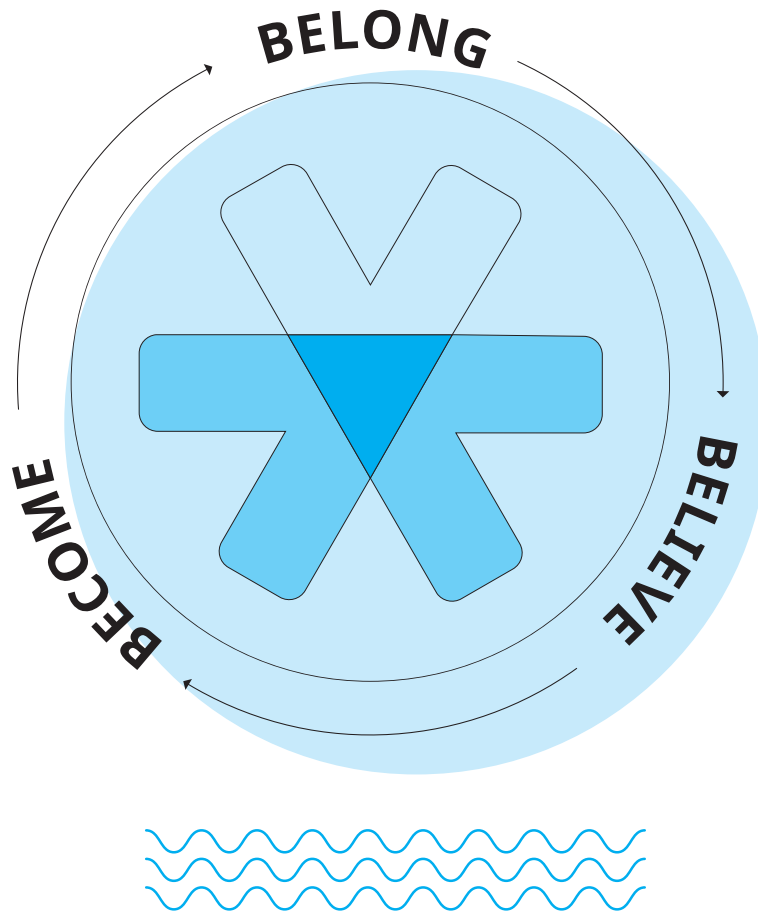


Belong, Believe, Become in Light of the Gospel

THE GOSPEL TOOLKIT

Awana®



We know child discipleship is incredibly important; but in a world of varying contexts, not to mention the unique background and personality of each child in our care, how can we effectively gauge the success our ministry is having in building up resilient disciples? Despite changing environments and circumstances, we have found that the presence of three components (Belong, Believe and Become) has proved to be a solid foundation for child discipleship and spiritual resilience, even in difficult circumstances. These three components are clearly seen and firmly rooted in the truth of the Gospel. The Gospel is the incredible story God has been telling and continues to tell throughout history, from **creation** to **the fall**, and from **redemption** to **restoration**.



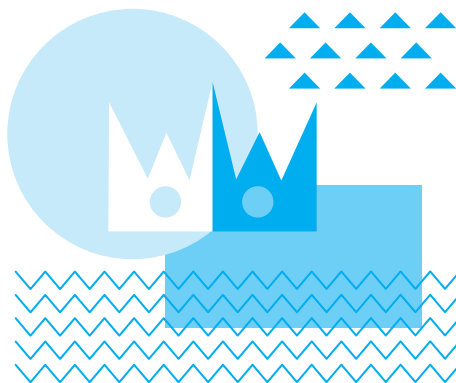
Including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:6)

As a child is discipled, it is so important they know they belong to God and to a body of believers. In **creation**, we see God made man and woman in the very beginning to have perfect fellowship with Him in a perfect world. When that perfect world **fell** into sin because of Adam's disobedience, God sent His Son, Jesus, to literally be with us and provide a way to **redemption**. Romans 5:19 tells us: *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

It is so powerful for children to know and consistently be reminded that despite our sinfulness, those who believe in Jesus no longer belong to sin, but now belong to Jesus. We can be confident that, one day, He is coming back again and will **restore** all things, including the fellowship we have with each other and with Him.

Through belonging to Jesus, we now know how to love each other and build a strong community in which people know they belong.

This is what Jesus prayed for believers in *John 17:23*: "I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me." He prayed believers would be united together; because through that unity, through them belonging to each other, the world would know the love of Christ. This is a belonging everyone is welcomed into; and we can be supremely confident this is true for children. For in Matthew 19:14, Jesus called: "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."





For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

Resilient: Child Discipleship and the Fearless Future of the Church identifies, "The core outcome of belief is to align and identify oneself with Christ." It is through belief in Jesus that we then belong to Him and are given the freedom and power to become who God created us to be.

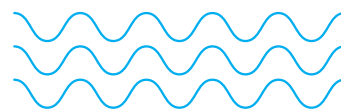
In Mark 10:17-27, Jesus was approached by a rich young man who addressed Him as "good teacher." The man told Jesus how he has kept all of the commandments since his youth. Jesus told the man that he lacked one thing: he must go and sell everything he has and give to the poor and then, to come and follow Him. Jesus wasn't giving the man a task to do in order to earn salvation, He said this in order to reveal the man's heart and what he most deeply valued. The man addressed Jesus as a good teacher; but when he left unwilling to give up what he had to follow Jesus, it was clear he did not believe Jesus was Lord.



Adam and Eve were **created** in God's image, but they chose to believe in themselves rather than in God. This resulted in **the fall**, breaking the relationship between God and man. But because of Jesus, we can have **redemption** through believing in Him. Belief in Jesus isn't simply about believing He exists or even that He gave really good life advice, but believing that Jesus is the promised Redeemer and the only way to have a **restored** relationship with God. It is a decision every person must make, not based on what everyone else says about Jesus, but deciding for themselves who He is — just as Jesus asked Peter in Matthew 16: "But who do you say that I am?"



Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

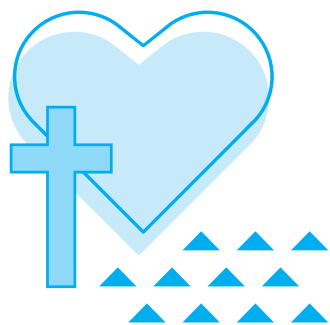


When a child believes in Jesus, they now have the freedom and power to become more like Him through the working of the Holy Spirit. With the knowledge that they belong to Jesus, they have the confidence to pursue a deeper relationship with God out of love for Him, rather than feeling like they have to continually “earn their keep” as His child.

People were originally **created** in a perfect relationship with God; but because the world **fell** into sin, our relationship with God is broken. On our own, we are unable to live the purpose God has given us and become what He has made us to be. But thankfully, when someone believes in Jesus and receives the **redemption** He offers, they receive the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them to become more like Him. Scripture makes it clear that every believer is in the process of becoming and has been given the incredible opportunity to participate in the divine work the Lord is doing all over the world. 2 Corinthians 3:18 reminds us where the ability to become originates:

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord Who is the Spirit.

Through trust and dependence on the work of the Spirit and bold obedience to the Lord in the face of both inward and outward trials, we are transformed more and more into His image until one day we are fully **restored** with the new heaven and earth.



The Gospel is the story God has been telling since the beginning of the world, and we can see the powerful thread of belonging, believing and becoming — from creation to the fall, and from redemption to restoration. Child discipleship cannot be done well without the Gospel always at the forefront of what we do. As we lead our group of kids, may we always remember to remind them that they belong to Jesus and to a family of believers, that they can believe in Him and His Word applies to their lives, and that through Jesus they can become all they were created to be and help others know Him.