

STUDYING THE BIBLE AS A FAMILY

Opening the Bible to study God's Word may come very naturally for you, or it may take some work, but to sit down with your children of any age and study the Bible together definitely takes a plan. We've put together a guide to help you plan for intentional family study time and are excited to see how God works in your family as you grow closer to Him and one another.

- 1) Pray! The most important thing you can do is pray. Pray for your time together as a family and for a focused time free of distractions. Pray for unity within your family as you learn together and for understanding of what you will study.
- 2) Read the Bible story beforehand. This will give you more confidence as you share with your children, and a chance to familiarize geographic references, name pronunciations, etc. - but do not stress about those things. You can just use abbreviations, or make it funny! Mahershalalhashbaz. (Isaiah 8:1) can simply be Masherbaz. They won't likely notice, and looking ahead of time will give you a chance to be confident in what you want to share.
- 3) Share the story and be ready for wiggles, questions, and groans. Certainly, if this is a new discipline you are introducing to your family, there will be push back. One pastor said of his own family that they rarely got through a family devotional time without a timeout or grounding until the kids learned it was just going to happen. It will get better as you go.
- 4) Have fun! Reading the Bible can seem like a chore if you make it one, but let your kids ask questions, say silly names with you, and take away those small seeds of faith. Rest assured that God is doing the "work" during this time and you get to be the vessel. Make a game out of the questions you want to discuss with your children, or act out the stories together, whatever keeps them engaged.
- 5) Incorporate questions from the story into everyday life. For younger children, repetition is key to learning. And for your older children, reviewing the story you discussed and asking a next level question like, "Why do you think this is included in the Bible?" or "How do you think you can see yourself in that story?" will help them to recall what they are learning with you. So, while you are driving in the car, eating dinner, playing at the park, or doing whatever you do for leisure, bring up the story to review with them. It lets them know it is on your mind during the week as well.
- 6) Ask questions too! Do not feel like you have to come off as a Biblical scholar to them (or anyone else). God's Word is intended to be studied for a lifetime. If you come across something that you have questions about, tell them you will ask and get back to them about it. And do.

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- Read the story beforehand in a common language translation (NIV, NRSV, CEB).
- Think of a couple questions you would like to ask for review.
- Read the story from the Bible or Children's Bible and ask your children the review questions.
- Let your children ask you questions.
- Choose a memory verse for your family and work together to memorize it throughout the week.
- Pray together that God will help make this truth a part of your lives.
- Review back page for additional help with Family Bible time.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What happened in the story?
- Who were the main characters?
- How did God act in the story?
- How did the people act in the story?
- How did the people feel in the story?
- What does this teach us about God?
- What does this teach us about ourselves?

CHILDREN'S BIBLES WE RECOMMEND

The Rhyme Storybook (Infants-Age 2)

The Beginners Bible (Infants-Age 3)

The Jesus Storybook Bible (Ages 3-8)

The Action Bible (Ages 6-11)

The NIV Adventure Bible (Ages 8+)

MORE FAITH AND FAMILY RESOURCES

"Grow at Home: A Beginner's Guide to Family Discipleship" by Winfield Blevins

"Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles" by Paul David Tripp

"Almost Christian" by Kenda Creasy Dean (Teenagers)

"Parent Cue" theparentcue.org

"Studio 252" studio252.tv