

# *Milestones & Cornerstones*

*a discipleship pathway for families  
in partnership with the church  
who will empower, equip & encourage you for the long haul!*

Our deep desire is to partner with families at key moments in their child's physical, emotional and cognitive development to also be mindful of the significance of their potential spiritual development.

Our *Cornerstones* project is a series of experiences for children to take part in that will feed their spiritual development. Each one is designed to consider the child's developmental stage and to lean into the spiritual development possible at that stage.

As significant as the child's experience is, we are mindful of the development parents need as well. Cultural changes have happened faster than resources to equip parents. Parenting is rarely discussed as an evolving role that changes with the child's development.

Our *Milestones* project is intended to bring awareness and purposefulness to parenting approaches for the different developmental milestones. Our hope is that it will help facilitate better parent child relationships as well as foster healthier adults in the long run.

As pastors, we are overwhelmingly aware of the weight of our role. Statistics have shown us that our current approach to spiritual development has at best a 50% success rate for children becoming adults. That would not be a pass in school and so we cannot claim it as success in the church. We certainly recognize that the power of the Holy Spirit is the only thing that will bring true life change and success. However, we know that we have been invited to partner with the Spirit in His work and have been stewarded families to care for and pastor well. Our commitment is to be good students of Christ and of culture. To learn from both, to pray often and to think creatively in order to spiritually lead and partner well.

## **Scriptural Foundation:**

### *Love the Lord Your God - Deuteronomy 6*

These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, **so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.** Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. **Impress them on your children.** Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.

When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, **be careful that you do not forget the Lord**, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

**Fear the Lord your God**, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. Do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Massah. Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. **Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you** and you may go in and take over the good land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors, thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the Lord said.

**In the future, when your sons and daughters ask you**, “What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?” tell him: “We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the Lord sent signs and wonders—great and terrible—on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. **And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.**”

## **Kids *Cornerstones*....**

As we prayed and studied to over the *Cornerstones* we developed some important foundational pieces.

**Values:** Through each of the *Cornerstones & Milestones* that families will experience, we wanted them to be grounded in consistent values that will be experienced in each.

- Intentional/Purposeful ... defined outcomes, goals, clear plan with resources
- Theologically rich ... deep, scriptural
- Accessible ... timed and planned for maximum access
- Challenging ... not easy, not light, 'take up your cross', clear parameters, freedom to fail
- Holistic ... the whole person is considered, all senses, all learning styles
- Safe ... creating openness, healthy learning environment, emotionally, physically, spiritually safe
- Community oriented ... we don't do faith alone, so we won't do these alone
- Engaging ... not us teaching but learning with, inviting them in
- "Stake in the ground" ... a defined moment/ceremony, reclaiming of rights of passage of sorts
- Excellent ... everything will be done to the best of our ability, aiming beyond & inviting people who do these things well to help us develop the best we can for kids & families.

**Theological Truths:** As each child moves through our *Cornerstones* we want them to be grounded in deep theological truth. Our commitment through the *Cornerstones* is that they will learn the following foundational theological truths.

- Sin + Salvation
- Grace
- Sacraments
- Covenants
- Trinity
- Identity
- The call of a disciple
- Creation/Fall
- Ecclesiology (The Church)
- The Word

**Spiritual Disciplines:** Our hope is that not only will young people learn head knowledge but that they will develop spiritual habits that will last them a lifetime. Our *Cornerstones* will provide intentional times to experiment and develop the following spiritual disciplines.

- Prayer
- Scripture/Reading/Memorization/Study
- Journaling/Reflection
- Worship
- Silence/Quiet
- Service
- Spiritual Conversation

**3 Core Themes:** As we considered the Cornerstones, we recognized the development of each young person really centers on 3 key themes; identity, belonging and purpose.

	<b>Reflecting</b>	<b>Knowing</b>	<b>Connecting</b>
<b>Identity</b>	Who am I?	Grace	God
<b>Belonging</b>	Where do I fit?	Love	Community
<b>Purpose</b>	What different do I make?	Mission	Passion + Need

# ***Cornerstones* Worksheet**

Keeping the above in mind, each leader worked through the following worksheet to begin to develop their *Cornerstone* project:

**Age Group:**

**Overarching theme:**

**Theological themes covered:**

**Spiritual disciplines learned and/or experienced:**

**Scripture and/or Creeds that will be memorized:**

**How it responds the 3 Core Questions:**

- Who am I?
- Where do I fit?
- What difference do I make?

**Basic class outline:**

**The "Right of Passage" moment:**

- As a class
- As a church
  - congregational call & response

**Parent Connections:** (*where will parents connect in your cornerstone, this is separate from the parenting milestone*)

**Relationships that will be developed:**

**Length of program and time of year:**

**Materials:**

- Made by us
- Given by us

**Cost:**

## Parenting *Milestones*....

Our parenting gatherings will be more oriented around the developmental stage of their child vs specific spiritual development. The *Milestones* will equip parents with knowledge about their child's expected development, cultural realities and practical tools for parenting this next phase of their child's life.

Each *Cornerstone* will involve the parents with the intent of equipping and encouraging them to further the spiritual development of their child. They are aimed to be intentionally relationally rich for parents and kids. We recognize and celebrate that parents are the number one spiritual influence of their child!

**Values:** We will have a number of overlapping values with our *Cornerstones* plus a few unique to the *Milestones*. Again, the intent is that as parents move through the *Milestones* they will experience consistent learning due to our values.

- Intentional/Purposeful ... defined outcomes, goals, clear plan with resources
- Accessible ... timed and planned for maximum access
- Challenging ... not easy, not light, parenting is not for the faint of heart and so we won't act like it is. It's also one of the most important jobs out there, we will train with that in mind.
- Holistic ... the whole person is considered, all senses, all learning styles
- Safe ... creating openness, healthy learning environment, emotionally, physically, spiritually safe
- Community oriented ... we don't do faith alone, so we won't do these alone
- Engaging ... not us teaching but learning with, inviting them in
- Supportive/Encouraging ... parents experience a lot of guilt and shame, we want this to be a place of support and encouragement, not matter the journey to this point
- Professional ... we want to give our parents the best available, we will use resources in both people & material to bring the highest level we can to our parents
- Excellent ... everything will be done to the best of our ability, aiming beyond & inviting people who do these things well to help us develop the best we can for kids & families.

# **Parenting Worksheet**

**Age Group:**

**Overarching theme:**

**Where is the child at developmentally for this age & stage:**

- **emotionally**
- **physically**
- **mentally**
- **spiritually**

**What are common struggles for this age & stage:**

**What are some healthy parenting habits for this age & stage:**

**How to develop deeper relationship with your child at this age & stage:**

“Where there is relationship, there is influence”

**Length & timing of program:**

