

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OPELIKA
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"WE WILL NOT HIDE
THESE TRUTHS FROM
OUR CHILDREN; WE
WILL TELL THE NEXT
GENERATION
ABOUT THE GLORIOUS
DEEDS OF THE LORD,
ABOUT HIS POWER AND
HIS MIGHTY WONDERS."

PSALM 78:4

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**We exist to raise
up the Next
Generation to be
devoted followers
of Jesus.**

Welcome to Our NextGen Discipleship Guide

The NextGen Ministry of First Baptist Church Opelika consists of all of our age-graded ministry areas, including Preschool (birth-K5), Kids (1st-6th grade), Students (7th-12th grade), and College. The purpose of this discipleship guide is to explain to families how we desire to partner with them.

The mission of the NextGen Ministry at FBCO is to raise up the Next Generation to be devoted followers of Jesus. As we come alongside parents, we desire to see the Next Generation empowered by the Holy Spirit to love God and make Him known to everyone—from our neighbors to the nations. We accomplish this mission and vision through our shared values that represent and align each age-graded ministry.

Dan Strickland
NextGen Pastor
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FBCO Families,

The theme verse for the NextGen Ministry is Psalm 78:4 “We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about His power and His mighty wonders.” As you read through this guide, we hope that it encourages you to talk to your kids about Jesus and his power and mighty wonders.

It is never too late to invest in the life of your child spiritually. Regardless of age, it is always worth it. Simple steps like praying for and with your children and reading scripture together as a family are important building blocks at any point of their spiritual journey. You do not have to be perfect or have all the answers, but as you follow Jesus with your life, your children are watching.

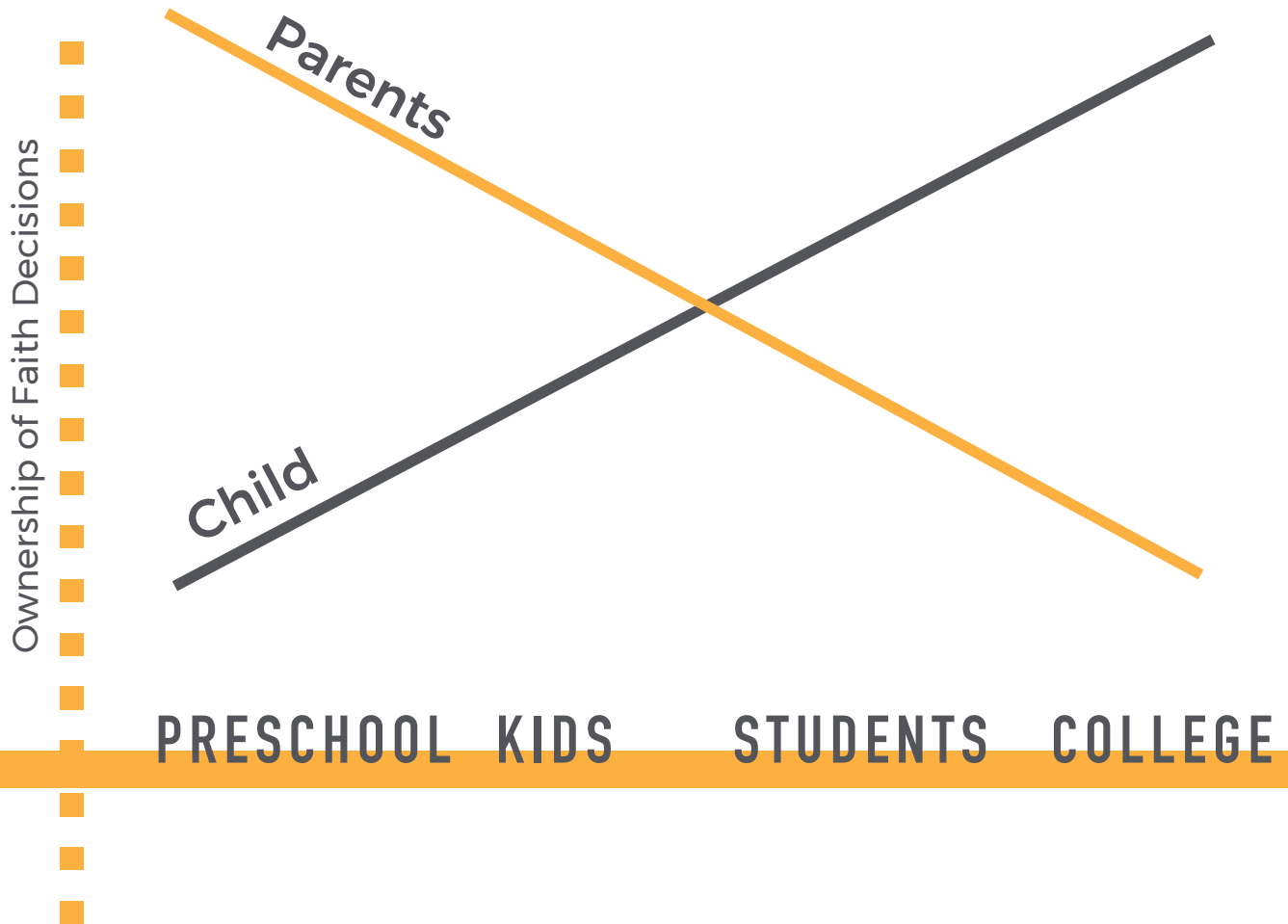
It's also never too late to plug in and connect with FBCO. Each NextGen Ministry provides intentional on-ramps where a child can connect and grow regardless of how old they are when they first jump in. If there is a milestone or a moment that you missed, we would love to discuss what an alternative option could look like for your family, meeting you where you are today.

As a child grows up, the transfer of ownership of their faith progresses with each step in the journey. Parents play the most important role in the spiritual formation of their children, so the church strives to come alongside parents to resource and equip them as they invest in their children. The graph shows that with each subsequent age-graded ministry, there is less ownership by the parent and more ownership from the child. In Preschool Ministry, Parent Commissioning is an important first milestone for the family, but it is wholly owned by the parents. On the other end of the graph is College Ministry, where students own their faith and are being mobilized to live on mission for the Gospel. The handoff of faith ownership typically takes place around 7th to 9th grade.

Each person's story is different, and each family dynamic is unique. Whatever your story is, we would love to hear it. We are with you on this journey and will be cheering for your family and helping you each step of the way.

-The FBCO NextGen Team

Your Child's Faith Journey



Preschool Ministry

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the Preschool Ministry of FBCO is to partner with parents to help preschoolers learn that God loves them.

The vision of the Preschool Ministry of FBCO is to see preschoolers understand that the Bible is true and that God made them, God loves them, and Jesus can save them.

WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Sunday AM

We have childcare for children from birth through 3 years during the 8:30 service. During the 9:45 service time, we have Sunday School for all ages, and at 11:00, we have a rotation of Bible lessons, Worship, and play time for preschoolers.

Sunday PM

During the Sunday evening service, we have childcare for children from birth through 2 years. Children 3 years and older have fun singing in our preschool choir.

Wednesday PM

We have a fun-filled hour of Bible stories, crafts, songs, games, and more!

BIG EVENTS

Summer Storytime

Parents and preschoolers enjoy storytime fun on Fridays during the summer with crafts, books, songs, and playtime!

Vacation Bible School

PreK and Kindergarten age children enjoy a fun week with opportunities for worship, missions, and crafts—all while learning how much Jesus loves them!

KEY MILESTONES

Birth

We celebrate the birth of children in our church with special gifts for the baby, the mom, and the dad!

Adoption

We celebrate adoptions in our church with the gift of a Bible with the child's new name imprinted on the cover!

Parent Commissioning

Parents are encouraged to celebrate the birth of their children and publicly commit to raising them according to God's direction during our Parent Commissioning services.

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

We send home weekly activity sheets to make sure parents know about the lessons taught and key Bible verses learned.

A large part of our mission is to provide safe care for young children so that parents can be part of corporate worship and Sunday School classes.

Bright Beginnings Preschool is a weekday preschool program for children in our church and community. We partner with parents to help children learn about Jesus in a safe, fun, developmentally appropriate environment during the week.

TRANSITIONS AND MARKERS

When children move from the Preschool Ministry to the Kids Ministry, we take them on a tour of the kids area to meet the Kids Pastor and the new teachers.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Psalm 78: 4, 6-8

Psalm 127:3-5

Matthew 19:20

3 John 1:4

Kids Ministry

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OUR MISSION

The mission of FBCO KidsMin is to see kids come to Know Jesus, Grow deeper with Jesus, and Go share Jesus. The vision of FBCO KidsMin is to equip, empower, and enrich children and their parents to raise spiritual champions. This is done through fun, engaging, and age appropriate teaching and worship.

WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Kids Church | Wednesday Nights

Praise, games and teaching from Pastor Paul

Sunday School | 9:45am | Sundays

Age graded classes utilizing The Gospel Project curriculum

Kids Church | 11am | Sundays

Sunday worship at a child's level including praise, games and a lesson. Pastor Paul teaches from the same scripture as Pastor Jeff.

BIG EVENTS

Camp 412

A beginner overnight Summer Camp experience for rising second and third graders

Camp 345

Summer camp for rising fourth, fifth and sixth graders

VBS

One of the most awesome weeks of the year – children in grades one through six have the opportunity to worship, learn about missions, make crafts and learn about Jesus.

Winter Camp

A winter weekend camp for fifth and sixth grade

KEY MILESTONES

1st Grade Bible Presentation

Held in September, Bibles are presented to first graders during the morning worship services

Go to Camp

We believe that experiencing Camp is a big moment in the life of a child. We desire to see each child attend Camp by the time they have reached 4th grade.

6th Grade Commissioning

Held in May, this is a time for our sixth graders to learn about Student Ministry from its leadership, a new teen study Bible is presented to each sixth grader and then a time of prayer for our sixth graders as they prepare to move up to Student Ministry.

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

Daddy/Daughter Night

Usually in February, a time to dress up, enjoy a meal and hear a great message

Mother/Son Dodgeball

Usually in March, a great time of food, fellowship and competition

Mother/Daughter Event

Varies from year to year, a time of fun, food and fellowship for mothers and daughters

Father/Son Event

Varies from year to year; camping, fishing and other outdoor activities for fathers and sons to enjoy together

TRANSITIONS AND MARKERS

Receiving 1st graders

Sending 6th graders

Annual Promotion Sunday

KEY SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 6

Proverbs 3:5-6

Matthew 28:19-20

Luke 10:27

Genesis 1:27

Colossians 3:20

Student Ministry

OUR MISSION

The Student Ministry of First Baptist Opelika exists to partner with families to help students grow in a personal relationship with God (walk); develop Christ-centered community (love); and engage the world around them with the truth of the Gospel (shine).

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WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Sunday School | 9:45am | Sundays

We gather together corporately for time of community building, then split up by grade for Bible study + small group discussion.

Life Groups | 6pm | Sundays

Life Groups are small discipleship groups split by grade and gender. Each group has 2 leaders and about 5-8 students. Our purpose is to grow in community, grow in the Word, and hold each other accountable.

Wednesday Night Worship | 6pm | Wednesdays

A corporate worship gathering. We gather for food, check-in, games, and hangout and have a time of worship and teaching God's Word. The goal is to help students refuel with truth from the Bible and be a part of Christ-centered community!

BIG EVENTS

Disciple Now Weekend

DNOW is an in-town conference style retreat for all 7th-12th grade students. This is a 3-day event with 4 main worship sessions, games, meals, and time of community building.

Fall/Spring Outreach

Each semester we host a fun event for our students to invite their peers to hear the Gospel and connect with FBCO.

Summer Camp

This week-long trip to Ocoee, TN with the purpose of retreating from everyday life to focus on Christ with our FBCO community.

Mission Trips

We offer an annual domestic trip mission trip. We also have opportunities for international trips for 9th-12th graders. Our goal is to challenge our students to serve those around us, reaching our neighbors and the nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

MSM 101

MSM 101 is for rising 7th + 8th graders. This 4-day event takes place at the beginning of the summer to help them learn about Student Ministry and connect with our faith family.

TRANSITIONS AND MARKERS

Middle School Ministry

7th + 8th grade is an incredibly important season in the life of a teenager! We desire to help students navigate these years that are filled with a lot of learning, change, and new experiences. The goal for any student in our Middle School Ministry is to learn what it looks like to own their faith and step into discipleship. The week of Promotion Sunday (early June) is pivotal for our Middle School Ministry. We welcome our 7th graders to a new ministry area by hosting a 7th Grade Welcome Lunch for students and families, then host MSM 101 that week to help them connect with our 8th graders and Student Staff.

High School Ministry

9th - 12th grade is a span of years that brings exciting times, challenges, and lots of growth. We desire for our High School students to not only own their faith but lead and serve from their faith. Our Student Ministry provides many opportunities to help High Schoolers be missional and evangelistic with their peers at school, our neighbors in Lee County, and the nations of the world. It is our goal to help 9th - 12th grade students to go on mission locally, domestically, or internationally.

Graduation

The senior season at FBCO is full of memories and moments that will help propel them into College Ministry. From our Blessing Dinner (a night for fathers to bless and affirm their son/daughter) to moments at Summer Camp where seniors can impart wisdom to younger students, we want our seniors to feel recognized and appreciated. Graduate Recognition Sunday is a key milestone where seniors get to be recognized in front of the church body.

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

Our Student Ministry team hosts several gatherings periodically throughout the calendar year for parents. Our goal is to continually cast vision, provide information, and assist parents in discipling their son or daughter. Parents are directly involved with our Life Group kickoff, Summer Camp, and Mission Trip gatherings. We continually partner with and provide training to all our Student Ministry leaders who serve in Life Groups, Sunday School, or Wednesday night gatherings.

KEY MILESTONES

MSM 101	Mission Trip
Life Groups	Graduation

KEY SCRIPTURES

Colossians 1:17-18, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16, John 4:24, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 15:7, Genesis 1:27, Matthew 22:36-40, Ecclesiastes 4:12, Proverbs 27:17, 1 Peter 3:15, Romans 10:14-15

College Ministry

OUR MISSION

Everything we do in the College Ministry is centered around four words: Gospel, People, Community and Mission. We get the gospel to people, people into community, and from community we equip you and send you out on mission to your neighbors and to the nations.

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WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Sunday Morning – Our Multigenerational Sunday morning worship gathering happens at 11:00 am in the 3:16 center.

8th Street – This mid-week College worship gathering happens at 8:00 pm in the main worship center on Wednesday nights.

Missional Communities – Missional communities are small groups that worship, fellowship and live on mission together. They meet in the home of a family in the church and are led by students in the college ministry.

BIG EVENTS

Bagel Break – Each year during Sorority Recruitment we provide a space on Auburn's campus to take a break from recruitment by hearing the gospel over a bagel breakfast!

Freshmen Retreat – Near the start of the school year we take a trip with the newly forming freshmen class to fellowship and have fun but also to share what our college ministry is all about!

Amplify – Each Spring Break we serve the communities of Apalachicola and Port St. Joe by meeting tangible needs through construction projects while sharing the Gospel in the process. We stay on Cape San Blas, serve during the day, and grow in community and in our love for God in the evenings.

Girl's Retreat – This is a girls only trip where women from FBCO pour into the young women in the college ministry over two days of fellowship and rest.

Summer / Winter Trips – We believe in strategically using breaks during school to send students internationally and domestically on mission trips. Some domestic destinations have been Pittsburg, Boston, and New Orleans. Internationally we send teams to Europe, North Africa and South Asia.

KEY MILESTONES

Choose a Church – After arriving in Auburn, we think it is important to plug deeply into a local body of believers!

Go to Freshmen Retreat – Jump straight into community and plug in when you arrive!

Join a Missional Community – Missional communities are the heartbeat of our ministry.

Attend Amplify – Amplify is a staple of the FBCO experience, coming for the first time can be a life changing experience.

Serving in the Church – Serving the church is a large part of the Christian life, plugging in to serve is a significant experience.

Mission Trips – We want every college student to experience international missions before they graduate.

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

Mission Trips – Parents of families are encouraged to participate with their child when they go with us on mission trips by reading our GOers guide and coming alongside their student in prayer.

Parents and Alumni Lunch – We gather for lunch over homecoming weekend to fellowship with alumni of FBCO College as well as parents of students who are currently in college.

TRANSITION AND MARKERS

Moving into College

This is a vital step in a young person's life into adulthood and independence.

From Attender to Leader

We equip and encourage students to lead during their time in college.

Graduation

The end of college marks the beginning of a new phase of life.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 28:16-20

Acts 1:8

Age 0-3

Parent
Commissioning

Ages 4 & 5

Vacation Bible
School

Kids - College

Salvation and Baptism
(timing is unique for
each person)

PRESCHOOL

KIDS

1st - 6th Grade

Vacation Bible
School

2nd & 3rd Grade

Camp 412

4th - 6th Grade

Camp 345

1st Grade

Bible Presentation

4th Grade

Go to Camp

6th Grade

Commissioning

KEY

-  Milestone
-  Key Events

7th Grade

MSM 101

7th - 12th Grade

Be in a Life Group

7th - 12th Grade

Go on a Mission Trip

12th Grade

Graduation

- Blessing Dinner

- Grad Sunday

7th-12th Grade

Summer Camp

7th-12th Grade

Disciple Now

Weekend

STUDENTS

COLLEGE

Freshman

Choose a Church

College Age

Join a Missional
Community

College Age

Attend Amplify

College Age

Serve the Church

College Age

Go on an International
Mission Trip

Freshman

Freshman Retreat

College Age

Amplify

MINISTRY TRANSITIONS

Each transition from one ministry area to the next is significant. We put special emphasis on each ministry transition because we understand how it shapes the next step of development of an individual's spiritual journey.

PRESCHOOL TO KIDS

The transition from kindergarten to first grade at FBCO is an exciting step in the life of a child. There are many new experiences and opportunities that take place in the Kids Ministry, and this milestone is the first part of that journey. The KidsMin staff visits preschool classrooms before promotion to get to know the kids. The kindergarten classes also tour the KidsMin area so that it will be familiar, and this helps to relieve any stress or nervousness before they move upstairs. The next six years in KidsMin are a lot of fun, and the new relationships built with the kids and their families are foundational!

KIDS TO STUDENTS

Stepping into Student Ministry is a huge milestone for not only the teenager but also the family. The bridge from 6th grade to 7th grade at FBCO offers so many opportunities for students to own their faith in middle school and lead and serve with their faith in high school. Student Ministry years are all about learning how to grow in a personal relationship with God, develop Christ-centered community, and engage the world around them with the truth of the Gospel. The Student Ministry staff partners with families to raise up young men and women after God's heart. The desire is to provide platforms throughout the teenage years for students to go on mission, serve the local church, and have a ton of fun together in community!

STUDENTS TO COLLEGE

This is a vital step in a teenager's life as they move into adulthood and independence. The College Ministry staff begins welcoming high school seniors from FBCO's Student Ministry during their Spring semester before graduation. The College staff invites seniors to attend the Amplify mission trip during Spring Break, helps lead 12th grade Sunday School during the month of April, and joins the seniors and their families for Graduation Sunday. There is a huge emphasis for FBCO freshmen to attend the Oaks Retreat to begin forming Christ-centered community the summer before college begins. Towards the beginning of the academic school year, the College staff hosts a Freshmen Retreat to help students connect with the College Ministry at FBCO.

⁴ WE WILL NOT HIDE THESE TRUTHS FROM OUR CHILDREN;
WE WILL TELL THE NEXT GENERATION
ABOUT THE GLORIOUS DEEDS OF THE LORD,
ABOUT HIS POWER AND HIS MIGHTY WONDERS.

⁵ FOR HE ISSUED HIS LAWS TO JACOB;
HE GAVE HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO ISRAEL.
HE COMMANDED OUR ANCESTORS
TO TEACH THEM TO THEIR CHILDREN,
⁶ SO THE NEXT GENERATION MIGHT KNOW THEM—
EVEN THE CHILDREN NOT YET BORN—
AND THEY IN TURN WILL TEACH THEIR OWN CHILDREN.

⁷ SO EACH GENERATION SHOULD SET ITS HOPE ANEW ON GOD,
NOT FORGETTING HIS GLORIOUS MIRACLES
AND OBEYING HIS COMMANDS.

PSALM 78:4-7

The NextGen Ministry of FBCO commits to:

Teach the Bible

Scripture is the basis of everything that we do. We look to God's Word to lead and guide us as we build a spiritual foundation in the lives of each student.

Develop Disciples

The win of our ministry is to see disciples of Jesus raised up and equipped to become disciple-makers. Our teaching, events, and programming are all done with this end in mind.

Strengthen Families

We believe that God has designed the family to be the primary means of discipleship. We partner with and equip parents to raise up their children to follow Jesus. We are passionate about championing the family unit at the home as well as our FBCO faith family.

Cultivate Community

The Christian journey is not designed to happen in isolation. As followers of Jesus, we need relationships with other believers. Each of our NextGen ministries emphasizes opportunities for godly relationships to form. Growing in Christian community means having leaders to follow and peers to walk alongside.

Empower Leaders

We believe in a two-fold approach to leadership. We are always working to raise up the Next Generation to be leaders in the faith community. We are also equipping volunteers to serve and lead in each NextGen ministry area.

Build Trust

The physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of each student is critically important. We will always provide a safe environment where parents can be confident their children are physically safe, emotionally supported, and being taught accurate biblical theology.



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