



3rd Grade Developmental Guide

This is the year that children begin to see clear differences between themselves and others, which can lead children to suppress their individuality. We need to help children see that they are uniquely made. This is the year that children's interests in multiple areas can peak, leading to increased chaos in scheduling.

Here are some of the developmental changes they are experiencing right now.

Physical

- Are growing permanent teeth
- Have interest in team sports
- Are recognizing the large differences in size and ability among them and their peers
- Are increasing in coordination as well as motor and non-locomotor movement
- Are increasing in attention span

Emotional

- Define themselves based on attributes or achievements
- Will test limits
- Have a strong desire to do things well
- Struggle to handle failure and criticism
- Can become stressed because of schoolwork
- Can bite off more than they can chew by overshooting abilities

Relational

- Place high importance on friendships and have very close friends
- Begin to display a sense of humor

- Become less dependent on parents and more dependent on peers
- Begin to care for and play with younger children
- Recognize when someone is being left out and take initiative to include them

Spiritual

- Move out of the egocentric stage to begin considering others
- Begin to distinguish what is important
- Can ask big spiritual questions and tend to have big ideas on their own
- Can rank themselves and others based on material possessions



An Invitation to RHYTHM

In talking with parents, the general theme of families with 3rd graders is that life just gets crazy this year. Children are beginning to discover talents and participate in more extracurricular activities than ever before leading to a rushed and, sometimes, chaotic life. We want to help families discover a rhythm that's doable so that activities aren't controlling their time, but that families are controlling their activities.

Kickstarter 1: RHYTHM with PRIORITIES

Anything that is important to us would be considered a priority. Your 3rd grader has innumerable opportunities in which they can engage. As parents, we can help them understand that developing a rhythm means saying yes to some things and no to some things.

On the provided sheet, help your child list his/her priorities. Again, this is a list of things that are very important to him/her and on which he/she spends significant amounts of time.

In the Bible, Nehemiah returns to his hometown of Jerusalem to rebuild the broken down walls. This becomes Nehemiah's top priority and one he is very passionate about working on until it is completed. Read Nehemiah 6:1-4

to see how Nehemiah dealt with the distraction of people:

Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, the Arab, heard about what I had done. So did the rest of our enemies. All of them heard I had rebuilt the wall. In fact, they heard there weren't any gaps left in it. But up to that time I hadn't put up the gates at the main entrances to the city.

Sanballat and Geshem sent me a message. They said, "Come. Let's talk with one another. Let's meet in one of the villages on the flatlands of Ono."

But they were planning to harm me. So I sent messengers to them with my answer. I replied, "I'm working on a huge project. So I can't get away. Why should the work stop while I leave it? Why should I go down and talk with you?"

They sent me the same message four times. And I gave them the same answer each time.

Nehemiah said NO to other things in order to finish his priorities and do what he thought was right.

Look together through your child's list of priorities. Are there things that he/she needs to begin saying no to in order to focus more on other priorities. Have an honest conversation about what is most important, all the things that are pulling for time, and what seems most important. Figuring out what to say no to is something that our



children will have to do ALL of their lives. Maybe there isn't a need to say NO yet, but have an honest discussion with your child helping them understand that time will come.

Kickstarter 2: RHYTHM with GOD TIME

Often we allow all the other things in our life to interfere with God time. This Kickstarter is designed to help your child figure out a rhythm for God time; when, where and how they'll spend time with God. This is something adults struggle with as well. It's OK to be honest with your child about your current rhythm with God time and if that is/isn't a struggle for you.

Why do we need to have consistent God time? Jesus, Himself, made sure to carve out time to talk with God. Read Mark 1:3-5

It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where he could be alone. There he prayed.

Take some time to think through your family's weekly schedule. Help your child figure out the best time of day when they can carve out some time to pray and read their Bible. Is it in the morning before school, as soon as they get home from school, after dinner, before bed? Land on a specific time during the day that he/she can have God time.

Make sure they have a plan of what to read (1 chapter/story a day starting in John, a devotional guide), a Bible, and know to spend time in prayer (love God, thank God, ask God). See the resource "Helping Your Child Develop a God Time" for more guidance.

This will begin a habit that will lead them to pursue a real relationship with God. Make sure to consistently check in with your child to see how their God time is going. If they forget to do it, evaluate priorities and figure out what is taking precedent over God time. This will be an ongoing conversation with your child, but one that is worth the intentionality.

Kickstarter 3-RHYTHM with REST

With the craziness of life, the one thing that often gets pushed away is time to REST. We were made for much more than constant entertainment. We were created for peace which can be nearly impossible with the demands of life. Look at how God took a rest in Genesis 2:1-3

So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day he rested from all of his work. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. He rested on it. After he had created everything, he rested from all of the work he



had done.

God gave His absolute best then rested when done. Ask your child, when do you rest? Make sure to include times when they're actually sleeping as well, since we know many kids don't get enough sleep (need 10-11 hours per night). When do they have down time, time to reflect and think about the day, the week?

Look at the created weekly calendar. Take the time to fill this out together. Most weeks will be similar for children. They have school on certain days, they have after school activities on specific days, write in where God time fits within each day, include chores/responsibilities. Then write down when in the week your child will have rest. When will they be UNPLUGGED in order to think through their week to evaluate like God did, WAS IT GOOD?

This small calendar will help kids with a visual for expectations with his/her time. You can hang it in his/her bedroom, tape it inside their closet door, etc. as a frame of reference on a week to week basis.

Rhythm and Time

At the conclusion of your 3 family times, commemorate the commitment to rhythm with a gift related to time. This can be a new watch, a family heirloom watch, an hourglass/sand timer, a sports themed/animal themed calendar, etc. Take into consideration your child's level of responsibility. You may not want to spend a large amount on a watch if your child may lose it or break it.

Present the gift to your child during a special time, possibly at the dinner table at home one evening. Once you've completed the Kickstarters, schedule the special time of celebration. If the gift is a family heirloom and there's a story to share or a relative to present the gift, even better. Use the script below as a guide during the presentation, or use it as a reference in writing a note inside the gift.

We've spent some time looking at what it means for your life to have RHYTHM with your priorities, your time with God, and with rest. We've learned it's OK to say no in order to say yes to things that are most important to us. We've figured out a plan for a consistent time to spend with God, and scheduled time to rest each week. All of us have a limited amount of time each day, and we want to use each minute to its fullest. I believe you are ready to take on this rhythm we've discussed and honor God with how you spend your time. We want you to have this gift. Every time you look at it we hope you'll remember that time is a gift from God, and we all get to choose how we spend it.

Helping your child develop a God time

Explain to your child that God time is simply time between them and God. During God time you can take time to read the Bible, pray, and listen to music.

The first step is determining a TIME and PLACE. Good places to choose from would be his/her bedroom, kitchen table, wherever they do their homework, etc. Then figure out a time. Are they an early riser? Do it in the morning. Right after school is out or after homework, while you're cooking dinner, or right before bed are all good options.

Next, help your child know what to do during his/her God time. Make sure they have a good translation of the Bible to read (NirV, NIV, ICB, The Message, etc.). You can direct your child to read a story each day and then write down in a journal what they read/what it meant. Starting in the New Testament in Matthew is a good start. There are also many devotional guides for young children at your local Christian bookstore.

Maybe your child is unsure how to pray, and it's possible you've never talked with them about HOW to pray. Prayer is simply talking and listening to God. They can pray by first thanking God, then telling God how much they love Him, and end with asking God for needs.

In order to make this most successful, it'd be best for you to do this with them for about a week. Help them think about what they're reading. Pray first, then let them pray. This



is your chance to model for them how to have a God time. Once your child seems to understand, let them initiate this on their own. Remember to check in with them weekly to see how their God time is going. Ask them what they are learning about God, Jesus or the Bible.

Having a consistent God time is something with which most believers struggle. This is your opportunity to make sure your child is set up for success, that he/she knows the importance of a God time, and that it becomes a very natural rhythm in his/her everyday life.



3rd Grade Video Scripts - Invitation to Rhythm

By the time our children enter 3rd grade most parents feel like they run a part time taxi service to get everyone where they need to be, when they need to be there. School plays, soccer practice, church activities, sleepovers, birthday parties, basketball practice, dance, piano lessons, and an occasional trip to the doctor send our family calendars into a chaotic frenzy. As parents, we end the day and wonder how we made it through...but have you ever stopped to wonder what your child is feeling? Do you find yourself having to constantly push them to keep up? Are they pushing back on you because of it? How can we set our kids up to discover a better rhythm to life?

This year, we are inviting your child to the 3rd grade Family Experience called, "Invitation to Rhythm." In 3rd grade kids begin to be pulled in many different directions, so we are hoping to help them learn to manage a great gift God has given them...time. The truth is that time is a limited resource. There is only so much of it, and we are only given a certain amount of days to live life. Every moment truly does matter, and making the most of it means we have to discover a rhythm that maximizes the time we're given.

We will start this process by looking at 3 Kick-starters that will help you build a foundation for you to begin this year's Family Experience. In these Kick-starter discussions, you will process the idea of making priorities, carving out time to spend with God, and

what it means to actually rest. These Kick-starters are expounded upon in our Kick-starter Guide. They will have questions and activities for you to do with your child that set up the Family Experience Ceremony.

When you look at your child's weekly schedule, it's hard to imagine how to begin to help them understand rhythm. All of us, as parents, understand how hard it is for ourselves to maintain it! However, finding a balanced rhythm in life is a tension to manage, not a problem to solve. Relax...this is a year you will be able to give your child some wisdom that is found in the Bible and will stick with them through life. They will always remember you helped them figure this out. That is the influence you have as a parent.

Your next step is the Family Experience ceremony; it involves presenting your child with a watch, calendar, clock, or planner. You will find instructions for this experience in the Parent Planning Guide. It all depends on what you want to do. The watch could be a new cool high tech gadget or a family heirloom passed down from a grandparent. The calendar could be one you buy new each year that always is a surprise at Christmas.

No matter what you give them, this will be a ceremony where you affirm your child in their search for a healthy rhythm.