

FUELING FAITH IN THE NEXT GENERATION....light of the church and the love of the family

Children are born with an innate sense of wonder and faith that is real and authentic. Our role is to provide a foundation of experiences on which children build a life of learning and growth toward a mature and vital faith. Children who become deeply committed followers of Christ who Love God, Care for each other and serve in the world.

Foundation:

GROW – It's easy to grow up these days knowing about God, but not really knowing God. Children are immersed in technology and communication more than ever before, but it's an inch deep and a mile long. True relationship with God is both deep and wide. It's not about simply knowing Paul or Moses or King David as characters of the bible, it's more about understanding who God is through these wonderful Bible stories. It's about understanding God's big picture and how our lives fit into that big picture. Reading the Bible, listening to others read the Bible, and asking questions helps children know God and grow in relationship with God.

CONNECT - Small groups provide intentional community for kids. One of the greatest gifts a church can provide families is a consistent community of caring adults who are there to be a second voice and give wise direction when life gets complicated. This community of adults and friends provides a place for children to belong while wrestling with life-changing truths, and as they apply them in everyday faith. Small groups go hand in hand with how God grows us spiritually.

CELEBRATE - Marking children's physical "firsts," such as first steps and first words, is an exciting and memorable part of parenting. Just as important, and just as worthy of celebration, are spiritual firsts, or faith milestones. These milestones, or rites, help children know they're growing up as Christians and continually reconnecting to their faith family. Milestones also allow the church and parents to partner together to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus.

Five milestones: At UMCWFB, Baptism, Transition to elementary, 3rd grade Bible Presentation, 5th grade worship readiness, 7 & 8 grade confirmation, High School Graduation (entry to adulthood)

EQUIP – The goal is simple: Give parents the resources they need to get more involved with their child's spiritual development – and in the process, make the parents the spiritual leaders in their home. Without a doubt, the church is the foundation for the spiritual education of our kids, but we need help from parents. Our strategy is built on the principles that two influences (the church and the home) can have a greater impact when we work together.