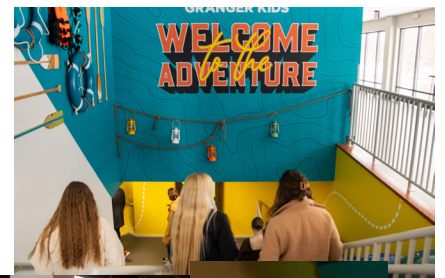


IT'S
JUST A
PHASE!
DON'T
MISS
IT.



WELCOME TO
 GRANGER **KIDS**

PRESCHOOL PHASE

EMBRACE THEIR PHYSICAL NEEDS.

NEW BABY

THE PHASE WHEN NOBODY SLEEPS, EVERYBODY SMELLS AND ONE MESMERIZING BABY CONVINCES YOU, “I NEED YOU NOW.”

A baby has arrived in a world where they don’t know the language and have very little control over their body. But babies are quickly forming first impressions about themselves and the world. So the way you respond consistently, cuddle often and engage their senses will help lay a critical foundation of trust.

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 936 WEEKS UNTIL GRADUATION.

ONE & TWO YEAR OLD

THE PHASE WHEN NOBODY’S ON TIME, EVERYTHING’S A MESS AND ONE EAGER TODDLER WILL INSIST, “I CAN DO IT.”

A toddler’s changing ability is a crisis—for you, and for them. This is a season filled with uncertainty, imperfection and even failure as they struggle to keep up with all their newly developing skills. The way you consistently meet their needs, engage their senses and provide discipline will help them develop confidence.

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 884 WEEKS UNTIL GRADUATION.

THREE & FOUR YEAR OLD

THE PHASE WHEN ANYTHING CAN BE IMAGINED, EVERYTHING CAN BE A GAME AND ONE CURIOUS PRESCHOOLER WANTS TO KNOW, “WHY?”

Life for a preschooler can be confusing. It’s okay to throw a ball, but not a rock. You can hug your friend, but not squeeze his neck. Your preschooler is learning the rules for life and encountering some necessary discipline. The way you consistently meet their needs, engage their senses and provide discipline will help them develop self-control.

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 780 WEEKS UNTIL GRADUATION.



ELEMENTARY PHASE ENGAGE THEIR INTERESTS.

KINDERGARTEN & FIRST GRADE

“LOOK AT ME!”

Kindergarten and first graders’ schedules may be picking up pace—from bus rides to recreational sports to after-school programs. And with all the increasing opportunities to try new things, don’t miss what they need most. The way you answer questions, listen to their stories and show up consistently will help them improve their abilities.

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 676 WEEKS UNTIL GRADUATION.

SECOND & THIRD GRADE

“SOUNDS LIKE FUN!”

Second and third graders are keen for comparison. They love to compare movies, sports teams, ice cream flavors...and people. This tendency often leaves kids wondering just how well they measure up. The way you answer questions, listen to their stories and show up consistently will help you encourage their efforts.

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 572 WEEKS UNTIL GRADUATION.

FOURTH & FIFTH GRADE

“I’VE GOT THIS!”

Fourth and fifth graders can understand different points of view, empathize with others and negotiate like champs. This means one thing: your influence is shifting. They still need you, but they are beginning to need you in a different way. If you want to engage their interests, then include peers, coach relational skills and help them develop healthy friendships.

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 468 WEEKS UNTIL GRADUATION.



INCORPORATING FAITH THROUGH THE PHASES

NEW BABY

A baby isn't ready to make a public declaration about what they believe, but that doesn't mean you can't begin to lay a foundation for their faith. In this phase, incorporate faith into a few of your daily routines.

SAY THINGS LIKE:

"God, thank you
for this baby."

(Pray aloud while you are with your baby.)

"Jesus loves you."

(Sing songs while you hold your baby.)

"We are going to church."

(Connect with a faith community.)

ONE & TWO YEAR OLD

One and two year olds listen to your words. So this phase is the perfect time to begin talking, singing and praying together. Begin by simply incorporating faith into your daily routine.

SAY THINGS LIKE:

"God made me.
God loves me. Jesus
wants to be my friend
forever."

"Let's go to church!"

"God, thank you for..."
"God, please help us..."

THREE & FOUR YEAR OLD

Your preschooler has many questions. Some might be about creation, heaven, church and the Bible... and some of their questions might already be hard to answer. Don't panic. Just like other topics, answer faith questions as simply as possible. If they need to ask more, they will.

SAY THINGS LIKE:

"Will you let your
friend have a turn?"

(Prompt them to share.)

"Isn't that wonderful? Let's
thank God for it."

"How did the Samaritan
take care of his neighbor?"

(Talk about what your
preschooler learned at church.)

INCORPORATING FAITH THROUGH THE PHASES

KINDERGARTEN & FIRST GRADE

Kindergartners are quickly learning the habits and routines that make your family work. Make church a priority, but don't let it be the only time you talk about faith. Talk about God as you go about your day. First graders may be starting to read and enjoy books. So, this is a great year to purchase a kid's Bible. Look for one that is the full text, in easy-to-read translation like the NIV. You may need to read it to them for now. Continue having other faith conversations as you go about your days together.

SAY THINGS LIKE:

"You can trust God no matter what. You need to make the wise choice. You should treat others the way you want to be treated."

"Let's do something for Mrs. Paula. She's not feeling well."

(Involve them in serving friends and neighbors.)

SECOND & THIRD GRADE

Second graders may be starting to enjoy reading. This is a great year to encourage skills that will help them enjoy reading the Bible. Make sure they have a full-text Bible in an easy-to-read translation like the NIV. Throughout your week, continue to talk about faith together.

SAY THINGS LIKE:

"I love that you noticed how they are feeling. What could we do to help?"

"Can I pray about that with you?"

"When I first trusted Jesus..."

(Encourage them to act on their impulses to help others.)

(Share your faith story.)

FOURTH & FIFTH GRADE

Fourth graders are often introspective and enjoy having some alone time. Leverage this new tendency to help them develop a habit of spending time alone with God. Help them pick out a preteen devotional and continue having faith conversations at home. You can do these things by taking advantage of the time you already spend together. During fifth grade, friendships matter more, so does their faith community. As they get ready to move into Granger Student Ministries (GSM), look for ways to prioritize church connection and continue having faith conversations at home.

SAY THINGS LIKE:

"How can I pray for you today/this week?"

"What do you think is the wisest choice in this situation?"

"Have you read anything in the Bible that stood out to you?"

(Talk about the Bible.)

CREATING A NEW BACK-TO-SCHOOL RHYTHM

PRESCHOOL

Below are some suggestions for how to create an intentional and meaningful back-to-school rhythm for a preschooler in this phase.

EVERY MORNING YOU WILL SET THE MOOD FOR THE DAY.

Reduce morning stress by setting out your child's clothes and packing bags the night before and wake up to your alarm. Make it your priority to be prepared so you can focus on sending your child to school feeling loved and happy.

ASK YOUR PRESCHOOLER TO HELP CREATE THE SCHEDULE FOR YOUR MORNING ROUTINE.

Print out or draw pictures representing key points in the morning: wake time, breakfast, teeth-brushing, hair-brushing, dressing, time to leave, etc. Ask your preschooler to help you arrange the pictures in order. Post the schedule and use it as a daily guide.

MAKE YOUR NEW DRIVE TIME COUNT.

During the trip to and from school, point out interesting or unique landmarks along the way and sing preschool Bible songs together. On your way home, you can both share one "high" and one "low" of your day. Give your child words to help them express how those events made them feel.

INSTEAD OF SIMPLY ASKING ABOUT YOUR KID'S DAY, PLAY "SCHOOL" WITH YOUR PRESCHOOLER A FEW TIMES A WEEK.

Take turns letting them be the teacher and you and/or their stuffed animals being the students. Ask them to show you (act out) something funny that happened, something that confused them or something new they've learned.

ELEMENTARY

Below are some suggestions for how to create an intentional and meaningful back-to-school rhythm for an elementary-school kid in this phase.

SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL FEELING AFFIRMED.

Say a short prayer over them as they leave, so they know that God is on their side throughout the day. Make a practice of writing and sending notes of encouragement in your child's lunchbox or backpack so they are also reminded you are on their side.

EACH DAY WHEN YOUR KID GETS HOME FROM SCHOOL, HAVE AN AFTER SCHOOL "CHECKLIST" POSTED FOR THEM TO FOLLOW.

Start off with at least 15 minutes of downtime, add in homework time, chore time, bath time, play time, dinner and family time. The next time you hear, "I'm bored!" or, "Can I play with your phone?" point them towards the checklist.

CREATE A DEDICATED SPACE FOR HOMEWORK.

It can be as simple as a special chair at the kitchen table with a place mat that only appears at homework time. Wherever it is, set it up with pencils, a sharpener, good lighting and some peace and quiet. Establishing healthy study routines early on will help your kid both now and in the phases to come.

GIVE SPACE FOR YOUR KIDS TO TALK ABOUT THEIR DAY.

Make sure to sit down and have dinner together as often as possible. Go around the table and have each person tell one "high" and "low" from their day. Oftentimes, kids will be most open to honest conversations when you tuck them in at night. Even when your kids are old enough to go to bed on their own, try to keep a tucking-in ritual for as long as you can.

CELEBRATING THROUGH THE PHASES

Ideas to help you celebrate what is good right now.

PRESCHOOL

Your preschooler is changing by the minute and learning to do new things every day! Don't miss celebrating all the good things happening in this phase.

You can make almost anything fun with a preschooler!
To get you thinking, here are some fun reasons and ways to celebrate them:

Good table manners (or trying a new food)

Tie a character balloon to their chair at your next meal together.

Cleanliness (like picking up their toys)

Pull out the finger paints and let them make a mess.

Hard work (like helping with a chore)

Take them to the park or playground for the afternoon.

Learning a new skill (like going on the potty)

Treat them to ice cream, complete with sprinkles!

A good week (or hardly any tantrums)

Go on a picnic or spend the day at the zoo.



ELEMENTARY

Your elementary kid is learning and discovering new things about themselves and the world around them every day. Engage them in their interests, and celebrate all the good things that are happening in this phase.

You can make almost anything fun with an elementary-aged kid! Here are some celebration ideas to get you started:

Special school days (like the last day of school)

Meet them at the bus stop with whatever fits the occasion—balloons, popsicles, silly string, water soaker toys, cupcakes, snow toys, noisemakers, etc.

Trying new things (like a new sport or hobby)

Make their favorite dinner. Set the table with colorful paper plates, napkins and a sprinkle of confetti.

Positive traits you notice (like showing kindness)

Write a note about things you see in them that impress you and put it in their lunch box or on their pillow.

Mastery of a new skill (like learning to ride their bike)

Hide a small gift or special snack and have them go on a treasure hunt!



PRESCHOOL TO ELEMENTARY

The transition from preschool to elementary school is a big one for many kids. The structure of their world is taking a drastic change at school and even at church. This will require you to have a little extra patience during this change, and it'll be really helpful to help them set expectations for how this new world is going to work. You may have kids who can already read and write their name, and you might also have some kids who cry when they can't find the color crayon they're looking for. During the days ahead, you'll want to comfort any fears they may have about the year ahead of them. We want to help you by giving you some words to say and not to say.

Remember that your goal during this time is to: ENGAGE THEIR INTERESTS.



WHAT TO SAY:

- "You're going to learn so many new things this year. What's one thing you're excited to learn?"
- "You can ask me any question you want while we're here!"
- "What are you most excited about going into Kindergarten?"
- "Your teacher will help you know what to do each day and where to go until you get the hang of it."
- "You might see some of your old friends, and you'll also meet some new ones."
- "I can't wait to hear all about your first day!"

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- "You will have so many new friends in your new class." (This can sound overwhelming.)
- "You will have all new teachers. Isn't that exciting?" (It may sound more scary than exciting.)
- "You are a big kid now. You can walk into your new room without your mom or dad."
- "Big kids do not cry."
- "You get to do big kid work now."

ELEMENTARY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

The change from elementary to middle school is one of the biggest transitions they'll face, and you get to be there to encourage and affirm them through this season. They might be nervous or seemingly confident, serious or over-the-top silly. They've still got stuffed animals in their room, but they're so over cartoon movies. At times, it might be hard to know when to pump them up and when to just listen. It might be difficult to know which words they need to hear and what they really don't need right now.

Remember to make this your goal with everything you communicate: AFFIRM THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEY.



WHAT TO SAY:

- "I know it might feel like everyone is staring at you at school, but the reality is everyone is really just worried about themselves."
- "I know trying out for the team is scary, and I know you don't want to fail. But whether or not you make it, you're showing courage."
- "If you notice someone sitting alone at lunch, why don't you go talk to them? They probably need a friend just like you do."
- "Middle school is a chance for you to start figuring out who you are and what you like. You might feel awkward at times, but that's a normal part of growing up. Everyone has gone through middle school, and we all felt awkward at times—including me."

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- "You think this is hard, just wait until you get into high school."
- "This is your last chance to get it right."
- "I've already gone through all of this and here's what I did..."
- "You're being silly, don't worry about it."
- "If you don't do well in middle school, you'll never get a good job."
- "Everyone hates middle school. Middle school is just the worst time in your life."