

- **LifeGroups at GCR are small communities of believers who joyfully exist to Win, Build, Equip and Multiply disciples of Jesus Christ for the glory of God**
  
- **Some Biblical Insights into Children and Faith**
  - Deuteronomy 6:4-9
    - Faith formation in children is primarily the responsibility of PARENTS.
    - Faith formation in children is done as we do life INFORMALLY not in a formal CLASSROOM setting.
    - Symbols of faith should be a constant PRESENCE and subject of CONVERSATION.
  - Exodus 12:25-27, Ex. 13:8-10 , 14-16 ; Deut. 4:9 , 10 ; Deut. 6:6-9 ; Deut. 11:19 , 20 ; Deut. 31:12 , 13 ; Josh. 8:35 ; Psa. 34:11 ; Psa. 78:1-8 ; Prov. 1:1 , 4 ; Prov. 22:6 ; Isa. 28:9 , 10 ; Joel 1:3 ; John 21:15 ; Acts 22:3
    - Children are INCLUDED in the practice of faith.
    - The Bible doesn't recommend the SEGREGATION of children and adults. In fact, God indicates that children are to play an ACTIVE role in the Biblical community of faith. Children participate in corporate events by OBSERVATION and CONVERSATION.
      - The Passover-
      - Holly Allen –participation in small groups has a dramatically positive effect on a child's faith development. "Worshipping together in a close and intimate setting reveals our inner spiritual lives to our children and theirs to us."

### I. Families First

- Families should be encouraged and equipped to NURTURE their children.
  - Parents encouraged to complete age appropriate PARENTING classes
  - Parents assume PRIMARY responsibility for their kids' spiritual growth
  - Parents MODEL their discipleship through family devotions and sharing
  - Each family in LifeGroup encouraged to use Family Walk or Youth Walk
- Children should be incorporated into the LifeGroup meeting
  - The WELCOME and WORSHIP portions are particularly good for all kids
  - Include older children in the Work portion and LifeGroup outreaches
  - Each LifeGroup might have a Children's Coordinator (if the LifeGroup has children)
  - Work with the other LifeGroup members to develop their Plan For Kids (PFK)
  - Responsible to organize children's time among LifeGroup members
- LifeGroups can purchase materials for use with children
  - Every LifeGroup could have one subscription to Family Walk (or Youth Walk) as a focus to build the children's time around
  - Share TESTIMONIES about what God is doing with children in LifeGroup

- Direct special concerns to LifeGroup COACH and note on the LifeGroup Report

### II. Plan For Kids (PFK)

- Tailored to the needs of the children using TARPS
- Flexible enough to accommodate various age groups (Family Walk or Youth Walk provide an excellent lesson guide, and reinforce family devotions)
- Emphasize RELATIONSHIP building activities that are fun
- Emphasize learning to PRAY for and MINISTER to each other
- Follow “HOUSE RULES” for Children in LifeGroups
- ROTATE coordinating children activities among LifeGroup members
- Incorporate older, responsible TEENS in children activities

### III. Use TARPS as a Guide for the Children’s Time

- T = TRANSITION: Move kids in an orderly way to their activity after worship
- A = AFFIRMATION: Affirm and bless each child present that week. Give honor for special recognition and birthdays
- R = REVIEW: Review the lesson/activity to get all the children involved
- P = PRAY: Pray for each child and encourage them to pray for one another
- S = STRAITEN: Straighten the venue when finished

### IV. TIPS & TOOLS

- **Think Family, Family, Family**
  - Reinforce PARENTAL involvement in spiritual nurture at home
  - Draw alongside and ENCOURAGE every family to have a devotional time
- **Approaches to Children in LifeGroups**
  - ROTATION: Responsibility to guide activity/teach shared by members
  - FAMILY Night: Build LifeGroup around family activities
  - CHILDREN’S Night: Build LifeGroup around children in LifeGroup
  - HIRE a Sitter: LifeGroup shares cost of hiring a sitter for small children
  - Youth ASSISTANT: Use teens to help guide activities/teach the children
- **Set Expectations for Giving Directions**
  - Who: Whoever is designated to be in charge at that meeting
  - When: As kids arrive; before any transition; before giving a handout or supplies; when an activity changes; after you have everyone’s attention; when someone doesn’t understand; before new projects
  - How: Assertively; Calmly; Simply; Clearly; Lovingly
  - Why: If you don’t take charge, kid’s will!
- **Establish House Rules with LifeGroup Members**
  - Agreed upon by all LifeGroup members
  - INVOLVE the children in making the house rules for the LifeGroup
  - INFORM newcomers of the house rules; update every 3-6 months