

Helping Children Grow in Christ

DISCIPLESHIP FOR KIDS



Rebecca Ruybalid Stone

A NAVPRESS DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCE

Jesus says in Matthew 19:14, “Let the little children come to me . . . for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (NIV). This book does just that. With easy-to-understand examples, illustrations, and exercises, this book simplifies what we grown-ups can tend to overcomplicate in establishing someone in their walk with Jesus. I can envision using these lessons not only with my own children but also with the local college students that my husband and I minister to. This is an excellent resource for helping anyone at any age deepen and strengthen their relationship with God.

ALICE MATAGORA, author of *How to Save the World*

In a fast-paced life, it's sometimes hard to incorporate discipleship and faith fundamentals for our kids on a daily level. *Discipleship for Kids* is a fantastic tool for teaching our younger generation how to engage with Scripture, cultivate a prayer life, and so much more!

TERESA SWANSTROM ANDERSON, author of the Get Wisdom Bible Studies series



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Discipleship for Kids: Helping Children Grow in Christ

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For my children.



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For the Grown-Ups

I'll never forget the first time I made nachos for my young daughter. When I set the food in front of her, she stared at the plate for a moment. Then she hovered both of her hands over the mountain of chips and cheese.

Finally, she looked at me and said, "Okay. Okay. How do I do this?"

She didn't know how to dig into what looked like a mess. She didn't even know where to start.

I think about this story each time I encounter people who want to teach children more about God. They're eager to pass on the deeper things of faith but are reluctant because they don't know where to start. Many parents, grandparents, and other caring adults want to be the ones to help the children in their lives discover the Christian life. But the task feels daunting and overwhelming.

Okay. Okay. How do I do this?

First, let me say to you that you can do this. There isn't one right technique. You don't need to have all the Bible knowledge in the world. It's okay if you are learning along with your child, bit by bit. Bite by bite.

This book you are holding is designed for children to read alone or with an adult. Whatever route you choose, please be assured that reading this book is not a race.

You are free. Your children are free. You are not held to an

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impossible standard of getting through this book in record time. If you need to spend more time than you thought on each chapter, do that. If you find your child is grasping everything in one section but not another, it's okay to slow down.

More importantly, this book is not supposed to be about simply gaining information so you can get things just right for God. *Obeying Jesus? Check! Prayer? Mastered that! Fellowship? Do that every week!* Discipleship is never about perfecting the Christian life. It's about moving forward with Jesus at the center of our lives.

May our Savior be the one to guide you from this day forward. May you learn to trust and obey him always. He is waiting for you to begin. And he will show you how.

Rebecca Ruybalid Stone

Introduction

Think about your life.

What did you think of first? Did you think about part of your body, like your lungs, which help you breathe? Did you think about where you live and go to school? Did you think about the people you see every day?

All these things are important parts of your life. These things are important to God, too.

If you have chosen to follow Jesus, that means you are a Christian. After you accept Jesus as the only one who can save you from sin, you get to live your life with him every day!¹

You can understand more about life with Jesus by looking at the picture of the Wheel on the next page.

The center of a wheel gives it power and makes it go forward. In the Christian life, Jesus is the center. He gives us the strength to live every part of our lives for him.

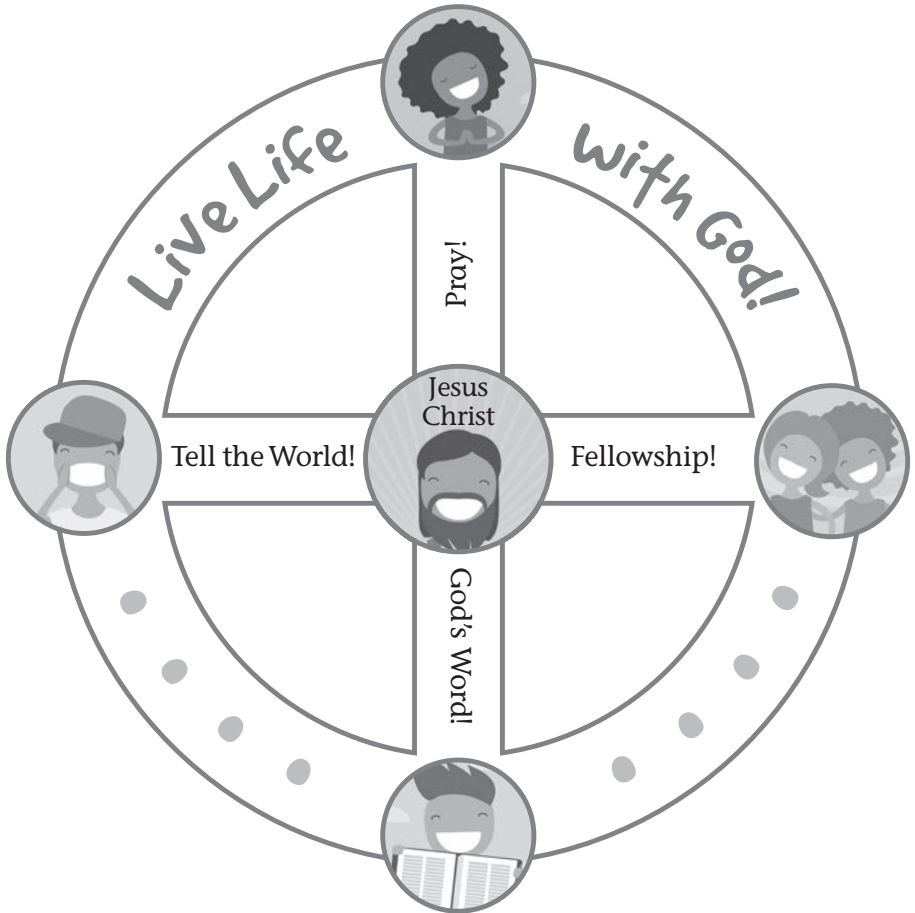
Prayer is talking to God and listening to him. **The Word** is the Bible, which is an important way God talks to us. **Fellowship** is spending time with other people who love God. **Witnessing** is using our words and lives to let people know that God loves them and wants them to have new life in him.

Each of these spokes on the Wheel connects us to Jesus at the center, who keeps us moving forward in the Christian life. When we spend time talking with God and listening to him, being with people

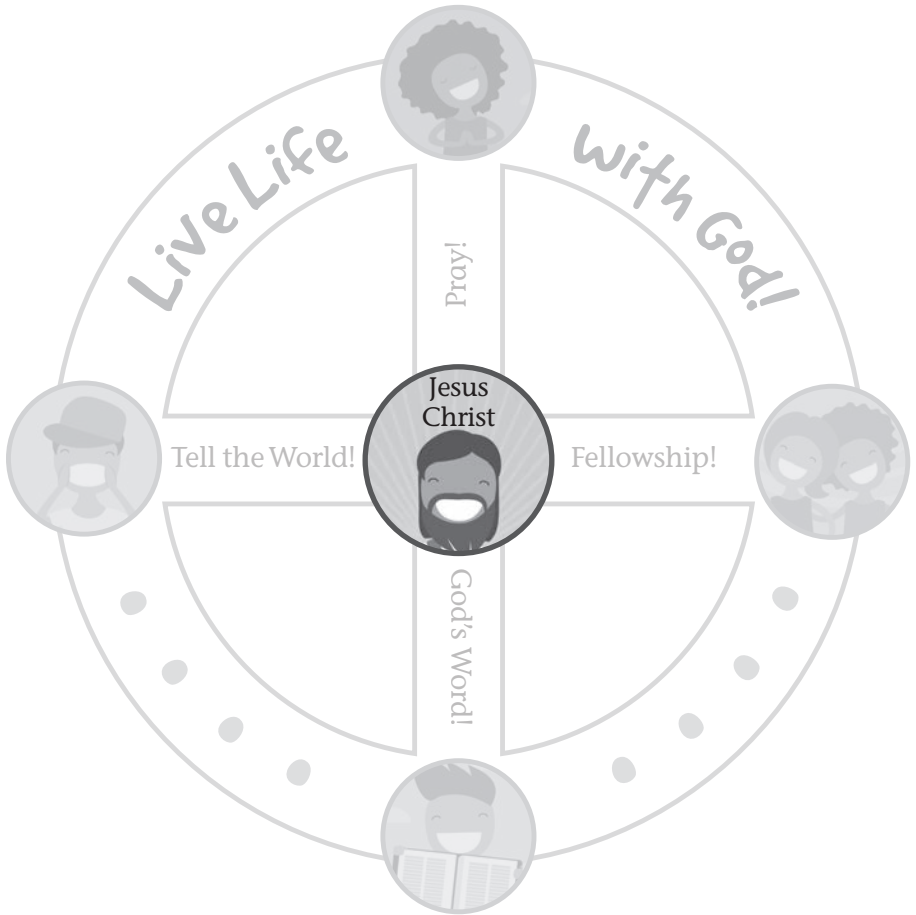
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who love God, and letting others know that God loves them, that's obedience in action.

In this book we're going to look at each part of the Wheel so that we know what it's like to live life with God. Let's get started!



Section 1
Jesus at the Center!





Anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life emerges! Look at it!

2 Corinthians 5:17

Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not “mine,” but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

Chapter 1

What does it mean to make something the center of our lives?

Logan knew exactly what he wanted to do first at Wheel World: ride the Rubber Bumpers. He felt both nervous and happy as he stood in line with his dad.

Logan had wanted to visit Wheel World for a long time. Each week when his family drove to church, they passed the amusement park. It looked so fun and exciting! Plus, some of his friends told him it was their favorite place to go.

The line for Rubber Bumpers moved slowly. But Logan knew it would be worth the wait.

Finally, the buzzer sounded for his group's turn. Logan and his dad climbed into one of the small, low cars. His dad helped him put on a safety belt. Then his dad secured his own belt in the seat next to Logan.

"Here we go!" Logan shouted as the light on the wall turned green.

"Whoo-hoo!" his dad exclaimed as they whirled and twirled and bumped around with the other cars.

When the light turned red, the boy asked his dad if they could go again.

"Not right now," Dad replied. "Let's go see what else is at Wheel World."

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The pair spent the morning going to each part of the park. Logan noticed that to get from place to place in the park, they often had to go through the center, past a large statue of a man.

The bronze man seemed friendly. He had a big smile on his face and a toy truck in his hand.

After a few roller coasters and a Chicken Pothole Pie for lunch, Logan asked his dad for some ice cream. His dad happily got him a cone. Then the two of them started out in search of some new places in the park.

As they walked, Logan licked his ice cream quickly to stop it from melting down the side of his cone. That's when he saw the statue again.

"Hey, Dad!" he called ahead. "Who's that guy?"

His father turned to look at the tall figure in the middle of the park. "That? Oh. That's Mr. B. He created this whole theme park." His dad pointed all around where he and Logan stood.

Dad continued, "All of Wheel World was his idea. The rides, the car picture on the shirt we bought you, and even the special flavor of ice cream you are eating. Your ice cream is called Smooth Street."

"Why is the statue right here?" Logan wondered aloud.

"This is Central Hub Park." Logan's dad took his hand and led him over to a map. The boy could see the shape of a car wheel on the map.

The middle of the map said, "You Are Here." The boy's father pointed to all the sidewalks going out from the statue.

"Mr. B loved cars," Logan's dad explained. "Trucks, too! So he created this place to look like a wheel. Nothing would be in Wheel World without its inventor, so some engineers put a statue of him in the middle of the park. They wanted to honor Mr. B and remember that he's important to this place."

"Ohhh. That makes sense!" Logan said.

For the rest of the afternoon, Logan thought about Mr. B. He realized how thankful he was to Mr. B for creating Wheel World. It must have cost the man a lot of time and money to make such a special place for people to enjoy and spend time together.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MAKE SOMETHING THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES?

As Wheel World was about to close that evening, Logan and his dad passed the statue one last time on their way to the parking lot.

Logan waved at the friendly-faced figure in Central Hub Park. “Bye, Mr. B!” the boy said. “Thanks for *everything!*”



When something is at **the center**, that means it is the main or most important thing. (Hint: “Central” is a word that means “at the center.”)

Think about these things from the story you read:

What was at the center of Wheel World?

Why was it important?

Now consider your own life:

What are some things that are central in your life? Think about the stuff that's really important to you. Take a minute to consider your answers. You could even write them down on a piece of paper.

Did you say something like your family or your house or even a toy? That makes sense! Those are good things! And God wants you to enjoy them. But here's what we're going to learn: Even very good things can never be as important in your life as Jesus, because Jesus is the very best thing.

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Jesus is the center of everything in our whole world. Jesus also wants to be the center of your life. Why? Because he loves you and wants to show you his plan for the best way to live. Jesus' plans are always great, and he has done some pretty great things already.

Next, we'll explore more about what makes Jesus so great.