check out her session from GrowCon24 below, or if you just can't wait to hear her thoughts on discipleship, keep reading for a quick summary. Be sure to snag the notes for this session and a practical exercise we made just for you!

If you want to help kids grow in their faith, there are five things you can do ...

1. REMEMBER DISCIPLESHIP TAKES TIME

Not only do you have to put in time, but you have to give it time, as well. It's a lengthy process to help kids draw closer to and become more like Jesus. It's about doing more than just teaching kids about Jesus. **Knowing more facts and information doesn't always translate into spiritual growth.** Instead, you can focus on helping kids make a habit of spending time with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and other spiritual practices. These habits build slowly over time, but they give kids a sense of ownership in their faith as they do. So, don't be afraid to help kids take a slower path as they develop sustainable habits that help them grow closer to God.

2. RELATE TO A KID'S EXPERIENCE

When we think about spending time with God, we might think about a quiet devotion or Bible study. That's great for an adult but may not be realistic for elementary-aged kids. Instead, **what would it look like to help kids explore a relationship with God in ways that make sense to them?** Kids can use their experiences in the world to connect with God in unique and personal ways. They might make a list of people they can pray for, note what they are thankful for, or sing worship songs on their own time. When kids can relate their experiences and passions to their spiritual habits, they will likely maintain them over time.

3. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION

There are a few layers to this one. First, you can **help kids know how close God is to them.** Think of this as a shift from knowing *about* God to knowing God personally. You can help kids do this by creating a space to experience God's love rather than focusing on knowing God is love. You can make space to answer their questions or prioritize following their tangents over getting through your whole lesson.

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At the same time, **kids can grow in their faith when given the chance to connect with their peers.** You can help by giving them opportunities to group different kinds of kids together so they can grow comfortable with each other. If you have a first-time visitor, you can ask a leader to help with introductions or point out a few kids they could spend time with. If kids feel like they truly belong, they'll be more willing to participate, ask questions, and invest in spiritual growth alongside their friends.

4. HELP KIDS IDENTIFY THEIR GIFTS

Every kid in your ministry has a series of unique gifts, talents, and skills. **As a kids pastor or ministry leader, you can give kids opportunities to discover which gifts God has given to them.** That can look like paying attention to the kids in your ministry to see how they approach different situations. You can train your volunteers to look for different strengths and interests that kids show. You can promote gifts that aren't as obvious, too. As you're helping kids identify their gifts, you can give them prompts and challenges to help them practice their gifts outside of the church!

5. PRACTICE SHARING FAITH STORIES TOGETHER

The goal of sharing faith stories is to make faith a regular, go-to topic of conversation for kids. We want them to be able to connect their stories with God's story. You can help kids by showing them how to write and rewrite their stories as they gain new experiences and wisdom. **Every day, kids learn about what God has done and who God is shaping them to be.** You can encourage them to keep thinking about these things by asking them to reflect on what God is doing in their story. Then, give them the chance to tell their story during your weekly environment. Let the kids take over the teaching or small group time. Create events where they get to share about what God is doing in their lives. And do your best to share your own story, too. You can inspire kids to grow in their faith by sharing simple, relatable stories from your own life that kids can understand.

These are just a few of the ways you can help kids grow in their faith, and to help make things more practical, we've also created a great exercise to help you brainstorm some ideas for your ministry. On your own or with your team, you can imagine and storyboard some great events and activities to help kids grow spiritually. Check it out below!

And if you're looking for even more ways to help your kids grow in their faith, we've made some for you in Grow Kids Curriculum! With every volume of Grow Kids Curriculum, you'll get ...

- 52 weeks of teaching lessons
- Teaching videos for elementary & preschool kids
- Quarterly events & discipleship activities
- Elementary & preschool curriculum
- Parent & volunteer tip videos
- Volunteer meeting guides
- Annual strategy guides
- And more!

Discipleship is an important part of ministry, and we'd love to help you with your discipleship strategy. Feel free to steal ours here! Whether you use these five steps from Dr. Linda Moon or start up a free trial of Grow Kids Curriculum, we hope it helps you as you lead kids in discipleship!



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