

KID CHALLENGE
THE FORWARD FOUR & THE DISCIPLE
FOUR

A Reflection on Children's Ministry Principles & Leader's Guide

INTRODUCTION: A PATHWAY CHILDREN CAN LIVE

The Forward Four is a simple but powerful way for children to embody the mission and vision of Kid Challenge Children's Ministries. It becomes a spiritual pathway they live out through their actions:

Save me.

Teach me.

Guide me.

Use me.

Children recite the Forward Four at the beginning and end of every service—Sunday, Wednesday, Bible study, or class. But more importantly, they learn to *live* it. Their actions become the evidence of their spiritual advancement.

This idea was birthed in prayer. A few weeks ago, while preparing to share the ministry vision with the children, the Lord impressed these four words on our hearts. Later, He led us to **John chapter 6**—the story of the lad with the loaves and fishes—as a perfect illustration of the Forward Four. What God revealed through that passage has reshaped the way we see children and the purpose already resting on their lives.

THE LAD IN JOHN 6: PURPOSE ON A CHILD

Crowds were coming to Jesus, hungry and tired. Jesus, full of compassion, turned to Philip—the “calculator,” the one who always measured the natural—and said, “Let’s feed these people.”

Philip immediately thought in numbers:

A year’s wages wouldn’t be enough.

We don’t have the resources.

This is impossible.

But Scripture says something remarkable:

Jesus already knew what He was going to do.

This truth is foundational in children's ministry. When we see children walk into our classrooms, onto our buses, or into our altars, we must let God stretch our faith. We must see them the way Jesus sees them—not by their behavior, background, or limitations, but by the purpose already placed on them.

From the moment that little boy woke up that morning, **purpose was on him**. The Forward Four was already on him—he just didn't know it yet.

His lunch tells us much about his life:

- Two tiny fish — thumb-sized
- Five barley cakes — poor man's bread
- A homemade fishing rod
- A boy likely helping his family survive

Yet Jesus chose *him*.

Jesus planned to use *his* small offering.

Jesus saw purpose where others saw poverty.

**THE BOY'S JOURNEY: FROM DISTANCE
TO DESTINY**

The boy finishes fishing. He heads home with his tiny catch. But he hears a crowd. He hears Jesus. Something in him says, *I want to get closer.*

And Scripture says:

Andrew found him.

Andrew—whose name means *manly*—was the first children’s evangelist in my book. It takes real men to step into children’s ministry. It takes men of courage, compassion, and calling to find the children God wants to use.

Andrew brings the boy to Jesus.

The boy stands there—poor, unnoticed, unnamed—but chosen.

Jesus looks at him as if to say:

“I know who you are. I planned this. You’re the hero today.”

Jesus takes the lunch, blesses it, breaks it, and multiplies it. The boy watches the miracle unfold from the front row. His small offering becomes a supernatural supply. Five thousand are fed. Twelve baskets overflow.

A poor boy with a tiny lunch becomes a vessel of a massive miracle.

THE FORWARD FOUR IN THE STORY

He hears of the Savior → “Save me.”

He draws close to Jesus → “Teach me.”

Andrew brings him forward → “Guide me.”

Jesus uses his lunch → “Use me.”

This is discipleship in childlike form.

This is spiritual advancement made simple.

THE POWER OF PRAYER IN CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

Every Sunday, our team prays one hour before the children arrive. We weep, intercede, speak in tongues, and pray for one another. We go to the altar *before* the kids ever step foot in the room. This prepares the atmosphere for miracles.

And just like John 6, God orchestrates moments we could never plan.

That morning, the first child to walk in was Julian—a young lad dressed like a missionary, boots and

all, with a pouch strapped to his side. The Lord whispered to me, *There's your lad.*

He didn't know he was walking into a divine appointment.

I asked him if he would help with the lesson. He agreed humbly. When the moment came, I reached into his pouch—just like Jesus reached into the lad's—and the children saw the story come alive through one of their own peers.

Faith ignited in the room.

Purpose awakened.

The Forward Four became real.

THE DISCIPLE FOUR

Later, during a Bible study on following Jesus, the Lord gave a second progression—a companion to the Forward Four. I told the children:

Follow Jesus

to get close to Jesus,

to become like Jesus,

to do what He does.

This became the **Disciple Four**, helping children embody:

- **Salvation**
- **Doctrine**
- **Devotion**
- **Ministry**

Together, the Forward Four and the Disciple Four form a spiritual pathway children can remember, recite, and live out.

A FINAL REVELATION: THE BREAD AND THE FISH

After the miracle, Scripture says twelve baskets of **bread** were left over—but no fish.

A minister once told me:

- The **fish** represent the Old Testament
- The **bread** represents the New

Jesus is the Bread of Life.

His body was broken for us.

The New Testament was established through His death.

And now He commands:

“Go make disciples.”

This is our calling.

This is our mission.

This is why the Forward Four and the Disciple Four matter.

Let them not only be recitations for the children—but convictions in us.

PART TWO: LEADER'S GUIDE

1. PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

Leader Objective

Equip volunteers to understand, teach, and model the Forward Four and the Disciple Four so children can embody a simple, memorable pathway of discipleship.

What Leaders Should Walk Away With

- A clear understanding of both recitations
- Confidence in teaching John 6
- A renewed vision for seeing purpose in every child
- Practical steps for preparing spiritually
- Tools for guiding children into salvation, doctrine, devotion, and ministry

2. THE FORWARD FOUR

The Recitation

Save me.

Teach me.

Guide me.

Use me.

Leader Insight

The Forward Four is not just a chant — it's a spiritual posture.

3. SCRIPTURE FOUNDATION: JOHN 6

Key Leader Points

- Jesus already knew what He was going to do
- The boy's offering was small, but his purpose was big
- Andrew represents strong men in ministry
- The boy moved from distance → closeness → obedience → usefulness

4. CONNECTING JOHN 6 TO THE FORWARD FOUR

Forward Four	Story Connection	Leader Emphasis
Save me	He hears of Jesus	Kids must hear the gospel
Teach me	He draws close	Kids need consistent teaching
Guide me	Andrew brings him	Leaders guide kids
Use me	Jesus multiplies his lunch	Kids can be used now

5. THE POWER OF PRAYER BEFORE MINISTRY

Leader Practice

Before any child arrives:

- Go to the altar
- Pray in unity
- Intercede for the children
- Pray for one another

Leader Reminder

“The altar begins when the first child walks in.”

6. THE DISCIPLE FOUR

The Recitation

Follow Jesus

Get close to Jesus

Become like Jesus

Do what He does

What It Builds in Kids

- Salvation
- Doctrine
- Devotion
- Ministry

7. TEACHING FLOW FOR LEADERS

1. Introduce the Forward Four
2. Tell the story of the lad
3. Connect the story to the Forward Four
4. Introduce the Disciple Four
5. Application moment

6. Ministry moment

8. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For Younger Kids

- What did the little boy bring to Jesus?
- Why did Jesus choose him?

For Older Kids

- Why does Jesus use small things?
- How can you get closer to Jesus this week?

For Volunteers

- How can we better “find the lad” in our ministry?

9. PRACTICAL MINISTRY ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly

- Pray the Forward Four

- Speak purpose over a child

Monthly

- Share a testimony
- Teach a devotional

Seasonally

- Host a Forward Four Sunday
- Celebrate spiritual growth

10. LEADER REMINDERS

- Every child has purpose
- Jesus already knows what He will do
- Small offerings become big miracles
- We are Andrews — we bring children to Jesus

11. CLOSING CHARGE TO LEADERS

Let the Forward Four be in you.

Let the Disciple Four be in you.

Let your life preach what your mouth teaches.

