



How to Use this Video Curriculum

Follow these simple steps for a successful small group meeting:

1. Open your group meeting by using the **Looking Ahead** or **Catching Up** sections of your study guide.
2. Watch the video lesson together and follow along the outlines in this study guide.
3. Complete the rest of the discussion materials for each session. Be sure to review the **Putting It into Practice** sections and commit to fulfilling any assignments before your next session.
4. Close your time together by following the **Prayer Direction** suggestions.

A Tip for the Host

The study guide material is meant to be your servant, not your master. The point is not to race through the sessions; the point is to take time to let God work in your lives. Nor is it necessary to “go around the circle” before you move on to the next question. Give people the freedom to speak, but don’t insist on it. Your group will enjoy deeper, more open sharing and discussion if people don’t feel pressured to speak up.

Session One: Growing Healthy Kids

Looking Ahead

- Tell your group about your kids. How many do you have? What are their names and ages?
- What are you hoping to get from this study?

Key Verse

"It takes wisdom to have a good family, and it takes understanding to make it strong." Proverbs 24:3 (LB)

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

Growing Healthy Kids

Healthy families are not an accident. They are the result of wise actions and wise decisions by wise parents.

I. _____ your kids for _____.

"Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with men." Luke 2:52 (NIV)

Four Ways Jesus Grew

- Jesus grew in wisdom = intellectual growth
- Jesus grew in stature = physical growth
- Jesus grew in favor with God = spiritual growth
- Jesus grew in favor with man = social growth

Three Ways We Prepare Our Kids for Life

- _____
- _____
- _____

"You must teach [these commandments] to your children and talk about them when you are home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning."

Deuteronomy 6:7 (LB)

II. _____ your kids in _____.

"Reverence for God gives man a deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security." Proverbs 14:26 (LB)

Three Kinds of Storms

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three Ways to Protect Your Kids in Storms

- _____ them
- _____ them
- _____ them

"Two are better off than one...If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one there to help him."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (GNB)

III. _____ with your kids for _____.

"Children are a gift from God. They are his reward."

Psalms 127:3 (LB)

"People ought to enjoy every day of their lives, no matter how long they live." Ecclesiastes 11:8 (NCV)

IV. _____ your kids to _____.

You can do everything in your power to make them as happy as they can be here on earth, but the real question is, “Will they be with you in heaven?”

“What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose you own soul?” Mark 8:36 (NLT)

“One’s life does not consist of abundance of his possessions.” Luke 12:15 (ESV)

“Parents, don’t be hard on your children. Raise them properly. Teach them and instruct them about the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4 (CEV)

Even more effective than your words is what your life teaches them about God.

“Knowing God results in every other kind of understanding.” Proverbs 9:10 (LB)

“Everything else is worthless compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.” Philippians 3:8 (LB)

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

Discovery Questions

- Joshua said in his famous declaration: “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15 NIV) Discuss what that means for your family. What does that look like on a day-to-day basis?
- In which of the four key areas of this week’s outline do your kids need the most attention right now:
 - Prepare your kids for life
 - Protect your kids in storms
 - Play with your kids for fun
 - Point your kids to God

- What practical steps can you take to help them in that area?

Living on Purpose: Fellowship & Ministry

A great way to teach your kids godly character and values is to get them involved in fellowship and ministry with other Christian families. Make a plan for your small group to take on a family-oriented ministry project together. Take the next few minutes to brainstorm ideas, timelines and roles. This could be a project in your church or in the community. It could be an all-day project or only a couple of hours, as long as it’s something the adults and kids can all do together.

You don’t have to decide in this session, just talk about the options. You can make your final decision in your next group meeting. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Volunteer in a local food bank or homeless shelter
- Organize a neighborhood car wash to raise money for your church’s benevolence fund
- Help a family in need—someone who recently lost their job or who is sick or shut in
- Clean up a local park or beach

Be sure to include in your plans some kind of celebration when you’re finished, such as a group pizza night or barbecue at the end of your project.

Putting It into Practice

Pastor Rick’s homework assignment for us this week is to celebrate your kids and have some fun with them. This could look different for each of you, based on your family situation and the ages of your children. Share ideas with your group about how you can celebrate your kids this week.

Prayer Direction

- Pray for your kids – in what area do they need the most help from God right now?
- Pray for yourselves – in what area do you need the most help from God right now?

Session Two: Bringing Out the Best in Your Kids

Catching Up

- In the **Putting It into Practice** section of your last meeting, you were encouraged to celebrate your children this week. Would anyone like to share a story with the group about how you celebrated your kids?

Key Verse

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” **Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)**

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

Bringing Out the Best in Your Kids

I. Accept their _____.

“God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purposes through them all.”

1 Corinthians 12:6 (PH)

How can you tell when you've accepted your kid's uniqueness?
Simple: you stop insisting that they be like you.

Kids are not things to be molded; they are people to be unfolded. God did not bring your kids into the world to satisfy your ego. He brought them into the world to accomplish his purposes.

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” **Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)**

“Train a child in keeping with his individual gift or bent . . .”
Proverbs 22:6 (AMP)

II. Affirm their _____.

- They need to _____ it through affection.
- They need to _____ it through words of affirmation.
“A word of encouragement does wonders.” Proverbs 12:25 (LB)
- They need to _____ it through the look in your eye.

Any meal you have with your teens is the most important meal of the day.

III. Trust them _____.

When we take responsibility *for* people, we take it away *from* people.

“Whoever can be trusted with a little can also be trusted with a lot . . . If you cannot be trusted with the things that belong to someone else, who will give you things of your own?” **Luke 16:10-12 (NCV)**

Nothing brings out the best in kids faster than having somebody believe in them. It's better to err by trusting your children with too much responsibility than trusting them with too little.

IV. Correct them _____.

“If you refuse to discipline your son, it proves you don't love him.”
Proverbs 13:24 (LB)

“Correct your children while there is still hope; do not let them destroy themselves.” **Proverbs 19:18 (NCV)**

Punishment

Discipline

Purpose:

Focus:

Motivation:

Result:

“Don’t use harmful words. Use only helpful words, the kind that build up.” Ephesians 4:29 (TEV)

When you correct your child...

- Do it _____

“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” Proverbs 29:11 (NIV)

- Do it _____

- Do it _____

“Fathers, don’t scold your children so much that they become discouraged and quit trying.” Colossians 3:21 (LB)

V. Love them _____.

“Be kind and loving to each other, and forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ.” Ephesians 4:32 (NCV)

Great parents don’t rub it in, they rub it out. Great parents don’t remind kids of their failures, they give them hope for their future.

“Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything.” 1 Corinthians 13:7 (PH)

The secret to becoming a great parent is to become a godly person.

“Reverence for God gives a man deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security.” Proverbs 14:26 (LB)

Discovery Questions

- Kids are not things to be molded; they are people to be unfolded. Discuss the meaning of Proverbs 22:6 and how it applies to your family. What does it look like to train your

children “in keeping with their natural bent”? What is the difference between molding and unfolding?

- What have you found to be the easiest and the most difficult areas of parenting?
- Different kids require different kinds of discipline. What have you found that works for your kids?
- Our role as parents isn’t just about teaching. We can also learn a lot from our children. What are some of the greatest life lessons your kids have taught you?

Living on Purpose: Fellowship & Ministry

In our last meeting, you were encouraged to discuss ideas for a family-oriented small group ministry project. If you haven’t already done so, it’s time to make a final decision and start planning.

- Choose your group project.
- Figure out the timeline.
- Divide up the responsibilities

Putting It into Practice

- The secret to becoming a great parent is to become a godly person. The Bible says, *“Reverence for God gives a man deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security”* (Proverbs 14:26 LB). How can you model reverence for God to your children? Share ideas for spiritually mentoring your kids.

Prayer Direction

- What is your greatest need in your relationship with your kids right now? Ask God to meet that need.
- Pray for each other’s prayer requests.

Session Three: Hope for Hurting Parents

Catching Up

- Does anyone have any answers to prayer you would like to share?
- In this week's session we will study the story of the prodigal son. This could be a painful subject for some in your group. Please be sensitive to the needs of your group members. Take a moment to open your group in prayer and remind everyone that this is a safe place to share your hurts and heartaches.

Key Verse

"Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways."
Proverbs 20:30 (TEV)

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

Hope for Hurting Parents

Stage One: The Rebellion of the Son

*"There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living." **Luke 15:11-13 (NIV)***

What to do...

- Let them _____.

The tighter we hold on, the more they resist. We have to let them go and entrust them into God's hands.

- Let them _____.

*"Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways." **Proverbs 20:30 (TEV)***

- Let them _____.

*"After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything." **Luke 15:14-16 (NIV)***

There is a price tag for rebellion.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
Galatians 6:7 (KJV)

God is a perfect father, yet Adam rebelled, and he was in a perfect environment! Was God to blame for Adam's sin? No. Adam had a free will. We all do. So, don't carry an unrealistic load of guilt over your child's rebellion. You can't feel guilty over something you can't control.

Stage Two: Reevaluation, Regret, and Repentance

*"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'" **Luke 15:17-19 (NIV)***

What to do...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Stage Three: The Return

“So he got up and he went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

Luke 15:20 (NIV)

What to do...

- _____
- _____

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”

Luke 15:21 (NIV)

Confession is so easy when you know you've already been accepted. Do your kids know it's safe to come home? Do you make it easy for your kids to admit when they're wrong?

- _____

“The father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.” **Luke 15:22-24 (NIV)**

The prodigal son didn't need a sermon. He needed a second chance.

The question you have to answer is not, “What did I do wrong?” The question you have to answer is, “Will I be ready to do my part when they come home?”

Discovery Questions

- Review the steps Rick outlines in his message. Which one do you think is the most difficult?
- The story of the lost son is a picture of how God loves us, and a model of how we are to love our wayward children.

- Put yourself in the son's shoes. Why did he leave in the first place? How would he know it was safe to come home? What does it mean to “come to your senses” (v.17)?
- Put yourself in the father's shoes. Pastor Rick said, “The question you have to answer is not, ‘What did I do wrong?’ The question you have to answer is, ‘Will I be ready to do my part when they come home?’” If your child has done what the son in the story did, how will you respond when he comes home? How ready are you to reconcile?

- Which character do you relate to most? Whether you are like the son or the father, what does God want you to learn from this story?
- This story has a happy ending: the son comes home and is welcomed by his father. But sometimes we do not see the home coming in our lifetime. How do you continue to trust God and wait?

Living on Purpose: Fellowship & Ministry

- How are your plans coming along for your family-oriented small group ministry project? Discuss any final preparation details, and don't forget to include a time for your group to celebrate together.

Putting It into Practice

- Is there a step you need to take this week toward reconciling a relationship either with your child or your parents? What do you think God wants you to do?

Prayer Direction

- Start your prayer time by thanking God for your kids.
- Pray for group members who have “prodigal” sons or daughters. Pray that their child will “come to his senses.” Pray that the parents will be ready to do their part when their child comes home.

Answer Key

Session One: Growing Healthy Kids

- I. PREPARE your kids for LIFE.
 - RELATIONSHIPS
 - CHARACTER
 - VALUES
- II. PROTECT your kids in STORMS.
 - CHANGE
 - FAILURE
 - REJECTION
 - HEAR them
 - HUG them
 - HELP them
- III. PLAY with your kids for FUN.
- IV. POINT your kids to GOD.

Session Two: Bringing Out the Best in Your Kids

- I. Accept their UNIQUENESS.
- II. Affirm their VALUE.
 - They need to FEEL it through affection.
 - They need to HEAR it through words of affirmation.
 - They need to SEE it through the look in your eye.
- III. Trust them WITH RESPONSIBILITY.
- IV. Correct them WITHOUT CONDEMNING THEM.

	Punishment	Discipline
Purpose:	<u>INFLICT PENALTY</u>	<u>PROMOTE GROWTH</u>
Focus:	<u>PAST-REACTIVE</u>	<u>FUTURE-REDEMPTIVE</u>
Motivation:	<u>ANGER</u>	<u>LOVE</u>
Result:	<u>FEAR</u>	<u>SECURITY</u>

- Do it CALMLY.
 - Do it QUICKLY.
 - Do it SPARINGLY.
- V. Love them UNCONDITIONALLY.

Session Three: Hope for Hurting Parents

- Let them GO.
- Let them MAKE THEIR OWN MISTAKES.
- Let them REAP THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR OWN CHOICES.
- PRAY
- COMMIT
- WAIT
- LOVE THEM FAITHFULLY.
- ACCEPT THEM UNCONDITIONALLY.
- FORGIVE THEM COMPLETELY.