

### Developing a Vision Orientation of Ministry to Children and Youth

We believe that having a long-term vision is crucial for discipling children and youth. A vision-orientation considers *where you are going*—clarifying your goals—and then carefully develops and implements an intentional plan to pursue those goals. Parents, pastors, ministry leaders, and all who care about the faith of the next generation must have a clear target in view so we know where to aim when we are interacting with children and youth.

Most importantly, our vision must be defined by the biblical vision for the next generation. There are several places in the Bible where God reveals His vision for the next generation. The first seven verses of Psalm 78 have helped to provide a biblical framework for Truth78:

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth!  
<sup>2</sup>I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old,  
<sup>3</sup>things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.  
<sup>4</sup>We will not hide them from their children,  
but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD,  
and his might, and the wonders that he has done.  
<sup>5</sup>He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel,  
which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children,  
<sup>6</sup>that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn,  
and arise and tell them to their children,  
<sup>7</sup>so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God,  
but keep his commandments;

Using these verses, and many more, we can begin to see an end goal for our children and youth; something to carefully aim them toward. This helps to clarify the vision, further shaped by the New Testament.

We are called to faithfully teach the next generations the Word of God so that they might:

- know the truth of God and His glorious Gospel.
- always honor and love God—never forgetting what He has accomplished in Christ.
- set their full confidence in Christ alone for the forgiveness of sin and the fulfillment of all His promises, including eternal life.
- follow and obey Jesus as Lord.
- live for the glory of God.

At Truth78, we state this succinctly in our vision statement,

...that the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.

By having a long-term vision, you can more effectively develop a discipleship strategy—for both church and home—to evaluate every program, activity, curricula, and resource. The vision focuses on questions about children five, 20, and even 40 years into the future. Questions like:

- What do we want them to understand about God and His Word?
- What do they need to know and embrace about Jesus and the Gospel?
- What marks of faith and spiritual maturity do we want them to have?
- What portions of God’s Word do we want hidden in their hearts through memorization?
- What kind of husband and father, or wife and mother do we want them to be?
- How do we want them to respond to success? To tragedy and suffering?
- How does the Bible characterize a true disciple?

A vision-orientation recognizes that occupying children and youth with various activities and programs is important, but these activities and programs should be shaped by a *long-term, overarching, intentional, strategic plan* for:

- imparting the whole counsel of the Word of God,
- presenting the Gospel,
- nurturing their faith,
- and making true disciples.

### **Getting Started**

To better understand and implement a vision-oriented approach to ministering to children and youth, we encourage you to watch these four short videos by Pastor David Michael and Sally Michael.

#### **A Vision for the Discipleship of the Next Generation**

#### **A Vision for God-Centered, Gospel-Focused Teaching for the Next Generations**

#### **A Vision for Teaching the Word of God**

#### **A Vision for Encouraging Faith in Christ**

### **Next Steps**

We invite you to learn more about Truth78 and our vision-oriented resources and training through the [Truth78 Viewbook](#).