PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE

How to Change Your Child’s Attitude, Behavior & Character in 5 Days

A Six-Session Study

Dr. Kevin Leman
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How to Use
This Participant’s Guide

Here’s the most important thing you need to know: this is your participant’s guide. That means you can use it in any way that works best for you and your group. Every individual and group is unique, and only by trying new things will you find out how this guide works best in your group. So do whatever brings you and your group the maximum impact.

Each of the six sessions is set up in the following basic format.

The Kickoff
Questions to launch group interaction and promote sharing.

Watch
Scenes from Have a New Kid by Friday DVD.

Discuss the DVD
Questions to connect the DVD material to your everyday life.

Taking It Deeper
Questions, reflections, and insights to aid your transition to having a new kid by Friday.

Remember
Bite-size nuggets of wisdom to carry with you.

My Game Plan for Today
What to do to reach your goal—having a new kid by Friday.

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How to Use This Participant's Guide

**Aha Moments**

Space to record your insights and thoughts from the day’s session. For additional reflection, start a separate journal of “Aha Moments.”

**Prayer**

A time to commit your goals to God, pray for others in the group, and ask God for his help in giving you the determination to stick to your plan.

The structure of the first session, “Introduction,” will be slightly different from the Monday through Friday sessions because it’s just that—an introduction. In the Friday session, the discussion sections are shorter to allow for the additional reading of “It’s Time to Launch” and to review “Have a New Kid by Friday Plan for Success” as a group. You may also choose to have a lengthier prayer time in this last session.

Now that you understand the basic format, you can be creative and experiment. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- The “Want a New Kid by Friday?” quiz can be taken by group members either on their own before the group starts (to shorten the length of the first session), or where noted in “Introduction.”
- Use “The Kickoff” questions either before or after you watch the video clip. For sessions two through six, individuals can come prepared with their responses to the opening questions, if so desired.
- Watch the full video clip altogether, or pause it to discuss the DVD questions or “Aha Moments” you are getting from watching the video.
- The “Remember” section is a great summary or reminder of the main points of each session. You as a group member could compile a six-page “Remember” book, adding a new page at the end of each session that includes those bulleted points and highlights of your own “Aha Moments.” A “Remember” book will be an encouraging reminder of the key principles and insights you’ve gained as you’ve walked through this participant’s guide. It will strengthen your resolve in those difficult moments of being a parent (and we all have them).
- “My Game Plan for Today” can be done during the group session—by breaking into one-on-one conversations or through individual
reflection time—or as follow-up individual journal time after the session. As a further reminder, write your note highlights on an index card and carry it in your wallet or purse. (Hint: Don’t post it on the fridge where your kids can see it and know what you’re up to.)

• Share your “Aha Moments” in your group discussion at the end of each session, or at the beginning of the next session, when you’ve had time to reflect on them. Or those moments can be private ones, noted in your participant’s guide or journal.

• For the prayer time, try a variety: prayer with the whole group, one-on-one, or with three to four people, or write a private prayer in your journal. Use the prayer suggestions as prompts for your prayer time, or allow God’s Spirit to move your group to pray for specific needs, as desired. Be mindful that some people in your group may not be persons of faith or might be uncomfortable praying audibly. Let everyone know they don’t have to contribute a prayer.

See how this works? The sky is the limit on how you can use the materials. Regarding leadership, some groups have an appointed leader. If that works for you, great! But if none of you like the idea of being the leader, then why not share leadership? Have members take a turn leading the group. Anyone who can push the button to start the DVD, read questions, and invite others to share and pray can be a leader. Or you might want to have two individuals share the responsibility for a session—one to start and stop the DVD and another to ask the questions. It really is just that simple . . . and easy.

Above all, take advantage of this practical, hands-on participant’s guide that will transform your family’s life and help you get that new kid by Friday. And along the way, you’ll have a lot of fun too!

I guarantee it.
Want a New Kid by Friday?

Take this quick quiz. Simply mark Y for Yes or N for No on the line before each entry.

About You

__ Do you expect the best of your child?
__ Do you mean what you say?
__ Do you follow through on what you say?
__ Do you hold your child accountable for his or her actions?

If you’re four for four with all “Y” answers at this point, stick around. The rest of those in the group are going to need you for a mentor.

__ Do you yell at, scream at, threaten, or cajole your child to do simple, routine things like get up for school, get dressed, eat, do homework, or perform a chore?
__ When you say no to your child and your child cries, are you overcome by guilt? Do you find yourself giving in to the original request of your child—saying yes to what you had just said no to?
__ Do you engage in long conversations with your child, defending why you said no to a certain request?
__ Are you worried that your child doesn’t feel good about himself or herself?
__ Are you bothered that your child doesn’t seem happy?
__ Do you plan over-the-top birthday parties?
__ Are you concerned about your child not keeping up with the successes or achievements of other children?
__ Have you ever wished another child would fail so your child would look better?
__ Do you have a difficult time saying no?

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Want a New Kid by Friday?

__ Do you have a hard time saying to your child what you really feel as a parent?
__ Are you frustrated most days?

About School

__ Are you overly involved in your child's life? Do you fear that something terrible will happen if you don't chaperone every school field trip?
__ Do you complete your child's school assignments and projects?
__ Do you require a full explanation from your child's teacher when your child doesn't receive a superior grade?
__ Do you make excuses for your child not having completed his or her assignments on time? (“Oh, it was our fault. We had to go to____ and we had____ to do.”)
__ Does a simple homework assignment take the whole family's energy for an entire evening? Are the end results lots of tears and frustrations—and an assignment that either never gets done or doesn't get done right?
__ Do you check and correct homework on your child's behalf?

About Your Children

__ Do they have to be asked to help around the house on a daily basis?
__ Do they disrespect you and not value what you have to say?
__ Do they fuss about obeying you?
__ Do they lack for nothing?
__ Are they engaged in one or more extracurricular activities?
__ Do they need to be reminded more than once to do something?
__ When they slam the door in your face, do you write it off as “just the way kids are”?
__ Is bedtime a battle zone?

If any of these topics resonated with you and you marked even one “Y,” you're in the right group. This participant's guide will scratch where you itch. I promise.

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Introduction

They’re Unionized . . . and Growing Stronger

Your kids have a game plan to drive you bonkers. But you don’t have to let them call the shots. I’ve got a game plan guaranteed to work. Every time.

Your kids have a game plan to drive you bonkers. It all started back with Eve birthing two brothers—Cain and Abel—who were as different as day and night and couldn’t get along. And we all know how that story ended up.

There’s always at least one kid in your home who is determined to go a certain direction—a direction you don’t want him or her to go. What’s worse, your kids are unionized . . . and growing stronger. In today’s society, children even shorter than a yardstick are calling the shots. They’re part of what I call the “entitlement group”—they expect anything and everything good to come their way, with no work on their part, just because they exist. In their eyes, the world (and Mom and Dad) owes them. Some of them are part of the ankle-biter battalion; others have graduated to emeritus status and are holding down the hormone group division.

You know all about that, because that’s why you’ve picked up this guide. It isn’t always the big things that wear you down and make you say, “I’ve had it!” It’s the constant battles with attitudes and behaviors like eye rolling, talking back, fighting with siblings, giving the silent treatment, and slamming doors. It’s the statements like, “You can’t make me do it!” and “I hate you!” flung in your face.

If you want to see some things—or a lot of things—change in your house, and you long for a better way of doing life in your home, Have a New Kid by Friday Participant’s Guide and the accompanying DVD will help you accomplish just that. The principles are simple. Anyone can follow them. But they’re not easy. They take willpower—yours. No

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wimps allowed. However, the payoff will be greater than you could ever imagine.¹

The Kickoff

1. How many children do you have, and what are their ages?

2. If you could change just one thing about your interactions with your kids, what would that be? Why?

Watch

Watch “Introduction” on Have a New Kid by Friday DVD.

Discuss the DVD

1. When Dr. Leman said you could have a new kid not only by Friday but even by Wednesday, what was your gut-level response? Did you believe it? Why or why not? On what experiences do you base your answer?

¹. If you haven’t yet taken the “Want a New Kid by Friday?” quiz (pp. 9–10), do so now. If you wish to share your responses during group time, terrific! Otherwise, it’s fine to keep them to yourself.

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2. When have your kids starred in their own “dog and pony show”? Explain. How did you respond then? How might you handle your children’s upcoming dog and pony shows differently?

3. If you’re married, do you and your spouse tend to be on the same page in your interactions with your children? Or is one of you pulling one direction and the other another? How might pulling together in the same direction benefit your kids—and your marriage?

If you’re divorced, how might you and your ex (if your ex is still involved in your children’s lives) both take a step in the same direction for the benefit of your children?

If you’re a single parent, how might you gather a support group of like-minded people around you?
Introduction

4. Can you identify a recent situation where your child viewed reward as his or her right? What did your child say? How did you respond?

5. Should that situation come up again with your child, what might you do differently, knowing what you know from Dr. Leman?

Taking It Deeper

Nothing in life is a free ride, and the sooner your children learn that, the better. Each person is accountable, regardless of age, for what comes out of his or her mouth. And homes should be based on the cornerstones of mutual respect, love, and accountability. There is no entitlement. If you play the entitlement game in your home, you’ll create BratZ—with a capital Z.

1. What adjectives would you use to describe the way you feel after doing battle with your kids?
2. Do your kids usually get what they want—and when they want it? Or do they have to save for an item they want, wait to go to a friend's house, etc.? Explain.

3. How has trying to make your kids happy upped the ante on their requests? On your stress level?

4. Imagine saying no to such requests. Paint the scenario of what would happen between you and your child.

5. Imagine not only saying no but sticking to that no, even when your child pleads for a change of heart. Now paint the scenario.
6. If you stick to your no, what do you think will happen the next time your child plays the entitlement game?

7. Philippians 2:3 says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” How might believing in and acting upon these words transform your family’s interactions?

8. If your child didn’t turn in a paper on time, what would you do—and why? For example:
   • Call the teacher to apologize that your daughter didn’t get the paper in on time, and ask for an extension. Then push your daughter to finish it that night. (End result: your daughter screams at you and slams her bedroom door; you get angry and then feel bad.)
   • Email the teacher and tell her it’s your fault—your daughter has had too full of a schedule—and ask for an extension. Then write the paper yourself that night so your daughter can turn it in the next day.
   • Write a note to the teacher and drop it off at school: “My daughter is late again on handing her paper in, and she has no excuse. I’d be grateful if you would give her the maximum deduction in her grade for lateness so she’ll understand there are consequences to her actions.”
9. Do you tend to snowplow your kid's road in life—making too many decisions for her, giving him too many choices, letting her off the hook, or making excuses when he's irresponsible? If so, what has been the result in your child's life and in yours?

10. Ecclesiastes 5:19 says, “When God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God.” What is the source of happiness in this verse? How does trying to boost a child's self-esteem actually backfire?

Your job as a parent is not to create a happy child. If your child is temporarily unhappy, when she does choose to put a happy face back on, life will be better for all of you. After all, the long-term goal is to make her a responsible adult who doesn't think her happiness is the only thing that's important in life.

Many of us have unwittingly led our kids to think they're in the driver's seat of life, and that everyone else has to do their bidding—moms in particular. If you're a mom and you feel like a slave, exhausted by the end of the day, you especially need this participant's guide. You deserve more, and so do your kids.

If you want your child to emerge a healthy, contributing member of your family and society, Have a New Kid by Friday Participant's Guide will help you do just that—produce the kind of adult you'll be proud to call your son or daughter now and down the road. It'll ratchet down the
stress level in your home and give you freedom you’ve never experienced before in your parenting.

**Remember**

- Your kids’ game plan is to call the shots. But you don’t have to let them.
- Nothing in life is a free ride. The sooner your kids learn that, the better.
- Your job as a parent isn’t to create a happy child. It’s to create a responsible adult.

**My Game Plan for Today**

1. Identify which child most needs to become a new kid by Friday.  
   (Hint: When you think of this kid, your blood pressure skyrockets.)

2. Commit to the five-day Monday-to-Friday process.

**Aha Moments**
Introduction

Prayer

• For my eyes to be open in a new way to my child’s actions and my own.
• For stick-to-it willpower.
• For my friends in the group, who will share the same journey.
Why do your kids do what they do—and continue to do it? Here’s the secret you need to know.

The Kickoff

1. What is your number one challenge with your child right now?

2. How does your current response to that challenge impact your relationship with your child? What would you like your relationship to be like?

Watch

Watch “Monday—Where Did They All Come From?” on Have a New Kid by Friday DVD.

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Monday

Discuss the DVD

1. If you have more than one child in your family, what are the things that they fight about most?

2. What are the specific techniques kids use to ramp up the battle between them?

3. How does learning that fighting is an act of cooperation (it takes two) change your perspective on how to respond to sibling rivalry? In what practical ways can you keep the ball of responsibility firmly in the squabbling children’s court?

4. When do kids tend to have major meltdowns, like the four-year-old in the scene on the DVD who decided he wanted a treat?

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5. When you identify a child’s trigger point, how can you effectively throw him or her a curveball and provide a teachable moment?

6. Attention, power, and revenge are the three reasons a child will misbehave. Which one of these is best demonstrated by the four-year-old in the DVD? Why do you think that?

7. Why is it important for children to get attention—any kind of attention—whether positive or negative?

8. If you had to wake your child up and endure power struggles every morning, would you do what Dr. Leman suggested? Why or why not? What else would you try?
Monday

9. How can realizing that children are creatures of habit help you form
game plans for success in changing their behavior?

Taking It Deeper

Why is it these days so many children diss their parents—and get away
with it? And why are so many parents caught in the roles of threatening
and cajoling and never getting anywhere?

It all comes down to who is really in charge of your family. Is it you or
your child?

1. What is more important to you—to be your child’s friend or to be
their parent? Be honest. Explain.

2. Every child has a predictable strategy. In the daily game of trial and
error, designed to get the best of you, he’s motivated to win because
then you’ll do anything he says. That means if he tries something
and it works, he’ll try it again. But he’ll ramp up the efforts a little.
How have you seen this truth play out in your own home? Give an
example of a recent real-life scene.
3. The esteemed psychiatrist Alfred Adler talked about the “purposive nature of the behavior.” What proof do you see that when your child misbehaves, she’s doing it to get your attention?

4. What are some ways to give your child attention for positive things he does?

5. Do you ever win in a power struggle with your child? Why or why not? Which of you has the most to lose? Explain.

6. What do the following Scriptures say about the roles that God gives to children? To parents?

   Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you. Honor your father and mother. This is the first of God’s Ten Commandments that ends with a promise. And this is the promise: that if you honor your father and mother, yours will be a long life, full of blessing. (Eph. 6:1–3 TLB)

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Monday

Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD. (Ps. 34:11)

7. Do you consider always telling a child what to do and making choices on her behalf disrespectful of her? Why or why not?

8. Why does asking questions sometimes backfire?

9. Go back to what you wrote or shared about your number one challenge with your child right now. How might you use the following principles to help with that situation?
   • Say it once.
   • Turn your back.
   • Walk away.
10. What proof do you see in your own children that they are creatures of habit? (For example, some night when you’re tucking in one of your children, just leave out one part of the routine and watch your kid turn into Judge Judy: “Mommy, you forgot to rub my chin with my blankie. . . .”) How might you use that truth of human nature in forming your game plan of having a new kid by Friday?

Parent, it’s time for you to step up to the plate. Your child needs to know that you mean business—what you say is what you will do. You will not be dissed, and if you are, there will be consequences. Immediate consequences. And you will not be talked out of them.

Today’s children need guidance. They need accountability. They need to be taught that there are consequences for their actions (or their inactions).

**Remember**

- Kids do what they do because they’ve gotten away with it.
- When you choose to do battle with your child, you’ll never win.
- Say it once, turn your back, and walk away.

**My Game Plan for Today**

1. Observe what’s going on in my house.

   *My notes:*
Monday

2. Think about things that I want to change.

My notes:

3. Decide to take the bull by the horns.

My ideas:

4. Expect great things to happen.

My dreams:
Aha Moments

Prayer

• For the courage to step up and be a parent, even when it's difficult.
• For the reminder not to follow my feelings (guilt, anger, etc.) but to choose my actions wisely.
• For my group members, as we uphold each other in accountability.