

Aslan Academy Seven-Step Plan

To help parents begin the *Aslan Academy* program and stay focused as they work through the various elements, we offer a suggested approach below. The estimated time to complete each step is listed, but parents should feel free to extend or adjust the times in light of their schedules. We recommend that as parents begin each new step, they write down an anticipated schedule for each listed activity. The Seven-Step Plan is designed in a way to help families develop new habits and new intentional approaches to spiritual growth in their children. For each step we offer categories: Pray, Read & Study, Apply, and Family Activities.

We designed these steps with busy families in mind, but discipling children will require a parent's intentional focus. Use the suggested items under each step to build a foundation and then an ongoing pattern of living that will begin to develop your children into disciples of Jesus. Parents often seem willing to make big sacrifices for sports activities, theater, music development, and educational projects and opportunities for their children. While there is value in those activities, doesn't it make sense to place an even higher priority on your child's spiritual development and growth?

For married couples, the program will have the greatest effect if both parents "buy in" and participate fully in the Seven-Step Plan. If only one spouse will be carrying the load, or if you are a single parent, try to find a godly adult friend or relative to help you as you seek to disciple your child. Perhaps you can form a group of single parents in your church who might participate in the Aslan Academy program and provide prayer support and a sounding board as you seek to lead your child to better know and love our Lord. Whether you are married or single, God loves you and your family and wants you to know Him more clearly and grow in faith.

The following steps will help you begin or, if you are already on this path, help you accelerate that growth.

{ Step One }

Getting Started: Orientation and Overview

Estimated time to complete: Two to Four Weeks

Pray

1. Read “The Need for Prayer” in the *Aslan Academy* resources.
2. Start praying regularly for your family and your children.
3. Explain to your children that you will be praying for them each day and commit to praying with each child in the morning or evening of each day, in addition to regular mealtimes. Pray out loud for God’s guidance and a willing spirit in your child as you begin this program.

Read & Study

4. Read the introduction to the *Aslan Academy* and the section on “How to Use This Handbook.”
5. Read the overview articles that describe the first few sections of the *Aslan Academy* curriculum:
 - a. “The *Aslan Academy*: Intentional Parenting to Disciple Our Children”
 - b. “Reviewing the Fundamentals”
 - c. “Heart Change”
 - d. “The Importance of Scripture”
6. Work through the Bible Studies for the following sections
 - a. “God’s Plan for Parents”
 - b. “Understanding Heart Change”
 - c. “The Importance of Scripture”

Apply

7. Write down key lessons or questions from the articles and Bible studies. Make a list of the steps you are going to take to begin implementing what you’ve learned.
8. As described in the “The Need for Prayer,” start recruiting a prayer team.
9. Communicate regularly with your prayer team and share insights gained as you go through this program.

Family Activities

10. Choose an age-appropriate Bible for your child (from the resources under “Teaching the Bible to Your Children”) and begin reading from it each day. Or, if the child is old enough, have the child read it on his or her own. Set aside time each day for a brief discussion of the reading.

{ Step Two }

A Good Foundation

Estimated time to complete: Two to Four Weeks

Pray

1. Continue praying with each of your children each day, asking God to guide your efforts and work in the hearts of your children.
-

Read & Study

2. Choose either *Basic Christianity* or *Christianity 101* under “Review of Fundamentals” and read it. Even if you are long-time believer, it is helpful to review the fundamentals to help you as you begin to teach your child.
 3. Read either “Parenting Is Heart Work” or “Shepherding a Child’s Heart” under “Understanding Heart Change.”
-

Apply

4. Write down key lessons or questions from the articles and Bible studies. Make a list of the steps you are going to take to begin implementing what you’ve learned.
 5. As described in the “The Need for Prayer,” start recruiting a prayer team.
 6. Communicate regularly with your prayer team and share insights gained as you go through this program.
-

Family Activities

7. Choose an age-appropriate Bible for your child (from the resources under “Teaching the Bible to Your Children”) and begin reading from it each day. Or, if the child is old enough, have the child read it on his or her own. Set aside time each day for a brief discussion of the reading.

{ Step Three }

Moving Ahead

Estimated time to complete: Two to Four Weeks



Pray

1. Continue praying with each of your children each day, asking God to guide your efforts and work in the hearts of your children.
-



Read & Study

2. Read *The Big Story—How the Bible Makes Sense Out of Life*. After reading it, set aside time with your child to talk about how the Bible is one continuous story of God's love and His desire to rescue us. Do this over several sessions, perhaps as a story before your child goes to bed.
 3. Read *Gospel-Centered Family: Becoming the Parents God Wants You to Be*. Answer the questions under “Questions for Reflection” after each chapter. Write down the key insights you've gained from this book.
-



Apply

4. Discuss the “Issues to Ponder” from “Teaching the Bible to Your Children” section of *The Aslan Academy Guidebook*.
 5. Write down additional issues or thoughts you have from the resources you've completed so far.
 6. At unhurried mealtimes, use the “Aslan Moments” (from the *Dawn Treader News*) to guide a discussion each week on key topics.
 7. Write down a description of your children's faith, their attitudes and their behavior. Discuss your possible parenting shortcomings from the past and begin implementing one or two specific changes based on what you've learned from the resources read so far. Be sure to do a specific plan for each child.
-



Family Activities

8. Continue daily Bible study or readings from an age-appropriate Bible.
9. Provide some of the “Listen and Learn” resources to your child and allow your child to listen on his or her own or use for car rides and have the whole family listen together. Ask your child about the stories and have him or her describe what he or she is learning.

{ Step Four }

Learning More about How God Made Your Child

Estimated time to complete: Two to Four Weeks



Pray

1. Continue praying with each of your children each day, asking God to guide your efforts and work in the hearts of your children.
-



Read & Study

2. Read the *Aslan Academy* overview article: “Developing Character and Faith That Lasts.”
 3. Work through the Bible study: “Developing Character and Faith That Lasts.”
 4. Read Section 1 and 2 of *Raising Kids to Love Jesus*. Write down the unique characteristics of each of your children. Write down your understanding of your child’s personality type. Pray for God’s wisdom as you learn how to parent each child, based on the child’s uniqueness.
 5. Read the first five chapters of *Character Matters! Raising Kids with Character That Lasts*. Answer the questions at the end of each chapter. Write down your assessment of each of your children’s character under each category listed in the chapters.
-



Apply

6. Consider the “Issues to Ponder” from the *Aslan Academy Guidebook* section on “Developing Character and Faith That Lasts.”
 7. From your notes about each child’s personality type, write down two or three parenting changes you will make based on this new knowledge, and commit to implementing those changes.
 8. From your assessment about your child’s character, plan one or two specific steps you will take to begin shaping your child’s character in these areas.
-



Family Activities

9. Continue daily Bible study or readings from an age-appropriate Bible.
10. Plan a special outing with each child to lovingly talk about the positive aspects of what you’ve observed about that child’s personality and character. Praise him or her and celebrate how God has made him or her unique. Reinforce God’s love for the child and how He wants to know him or her. Read relevant sections of the Bible to highlight how God wants to shape us to become the person He wants us to be.
11. Begin family readings, starting with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Use the guide *Aslan in Our World: A Companion to the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to ask key questions throughout. Look for ways to encourage your children to think and to envision themselves in similar situations.

{ Step Five }

Sticky Faith and Teachable Moments

Estimated time to complete: Two to Four Weeks



Pray

1. Continue praying with each of your children each day, asking God to guide your efforts and work in the hearts of your children.
-



Read & Study

2. Purchase the *Hide 'em in Your Heart CD* (preschool and early elementary) or one of the Seeds Family Worship CD's (older elementary and middle school) and play it as you drive around town or allow the child to listen in his or her room. These songs will help you and your child easily memorize key Bible verses
 3. Read *Sticky Faith* to gain insight into what helps children develop and keep a strong faith into adulthood. Complete the discussion questions at the end of each chapter.
 4. Read either *The Power of Teachable Moments* or *Faith Begins at Home*.
-



Apply

5. From your reading of *Sticky Faith*, write down your assessment of how your parenting approach so far will lead to a “sticky faith.” What changes did you see that would be helpful? Commit to implementing at least one change this month.
 6. From your reading of either *The Power of Teachable Moments* or *Faith Begins at Home*, write down three specific changes you and your spouse will make to begin creating teachable moments with your children. Commit to do them starting this month.
 7. At unhurried mealtimes, begin using the “Aslan Moments” (from the *Dawn Treader News*, the *Aslan Academy* monthly update) to guide a discussion each week on key topics.
-



Family Activities

8. Continue daily Bible study or readings from an age-appropriate bible.
 9. Plan a special outing with each child to continue discussing character. Think of an event or activity to illustrate an opportunity for growth.
 10. Continue family readings as well as encouraging your child to listen and learn on their own. Once you have finished reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, continue reading through the *Chronicles of Narnia* with the study guides. Every family is different, and accordingly should adapt the schedule of reading to suit the interests and time availability of family members. Try to read a chapter two or three times per week. If you don't have time to go over all the questions in one sitting, discuss them over the next couple of days, keeping the story fresh in the children's minds and building their excitement to read the next chapter.
-



Pray

11. Continue updating your prayer team and seek specific prayers as you learn more about your child's needs.

{ Step Six }

Introducing Spiritual Disciplines

Estimated time to complete: Two to Four Weeks



Pray

1. Continue praying with each of your children each day, asking God to guide your efforts and work in the hearts of your children.
-



Read & Study

2. Continue daily Bible study or readings from an age-appropriate Bible.
 3. Read the *Aslan Academy* article on “Introducing Spiritual Disciplines to Your Children.”
 4. Work through the Bible Study “Introducing Spiritual Disciplines to Your Children.”
 5. Read either “Habits of a Child’s Heart: Raising Your Kids with the Spiritual Disciplines” or “Spiritual Disciplines for Children, A Guide to a Deeper Spiritual Life for You and Your Children” under the section on “Spiritual Disciplines.”
 6. Read chapters 6–10 in *Character Matters! Raising Kids with Character That Lasts*. Answer the questions at the end of each chapter.
-



Apply

7. At unhurried mealtimes, pick one of the spiritual disciplines and discuss why it is important and how it might be adopted in your family. As a family, seek to have everyone take an initial step toward following that discipline in an age-appropriate manner. Discuss it regularly as you implement it.
 8. From your reading in *Character Matters!* Continue your assessment of each child’s character under each category listed in the chapters. Plan one or two specific steps you will take to begin shaping your child’s character in these areas.
-



Family Activities

9. Continue special outings (perhaps an outing to serve together) with each child or together to continue discussing character and seeking an event or activity to illustrate an opportunity for growth.
10. Continue family readings using the *Aslan Academy* suggested resources as well as encouraging your child to listen and learn on their own. Find time to discuss what they are reading and hearing.

{ Step Seven }

Understanding and Explaining Faith

Estimated time to complete: Two to Four Weeks



Pray

1. Continue praying with each of your children each day, asking God to guide your efforts and work in the hearts of your children.



Read & Study

2. Continue daily Bible study or readings from an age-appropriate Bible.
3. Read the *Aslan Academy* article “Understanding and Explaining Their Faith.”
4. Work through the Bible Study “Importance of Understanding and Explaining Faith.”
5. Choose the age-appropriate resource under “Understanding and Explaining Their Faith.” [list each resource] Begin working through the questions with your child. Take the time to discuss and seek additional resources for help if necessary. Help your child feel comfortable asking tough questions, and, as a parent, commit to finding satisfactory answers through *Aslan Academy* or other resources, your pastor, or children’s director at church. Work through the questions at a comfortable pace. This process may take weeks or months.



Apply

6. Consider the “Issues to Ponder” from the *Aslan Academy Guidebook* section on “Helping Children to Understand and Explain Their Faith.”
7. Read the article on “Understanding the Conversion of a Child.” Think about where your child is in terms of his or her understanding of God and salvation. If your child is ready, begin the discussion of what it means to be saved and how your child can place faith in Jesus Christ. If your child has already professed faith, review these key elements and engage your child in the discussion to discern his or her understanding.
8. From the resources under “Understanding and Explaining Their Faith,” pick one question to raise at unhurried mealtimes and engage your family in the discussion. Parents should do research before asking the question in order to guide the discussion. Continue this practice from time to time going forward.



Family Activities

9. Continue special outings with each child to continue discussing character and seeking an event or activity to illustrate an opportunity for growth.
10. Continue family readings as well as encouraging your child to listen and learn on his or her own. Find time to discuss what your child is reading and hearing.



Pray

1. Continue updating your prayer team and seek specific prayers as you learn more about your child’s needs.

{ Ongoing Intentionality }

If you've completed the suggested agenda for the first seven steps, you will have a good understanding of heart change, building character, the importance of teaching the Bible and spiritual disciplines. You have begun the process of helping your child better understand and explain his or her faith. You will also have begun regular time with your child to read and to talk about spiritual growth. We trust, this time has allowed you and your child to grow closer together as you both seek God leading in your lives. Now it is time to focus more and more on your child and his or her specific growth needs.

Pray

1. Continue praying with each of your children each day, asking God to guide your efforts and work in the hearts of your children.
-

Read & Study

2. Continue daily Bible study or readings from an age-appropriate Bible.
 3. Over time, go back and read the other *Aslan Academy* resources you may have missed. You will find further insight into each of the main topics.
 4. Look for interesting new resources highlighted in the *Dawn Treader News* to further deepen your understanding of discipling your children.
 5. If your child is at the stage to begin considering colleges, you and your child should read *How to Stay Christian in College* and discuss the key questions and concepts raised in the book.
-

Apply

6. Look for evidence of heart change in your child. Find those “teachable moments” to reinforce opportunities to help their heart change.
7. Continue introducing the spiritual disciplines in an age-appropriate manner. Guard against becoming legalistic in your approach. These disciplines are to help your child have a deeper, personal relationship with Jesus, not simply to “earn points” by doing works.
8. Continue working through the tough questions and build confidence in your child's ability to explain his or her faith. Use the apologetics questions from the *Dawn Treader News* to guide these discussions.
9. Update your assessment of your child's personality, heart, character and status of conversion. Continue to be intentional about encouraging positive growth and helping your child address weak areas.
10. If you have a child who is an adolescent or teen, develop a plan to use the resource *Building Character: A Bible Study for Adolescents and Teens*, listed under “Resources in Developing Character and Faith That Lasts.” If possible, work with your child and other parents to form a group of children who can go through this nine-week Bible study on their own. Pray about how this might be organized and for God's leading in bringing together the right people. As your child goes through the program, discuss with your child what he or she is learning and how he or she plans to make life changes in response. If it is not possible to organize a group of children to go through this study together, make plans to go through it with your child or together as a family.



Family Activities

11. At unhurried mealtimes, use the “Aslan Moments” (from the *Dawn Treader News*) to guide a discussion each week on key topics.
 12. Continue special outings with each child if possible, or as a group, to continue character discussions and provide memorable activities to illustrate learnings and reinforce growth.
 13. Continue family readings as well as encouraging your children to listen and learn on their own. Find time to discuss what they are reading and hearing.
-



Pray

1. Continue updating your prayer team and seek specific prayers as you learn more about your child’s needs.
-

Conclusion

The process of being an intentional parent never really ends. While the above plan offers one path to help you get started, every family is different. The important thing is to be intentional and begin to develop a specific approach for each child, taking into account the child’s uniqueness. Be sure to continue praying and to engage your prayer team, keeping them updated as you go along.

Encourage other families to join you in becoming intentional parents. Plan activities together. Encourage your pastor or church children’s director to hold regular *Aslan Academy Gatherings* to help other parents be better disciplers of their children.