

# Lets get on Board!

Colleen van Nieuwkerk,  
Grande Prairie Alliance Church, Grande Prairie, AB



## Kid Junction Purpose

It's been a 7 year journey that followed a "Growing a Healthy Church Seminar." At that time, we knew that God was calling us to be intentional in our ministry to kids. Our purpose became to assist parents in our church and community in the discipling of their children. As a result, we have developed a five-year Discipleship Diamond based on the philosophy of edutainment – educating the kids in the truths of the Bible as they learn to love Jesus and to love others – learning, in a fun way.

What exactly is discipleship in the life of a child? It is introducing them to Jesus so they can know Him, and then teaching them how to love Him and others for eternity. Discipleship begins in the church nursery where we want babies to enjoy coming to God's house and continues as they "grow up" in the discipling process.

By the grace of God, our desire is that when our kids graduate into Grade Seven, they are:

- Ready to be baptized and so to tell the church that they have decided to follow Jesus for the rest of their life,
- Ready to make a choice that says that teenage rebellion is not the norm!, and,
- Ready to serve in the church and to share their faith.

## Kid Junction Plan and Process

There are many layers to the discipleship process, but the basis of that process has to be learning to know God through the truths of the Bible. Who is this God that we believe in? When kids come to know and love God because of who He is, they develop faith and a foundation in their life that is stable and strong.

- We will teach the Bible as a whole which is God's Big Story. We need to teach more than just the popular Bible stories (Moses, David, Daniel) over and over. Learning God's Big Story and understanding God's holy character shows kids why they need a friendship with God. They need to tell God that they believe Jesus is the only way for that friendship to happen – that is kids coming to faith in Jesus!
- We will teach that the Bible is a book about God, not about us. We cannot just teach them to be "good" or place the emphasis only on Bible heroes. Those stories can lead to God loves "me," God cares for "me," God provides for "me," with a focus on us, rather than on God. "What does this story or passage tell us about God?" should always be our question. Understanding how God worked in the lives of Bible heroes helps them see how God can work in their lives as well. Admiring God's character causes their faith to grow and good morals to develop as they realize their own sense of sinfulness and inability to live holy lives which leads to repentance and greater dependency on God.

- We will teach the Bible in chronological order. This shows the kids how God's Big Story is woven together, with God as the great constant in all of life and history. Chronological teaching shows the conclusion of the stories and that God's way is the best way. As boys and girls gradually learn the whole story, faith is matured step by step and they learn to see God's heart!

## Kid Junction Phases

- Preschool Department (newborns to Grade One)  
Children learn about who God is, how to worship Him by learning the Word, how to pray, how to praise, and how to be a friend and love others around them.
- SuperKids (Grades 2-6)  
The Bible is taught in the order it happened with God as the central character. We take three years to study from Creation to Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. We are now studying the Book of Acts in conjunction with Paul's life and missionary journeys – the chronological story of how the gospel spread into the world. Prayer, stewardship, missions, and worship are all part of our time together.
- Kid Connection (Grade 5/6 Midweek Bible Study)  
We are learning to be H.I.S. Kids (His In Service). After being established in their faith, the next steps in discipleship are to learn to serve and then how to share their faith with others. Puppetry, child-care, Junior Choir, and ministry projects are all avenues of service. Having studied 2000 years of Christian Heroes has helped the kids to further understand God's plan in history.
- Family Zone  
The good news about Jesus and God's Big Story, is, of course, too good to be a secret. Family Zone, a ministry where families can pray for and reach out to another family, gives opportunities to come and have fun together and hear that good news. This continues the sharing process.

There is no greater privilege than making disciples who make disciples – the process never ends! We welcome families to get on board with us as we assist them to teach their own kids about Jesus, and then reach out to others! Getting on board also means that we, as ministers to kids, are growing as disciples of Jesus at the same time!



The 5 G's as developed by Willow Creek Community

Church are used in many of our churches to bring structure to the discipleship process for youth and adults. As we looked at the vision and direction of Unionville Alliance Church and our children's ministry, we had to think through, what does that really mean for our kids? Here's how we defined it.

### Grace

Kids will realize that God's gift to every child is higher and deeper and wider than anything they can ever imagine.

### Growth

God wants every child to grow in their understanding of His love and His plan for their lives.

### Group

Kids will connect with each other and with a significant adult as they learn to care and to reach out to others.

### Gifts

God made each boy and girl special and unique. He has given them gifts to develop and to share.

### Giving Above and Beyond

God wants kids to give above and beyond to help in sharing His love.