

## Preparing

### What Does a Lead Discipler/Teacher Look Like?

The following definition of mature faith comes from *Effective Christian Education; a National Study of Protestant Congregations* (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1990).

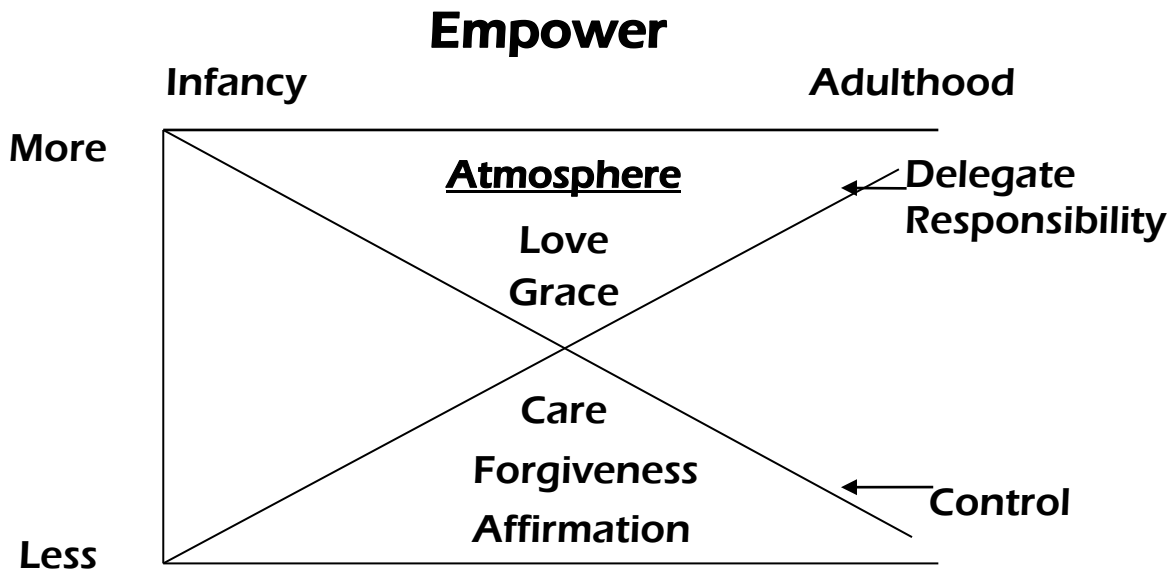
- A person of mature faith...
  - Trusts and believes
  - Experiences the fruits of faith
  - Integrates faith and life
  - Seeks spiritual growth
  - Holds life-affirming values
  - Has a genuine love and concern for children
  - Can initiate a ministry partnership with others
  - Can patiently and prayerfully guide other workers
  - Willingly accepts responsibility and initiates ministry

Even as we are discipling others it is important to recognize we are on a spiritual journey together. As children come to faith, God speaks to them. We can learn from children and partner with them in ministry, even as we are discipling them. In fact, the most affective discipling occurs as we journey through life together.

When people consider what a children's teacher/discipler looks like, they have often limited their thinking to what transpires in a classroom setting. But Christ taught as he walked through life, the settings were varied: from Synagogue and temple to streets; boats; hillsides; plains; rivers; and homes.

Christ's rabbi model is what we might call a mentor, teacher, and discipler. Jesus invested in the lives of his followers. I believe that we are called to do the same. A Children's Ministry teacher walks through life with those s/he is mentoring. They journey through GROW together. For some, this may mean discipling within the church building. For others it will mean serving outside the building. And for still others it may mean walking through life together.

## Discipling Toward Maturity



In the previous chart, note that when children are generally younger we exercise greater control in order to provide both security and foundational direction for faith and maturity. But as a child grows older, it is important that we offer more and more responsibility within the church body in order to help them mature toward a deep and abiding faith as they move into adulthood. This same model can also be used to help teachers mature. Luke 5:1-11 offers a plan to help teachers mature and grow as disciplers of Christ.

### Developing Disciples for Children's Ministry *Luke 5:1-11*

- Invite to observe (*Get in the boat*)
- Invite to assist (*Move into shallow water*)
- Invite to serve with you (*Move into deep water*)
- Invite them to serve while you assist/observe (*Let down your nets*)
- Encourage them to invite and mentor others (*Don't be afraid, from now on you will be catching people*)

### How Well Do You Know Your Team?

Plan to meet individually and as ministry teams to:

- Pray together.
- Have faith life conversations together.
- Engage in ongoing candid conversations together about faith journeys.

## **Plan for Spiritual GROWth Toward Maturity**

- God's Word: explore the Word together
- Relationships: guide and affirm and interact outside the context of the church facility
- Obedient Living: model, minister and serve together
- Worship: be mindful of and rejoice in God's continual presence together

### **Be There to Meet Their Needs**

- Contact regularly about how the ministry is going.
- Determine needs and develop a plan to address them.
- Offer training.
- Offer encouragement.