

Resource Contacts:

Lisa Simmons, WVBC Director of Discipleship Ministries, Associate of Mission Support, Lsimmons@wvbc.org

Rob Ely, WVBC Director of Student Ministries, ely@wvbc.org

Frank Miller, WVBC Director of Operations at Parchment Valley Conference Center, miller@wvbc.org

Koreen Villers, WVBC Director of Children's Ministries, villers@wvbc.org

Jerry Losh, WVBC Director of Senior Adults, jerry@fbcoh.com

2017

Take it Personally Devotional Resources

Get your devotional life **ready for 2017** by deciding on devotional materials now! Whether you enjoy a book, online reading or an app for your phone, there are ways to improve your personal devotional life. Below are just a few suggestions:

For Adults

Our Daily Bread – www.odb.org Available in booklet form for many years, Our Daily Bread now can be read online. The site includes Bible in a Year reading and daily devotions.

Bible Gateway – www.biblegateway.com/devotionals Includes an extensive list of devotion sites from which to choose. Starter suggestion – 40 Days with Dietrich Bonhoffer

Oswald Chambers –www. utmost.org This is a classic devotion guide that has been used by many.

Upper Room – www.upperroom.org Like Our Daily Bread this devotion guide has been used for years and continues to challenge and touch lives. Now you can read it online.

Christianity. Com/devotionals – A list of devotionals from favorite authors.

For Youth

(EXTRA)Ordinary - 365 ordinary moments with an anything but ordinary God, by Stephen Ingram.

For Kids

Don't just let them download games! There are devotionals for kids online too!

Compassion - Compassion.com – Search for Compassion Explorer magazine and see the devotional available for kids from 1-5 grade.

Keys for Kids – Keysforkids.org – Great stories and important issues are discussed in these kid friendly devotions. Get them online, by email and also in Spanish.

If you have some suggestions, share them with us! Send them to Lisa Simmons, Director of Discipleship Ministries, Lsimmons@wvbc.org.

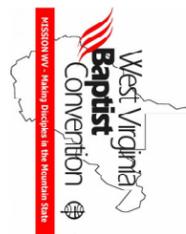
DISCIPLESHIP NOW! SEPTEMBER 2016

For more information, contact the office of the West Virginia Baptist Convention
PO Box 1019
Parkersburg, West Virginia 26102
Phone: 304-422-6449 or 800-879-9822

Lisa Simmons, Director of Discipleship/Associate of Mission Support
Lsimmons@wvbc.org, 304-273-9693

Valma Adams, Administrative Assistant for Discipleship Commission
adams@wvbc.org

Contact Valma at adams@wvbc.org if you do not want to receive this mailing in the future or if there is someone else in your church who would benefit by receiving it.



West Virginia Baptist Convention
PO Box 1019
Parkersburg, WV 26102

Non Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Parkersburg, WV
Permit No. 36



SEPTEMBER 2016

DISCIPLESHIP NOW is a periodic resource provided for local churches from the office of Discipleship Ministries.

This issue:

- ◆ Children
- ◆ Parchment Valley
- ◆ Student Ministries
- ◆ Devotional Resources
- ◆ Discipleship Event



There's an App for That!
The West Virginia Baptist Convention App is available for Android and Apple products. Download yours today!

Find it on the Web @

- West Virginia Baptist Convention - www.wvbc.org
- American Baptist Churches USA - www.abc-usa.org
- www.internationalministries.org
- American Baptist Home Mission Society - www.abhms.org
- www.judsonpress.com



Please, Take it Personally!

We have all said it, heard it and thought it. A thought, opinion, or suggestion is tossed out and the speaker says "Oh, don't take it personally!" or "It's just business, don't take it personally." Usually we already have.

What does it mean to take something personally? It means that the comment or action has touched us emotionally, whether for good or bad. The music and movie businesses thrive when the listener or viewer "takes it personally". Elections are won and lost because people take it personally. Relationships are strengthened or eroded when people take it personally.

As followers of Jesus we are instructed to take personally the words, actions and attitudes that He gives us through the Bible. Yes, following Jesus is personal and should remain so throughout our time on earth. Taking lessons, and commands the opportunity to fortify and be empowered in personally and seriously the of Jesus allows each person their relationship with Him their daily lives.



Recently I read a poster know you personally, personally." The Bible personally (Psalms 139:13), whether we acknowledge Him or not. The decision to become a follower of Jesus is an act of acknowledgement not only of our need for a Savior, but our need to be in relationship with Him. Yes, take it personally!

How personally are **you** taking the instruction and commands of Jesus? Try this exercise in the coming days and weeks: Every time you read a scripture passage, hear a sermon or take part in a Bible study, substitute **your name** in place of the pronoun's use. Make the passage personal and then think about what it says or means to you personally. I believe you will be challenged and blessed.

Lisa G. Simmons
Director of Discipleship Ministries

Our mission is to empower local churches to be Christ honoring communities of faith, and to help them fulfill their mission by enabling them to do together what they cannot do alone.

Take Along Barnabas Bear



This idea came from [Ministry to Children \(ministrytochildren.com\)](http://Ministry to Children (ministrytochildren.com)), a FREE website to help with children's ministry in the local church. It is great and is adaptable for any family.

Here is a great way to encourage family discipleship while traveling on vacation, to sporting events, dance, choir or band competitions or to holiday events. It's a fun approach to stay connected with children. If you are looking for creative family ministry ideas, then this post is for you – all this from one helpful little teddy bear.

Barnabas Bear travels along with families to their destinations. He is any old bear with a mini-backpack attached. In the backpack, a notebook is included to document his adventures in photographs and journal entries. Whenever a child in your ministry leaves for vacation, have them take Barnabas with them. They will love the opportunity to have a friend on the road and will eagerly anticipate sharing about the trip when they return.

Not only do the kids get a kick out of Barnabas, but surprisingly parents do too! Families will brainstorm the funniest things to do with him. Our Barnabas has turned into quite the world traveler. His destinations have included Brazil with a mission team, Florida, Indiana, South Dakota, Rhode Island, and Niagara Falls. He has been snapped mini golfing, life guarding, cheering on teams, camping, and attending church in other locations. A map can even be used to track his whereabouts for a bulletin board entitled, "Where in the World is Barnabas Bear?"

How To Start Barnabas Bear On His Adventures

1. Find a bear and name him Barnabas (or any name of your choosing). You may need more than one!. If you want to get fancy, make one at a [Build a Bear Workshop](#) and dress him in cool attire.
2. Attach a small bag to his back. In the bag, include a notebook with directions, some gospel tracts, and scripture memory cards. Since children tend to spend a lot of time in the car traveling, encourage them to memorize verses.
3. The directions can read: Hi! My name is Barnabas. My name means "son of encouragement." My goal is to encourage families by having them spend time together. Please take me with you on your travels whether you take a vacation or go out to the park with ice cream. Bring your camera to take a picture of me with your family. Post the photo in the notebook with an explanation of what we did when we were together. Be as creative as you would like and have fun!
4. Include pictures and journal entries from yourself to provide an example.
5. Introduce Barnabas to the children in your ministry. Pray for safe travels, good family times, and for God to be honored in the home and on the road.

You have kids who are shy and others who are outgoing. You have kids who know their Bible and others who have never opened it. You have kids who are confident and others who are unsure. You have kids who like to lead and others who like to follow. You have kids who want to be there and others who would rather be anywhere else but at church. How can you better connect with each of them since they are all different? There are five things that we can learn from Jesus about how to build relationships with the children in our ministries. These five things apply to all kids no matter their personality.



DON'T PLAY FAVORITES

There are some kids in our ministry who are difficult and it's hard to talk with them, much less try to build a relationship and keep them coming back to church. But Jesus did not play favorites. Look at the twelve disciples. They were misfits, doubters, teacher's pets, judgers, shy ones, greedy ones, confident ones, and scared ones. They are all different yet each one of them is special and important to Jesus. No one is supposed to be left out or not included.



BE PRESENT

Jesus was committed to loving everyone, teaching them, and leading them. He was with the people. He wasn't hiding away in a house by himself. He was out there. He was present with others. Kids in our ministry need to see adults who are consistent and there for them. When an adult shows up each week, talks with them, shows them compassion, and teaches them about Jesus, they begin to trust that person.



BE BOLD

To teach kids about Jesus we must not be afraid. We need to share our faith openly. We must tell them about our relationship with Jesus. Share your faith with boldness. Tell them stories of how Jesus has helped out, how Jesus has been with you, how Jesus has loved you, and how you have shown our love to Jesus. Children love to hear stories of your faith. Not only will it help them grow in their faith, but it will help you develop a bond with the children in your ministry.



LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH

Jesus was who He said He was. He didn't act one way with the disciples and another way with someone else. He didn't speak fluffy words about God just to get attention and have people listen. He lived out the words He spoke. He was the real deal. It's one thing to share openly about your faith with words, but it's another to actually live it out. Kids need to see you act the way you talk.



OFFER AN INVITATION

If we look at Scripture, we see that Jesus offered invitations to many people: an invitation to follow Him (Matthew 4:19), an invitation to come and see (John 1:3), an invitation to lay down our burdens and rest (Matthew 11:28), an invitation for peace (John 14:27) as well as many others. Jesus was all about inviting others and we need to follow His example.

If you work hard at the first four keys to building relationship with the kids in our ministries, then this fifth key will come automatically. If we don't play favorites, if we are present and committed, if we are bold and speak openly about Jesus, and if we live out our faith, then the invitation for kids to accept Jesus, to come back to church every Sunday, and to grow in their faith will come naturally. The example we set will speak loudly in our kids and they will want to "come and see" who Jesus is and will want to follow Him and accept everything about Him. You hold the keys to helping them unlock their faith and live a life sold out for Jesus.

(Kidzmatter Magazine September/October 2016)

STUDENT MINISTRIES

I love the story of the Apostle Paul. Actually since I began reading the Bible, Paul's writings have been my favorite. He grabbed my attention with Philippians 3:12-14 before I was a follower of Christ.

“12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **13** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

I began to look at being a follower of Christ personally. Playing sports my entire life I understood goals. But goals for Jesus was a new concept - a new direction for life and it was amazing.

Studying the life of Paul, it is easy to see how he “took it personally.” Acts 17 is just one instance where his personal story is spoken and his interaction with the people is personal. Walking the streets of Athens, he noticed an altar to an “unknown God”. It would have been easy, much like us today to ignore the idols in their lives. Actually today we ignore the idols in our own lives, but Paul didn't. He spoke up! He challenged their ignorance. Paul took the opportunity to share God's story. Acts 17 ends with these verses, **“32** When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” **33** At that, Paul left the Council. **34** Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.”

Paul had a personal story that he was willing to share. Paul knew the story of God and shared with people. How about your personal story? If we are going to “take it personally”, then our personal story has to be told. It has to be shared with family, friends, strangers to give God the glory. Writing this article reminds me of God's rescue in my life - the people, places and events that contributed to the call God has given me. We all should take it personally that God cares and challenges us to share what He has done in our lives. Share your story today and prayerfully someone will “take it personally” and seek our incredible God!

*In Christ,
Rob Ely
Director of Student Ministries*

PARCHMENT VALLEY - BROTHERS' KEEPER



If you search the dictionary for the meaning of the word “disciple”, it gives the definition as “one who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another or someone who believes and helps to spread the doctrine of another.” Though we often think of that term only to apply to the twelve chosen men who followed Jesus, a disciple can be many things, and most of the illustrations for this word pertain to people. I would like to “think outside the box” for a moment and go down another trail as an example of discipleship.

Of course, the trail I shall embark upon is a conference center commonly known throughout West Virginia as simply Parchment Valley – certainly not a human being, but a disciple nonetheless. The slogan for Parchment Valley is “a place where lives are changed” and we have numerous examples of how that phrase applies to many lives changed here at Parchment Valley.

While the conference center alone does nothing to spread the Gospel message, the atmosphere, the personnel, the beauty, and the peaceful serenity all aid in the discipleship of Parchment Valley Conference Center. We host many church groups and organizations; we are working in a multitude of areas to aid and assist our nation's veterans in finding peace within their lives; we sponsor Brothers' Keepers each year and spread the Gospel through help and compassion for others, all the while training young disciples for future service; and we daily interact with both old and new friends, a joyous example of discipleship.

We invite you to come and experience Parchment Valley Conference Center for yourself – see what lies within these mountains. Perhaps you, too, will be a person whose life is changed. Bring a lawn chair, bring a blanket or utilize one of the rocking chairs on the porch of the administration building and just “sit a spell” and feel the tension of everyday life dissipate. There's no finer place to draw closer to God.

*Blessed,
Frank R. Miller
Director of Operations
miller@wvbc.org
304-372-3675*

Christmas Letter Ornament

A great way to celebrate loved ones is to make Christmas Letter ornaments. The Christmas letter is a handwritten note placed inside a decorated and personalized small box hung on the Christmas tree. The letter can include positive words and comments, appreciation, wishes, desires and prayers for the individual for the coming year. On Christmas morning each person opens their box and receives a “gift” of love.

Items needed:

- Small paper box for each person. (These can be purchased at craft stores, dollar stores or you can recycle boxes from food items or jewelry purchases)
- Decorative notions (markers, glitter, wrapping paper, small flowers, stickers, etc)
- Glue
- Ribbon
- Christmas tree hooks

Boxes can be decorated by each individual. Be creative! Be sure to put the name in a prominent place on the box and be sure the box will open. Attach a hook and place on the tree. Letters should be placed in the box by Christmas morning.

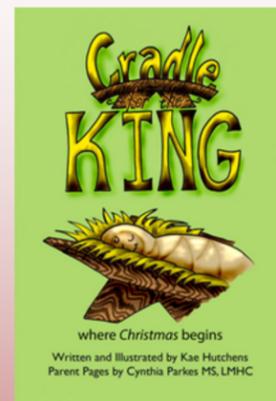


Kingdom Fest: Kids won't just be collecting candy – they'll be learning about Jesus! They'll love the exciting games and activities, parents will love the safe and fun environment—and you'll love seeing kids learn more about Jesus.

These 1- to 2-hour events are the perfect outreach program for any size church or community. With two fun themes to choose from, use as a fall kick-off, a Halloween alternative, a Harvest festival—any time you want a special event for kids of

all ages and their families.

And...**Brave Cave** is the perfect follow-up to Group's Easy VBS: *Cave Quest!* But also works great after *any* VBS.



Cradle for the King is an uplifting tradition that strengthens the family bond, teaches Christian values, and underscores the meaning of Christmas. Through the book included in the set, children witness a family who joyfully exhibits the spiritual gifts in Galatians 5:22-23, by using positive reinforcement and connection during the season and acknowledging your children's good deeds, you turn a stressful time into a more powerful and blessed occasion.

Review: We can't wait to put our *Cradle for the King* out as soon as the dishes are cleaned from Thanksgiving dinner! Children benefit greatly from having visual reminders, and that's exactly what *Cradle for the King* is. It's a

reminder that Christmas is on the way and that it's a celebration of Jesus' birth. It's also a reminder to all family members to show love to others in a tangible way. Starting on Thanksgiving each time a family member is caught in an act of love they are told to add a yellow yarn string of hay to the manger. Jesus came to earth out of the greatest act of love, so how appropriate for us to prepare a soft bed out of our love acts for the baby Jesus doll to be added on Christmas morning. Get one for your family [today](#)or better yet, for all the families in your ministry.

(Sept/Oct. 2016 Kidzmatter Magazine)

We want to take a road trip.



We want to visit YOU!

In 2017 the Discipleship Ministries commission of the West Virginia Baptist Convention is sponsoring events around our state titled “[Road Trippin' for Discipleship](#)”. The focus is to provide customized discipleship training and enrichment opportunities in several areas throughout the state so more people can take advantage of quality training and useful information concerning personal discipleship, corporate discipleship, and discipleship for youth and children.

The “road trip” will be to various parts of the state. A church will be deemed the “hub” church and churches in the area will be invited to attend the meetings. The events are “customized” in that there will be several modules to choose from and area coordinators can choose what would be best for their area.

How can you be involved now?

- Check with your pastor and see if your church can serve as a “hub”. If interested please contact Lisa Simmons, Director of Discipleship Ministries, Lsimmons@wvbc.org or 304-273-9693
- Share what helps your church needs in the area of discipleship. Contact Lisa Simmons at the above contact information.
- Intentionally look for more information on this program. More information will be available in the next West Virginia Baptist, in the Pastor's mailing and also in the next Discipleship Now!
- Tell others! Plan for your church to have a group come to the meetings. It WILL be worth your time. Talk about it, put up posters (coming soon), put it in the bulletin and most importantly, ASK others to join you.

Gas up the car or van, pack your snacks, get out your favorite CD, put on your sunglasses, get the GPS/Map and join us!