



## Milestones

### FOR PARENTS

Lastly, effective family discipleship involves planning for milestones. Milestones is about marking and making occasions to celebrate and commemorate times of spiritual significance, authored by God, in the life of the family and individual child. These celebratory occasions are a way for families to store up memories of God's impact and bring those memories to mind whenever needed. Overtime, these milestones can be a tool to strengthen a child's faith and help their faith stick! Spiritual milestones don't have to be complicated or costly, they can simply be new ways to take advantage of existing celebrations in your family's life! Look below for family discipleship milestone ideas and how you can be intentional about mapping this out for your family.

### THINGS YOU NEED

Highlighter or something to write with

### WHAT TO DO

There are many ways you can make milestones special opportunities to pass on your faith. Review this list of examples for you to consider as you approach making your family's own milestone plan. Highlight the examples that best suit your family. This list includes lots of different ideas that may not be applicable to where your family is presently and that's ok! Store ideas away or skip over them all together. Write down new ideas that come to mind!

## PASSING ON YOUR FAITH THROUGH MILESTONES

1. *Heirlooms and mementos.* Consider what physical items you might give to your children as a symbol of their Christian heritage: a family keepsake, purity ring, Bible, letter, or something else. Connect the gift with an important event so they will see it and associate it with what the Lord has done.
2. *Rituals and traditions.* Decorating a Christmas tree, singing “Happy Birthday,” painting Easter eggs – these are all common family traditions. Using these established or new family traditions infused with gospel truth is a great way to hand down your faith to your children. Traditions and rituals are an important aspect of milestones since they happen repeatedly, and repetitions lead both to learning and remembrance. For example, each birthday use that time to speak how you see Christ in that family member and pray for them.
3. *Events and experiences.* Creating an experience can take an ordinary event in a person’s life and elevate it to something extraordinary. How can you turn a time of recognizing or celebrating what the Lord has done into an event or an experience they will never forget? For example, when your child gets their first car or license create a fun scavenger hunt with favorite destinations they must drive to and at the end pray over them. When a child gets baptized or takes Communion for the first time, commemorate with a family party or dinner!
4. *Crafts and projects.* If you are crafty or handy, consider how making or building something together could be part of a milestone for your child. Your finished product is a testament to the time spent together, and the lessons and messages learned along the way.
5. *Feasts and fasts.* Both feasting and fasting are great ways to commemorate the Lord’s work. You can mark what God is doing through an awesome meal or through fasting, both are ways of showing praise and dependence towards God.
6. *Monuments and memorials.* In Scripture, the people of God often erected monuments to remind them of all the Lord had done. A tree planted at a family home, a family name carved in wet cement, a special brick or cornerstone laid into a wall, a word or phrase carved in a tree—these are all examples of physical monuments that can be used to teach children something about God in ways they can literally look back at and remember.
7. *Responsibility and authority.* After your children reach a milestone spiritually or developmentally, you might consider how to give them new responsibilities. This could be coming to worship service with mom and dad, getting a driver’s license, getting a job, taking

Communion, tithing, or doing a new chore around the house. Responsibilities communicate trust and teach accountability. Handing off responsibility to your child can be a great way to entrust them with authority.

8. *Symbols and crests.* Creating or implementing a symbol unique to your family can be a creative way of crystallizing your family's legacy and priorities. Christianity is a faith bursting with symbols, including the cross, ichthus, the dove, the alpha and omega, and more. Symbols are packed with meaning and memory. Create a family crest, something like a trademark symbol for your family. Have the 'artist' of the family draw it out and frame it!
9. *Journeys and destinations.* A pilgrimage is a journey with a religious purpose. Journeys make great family discipleship milestones as adventures with teachable moments, and they are predisposed to making life-long memories. You might plan a wilderness adventure, a mission trip, or visit a special family location—beach, amusement park, another country, or somewhere else.

## Milestone Ideas by Occasions

### BIRTHDAYS

1. Have family members take turns encouraging the birthday child with ways they've seen him or her grow that year and pray for the next year.
2. Invite friends and neighbors to celebrate what the Lord has done in the life of the child and pray for even more growth.
3. Set individual spiritual goals for the next year and discuss them together.

### HOLIDAYS

4. Read Advent scriptures leading up to Christmas. Can access resources through Parent Cue app or on VoxKids website.
5. Read Lenten scriptures leading up to Easter. Can access resources through Parent Cue app or on VoxKids website.
6. Bake a birthday cake for Jesus at Christmas.
7. Serve together somewhere for a holiday.
8. Invite unbelieving friends or neighbors to celebrate a holiday with you.
9. Celebrate New Year by making spiritually focused family resolutions or goals.

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

10. If you are married, celebrate your anniversary with your whole family.
11. Commemorate a loved one who had died on the anniversary of the death and leverage the opportunity to testify to the faithfulness of God and the reality of our hope with him in eternity.
12. Celebrate the anniversary of your child's baptism by treating it like you would a birthday.

## **FAMILY ADVENTURES**

13. A family mission trip
14. A family camping trip/retreat
15. Annual family vacations
16. A family road trip

Big or small choose something challenging to do together to overcome distractions and take your family out of their comfort zone.

## **RITES OF PASSAGE**

17. Baby dedication
18. A ceremony with close friends or family to acknowledge a transition manhood or womanhood
19. Graduation

## **Milestone Ideas by Stages**

### **AT BIRTH**

1. Choose a name for your child that has spiritual meaning.
2. Use Child Dedication Sunday to dedicate your child to Lord along with your family.
3. Choose a verse to pray over your child nightly as you put them to bed.

### **ONE YEAR OLD**

4. Throw a birthday party and testify the goodness of God that you've seen in your child's life, reaffirm your commitment to raising your child in the way of the Lord and invite friends to pray.

## **TWO TO FOUR YEARS OLD**

5. Get your child his or her first Bible.

## **FIVE TO TEN YEARS OLD**

6. Take your child on annual family adventures where you explore, serve, and talk about God.
7. Involve your children in annual celebrations to bless them and cultivate a love and fear of God.

## **ELEVEN TO FOURTEEN YEARS OLD**

8. Have intentional talk about purity and the gift of Biblical sexuality. *God's Design for Sex* by Stan and Brenna Jones series provides books for kids at different developmental milestones.
9. Give your child their first study Bible.
10. Find an opportunity for them to serve regularly in church.
11. Add significant responsibilities, such as new chores around the house, tithing, starting a savings account.
12. Hope and pray to celebrate their salvation in baptism if it hasn't already happened.
13. Consider having them join in partaking in communion if they've received Jesus as their Savior.
14. Send them or go with them on their first mission trip.

## **FIFTEEN TO SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD**

15. Organize a rite passage ceremony or adventure. For example, when your child turns 16 years old, select three people that have been significant in your child's faith formation and have them write them a special letter and take them out.
16. Celebrate earning a driver's license.
17. Add responsibilities that build the independence your child will need after high school. Such as, paying bills and managing their finances.

## **EIGHTEEN YEARS AND OLDER**

18. Celebrate with a special dinner or party a graduation, college acceptance, job placement, launch into independence, and so on. Lean on your child's family and friends to mark these occasions.



## MILESTONE PLAN BY STAGE

### THINGS YOU NEED

Something to write with

### WHAT TO DO

Develop your milestone plan by incorporating the family discipleship milestone ideas you highlighted or developed.

AGE	Sample	Your Ideas/Plans
Birth	Child Dedication	
1	B-Day with Community	
2-4	Gift of their first Bible	
5-10	Annual family vacation	
11-14	1 <sup>st</sup> communion; Serving in church	
15-17	Organize "rite of passage"	
18 & up	Graduation party	



## MILESTONE PLAN

### THINGS YOU NEED

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### WHAT TO DO

Develop your milestone plan by incorporating the family discipleship milestone ideas you highlighted or developed.

Ideas for..	Your Ideas/Plans
Family Traditions	
Family Adventures	
Gifts/Mementos to Bestow	
Birthday/Anniversary Traditions	

Adapted from *Family Discipleship* by Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin. For more information on the Family Discipleship model, visit <https://www.thevillagechurch.net/connect/family->

[discipleship.](#)