

GUIDE FOR LOCAL CHURCHES ON



Discipling Children to be Global Christians



THE BIG IDEA

A Christian school, known for its graduates entering global and cross-cultural mission service, was informed by a new student's parents that they were sending their son to the school 'to develop a vision for the world.' The school's president responded, '98% of our students already have a missions vision before they come.' The parents had good intentions, but poor methodology.

They had misunderstood the nature of value development. People develop most of their character before they are eight years of age, years when the family exerts the most pronounced effect on an individual. While the Holy Spirit can transform a person's values at any stage, most adults will agree that it's a struggle to change values developed as children. The home is consequently the most important environment for fostering lifelong Christian perspectives and priorities.

Parents have the privilege and responsibility to teach and model to their children the attributes of a global Christian.ⁱ



TIPS & EXAMPLES

1. Values are taught best by being caught (2 Timothy 3:10-14)

- Is your heart tuned to God's heart for the world, and is this reflected in your lifestyle?
- Do you care for non-Christians in your neighbourhood and at work?
- Do you plan the family budget with a view to releasing as many resources as possible to help others?
- Do you support the mission endeavours in your church with time, prayers and resources?
- Are you willing to serve God in a cross-cultural situation, should He lead you to do so?

2. Your values are reflected in your dreams (Romans 15:17-21)

- What dreams motivate your family? – dreams of a secure income? A new home? Higher education? A prestigious job? Keeping the family in the same neighbourhood?
- Dream together: “How might our lives best accomplish God’s purposes?” – then pursue those dreams with all your hearts, trusting God to supply the resources, strength, abilities and determination to carry them out.

3. What you think about determines your values (Romans 8:5-6)

- To what extent do you think about lost people around the world and the missionariesⁱⁱ seeking to reach them?
- Set aside some time for your family to build global vision:ⁱⁱⁱ
 - Read stories of children and families from other cultures, missionary biographies
 - Together memorise verses that reflect God’s concern for the lost
 - Create a visual aid (scrapbook; world map or collage) with pictures, letters and other information about the missionaries your church and family support
 - Pray for unreached people groups^{iv} and missionaries during meal times
 - Write letters/emails to missionaries and their kids

4. Your values are shaped by your associates (1 Cor 15:33)

- Endeavour to develop friendships with people from various ethnic backgrounds and encourage your children to do the same
- Consider involving an international student in the life of your family
- Encourage older teenagers to consider foreign exchange opportunities
- Consider taking your family on a short-term mission trip, your spend your holidays encouraging a missionary family
- Extend hospitality to missionaries who are in your area on home assignment, and allow your children to help you serve them

5. Your values lie with your treasures (Matthew 6:19-21)

- View yourselves as stewards of God’s resources - discuss your budget as a family, setting apart a significant percentage to support mission
- Encourage your children to give to mission work from their own resources
- Shop together for presents to send or give to missionaries
- Save money as a family to give towards a specific mission project

6. You will sacrifice for what you value (Matthew 16:24-26)

- Are you willing to release your children to (perhaps) a distant place and the uncertainties of mission work?
- Pray daily for each of your children, that they would develop God’s heart for the world, and that God would send them into His harvest at home or abroad – wherever they can best accomplish His purposes
- Release your youth and young adults for responsible short-term mission experiences
- Assure your children of your support and joy in their mission service, if God should lead them in this direction
- Help your children to discover ways to contribute now, in their current location, to world evangelisation

7. Real Examples:

- **“Kids Missions Camp: Transformational Experiences Instill God’s Heart for the World.”** Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 5, Iss. 1, 2010.
<http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Mis-Camp.pdf>



HELPFUL RESOURCES

1. Ellen Livingood. **“Kids with Power: Don’t Underestimate Children’s Global Impact.”** Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 3, Iss. 3, 2008. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/KidPower.pdf>
2. <http://www.globalconnections.org.uk/churches/teaching-materials/youth-group-activities>
 - Free downloadable **Youth Group activities**
3. <http://www.globalconnections.org.uk/churches/teaching-materials/sunday-school-materials>
 - Free downloadable **Sunday school materials** for ages 2 to 11+

ⁱ **Global Christian** (“World Christian”/mission-minded) – a disciple of Jesus Christ who shares God’s global perspective and engages in various ways in God’s global mission, no matter where they are located. While ideally there should be no difference between a Christian and a global Christian, the difference often lies in a Christian’s the level of understanding and active obedience in regards to God’s global purposes for the whole world.

ⁱⁱ **Missionary/missionaries** - a person/family who has been commissioned by their sending church(es) and/or mission agency to be explicitly dedicated to the work of cross-cultural ministry. It indicates

someone who is gifted, set apart and trained/prepared for cross-cultural service, and so serves a particular role in the global Body of Christ. While every follower of Jesus is called to be His witness wherever they are, some are specifically lead to cross cultural and geographical boundaries to share the gospel with those who could otherwise not comprehend its message.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Global vision** – a conscious perspective and growing awareness of what God is doing in the world to achieve His global purposes. This includes a biblical understanding of God’s global mission, a current awareness of international news and the spiritual condition of people groups, and an understanding of the ongoing growth of the global Church and the complexities/challenges involved in completing Christ’s Great Commission.

^{iv} **Unreached people group** – ‘a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group;’ the Joshua Project use the additional criteria of ‘less than or equal to 2% Evangelical Christian and less than or equal to 5% Professing Christians,’ (see <http://joshuaproject.net/help/definitions>).