



God's Word bears fruit where it goes forward. Let's make it a priority this year to bring it powerfully into our families. Here are some recommended resources for your family worship.

Family Devotional Guides:

Long Story Short – Old Testament Family Devotionals by Marty Machowski
Old Story New – New Testament Family Devotionals by Marty Machowski

Family Teaching resources:

Thoughts to Make your Heart Sing by Sally Lloyd Jones (ages 3-8)
The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New by Marty Machowski (ages 6-12)
Big Truths for Little Hearts by Bruce Ware.

Children's Story Bibles:

Gospel Story Bible – Bible Story Collection by Marty Machowski
The Big Picture Story Bible (1-4)
Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones (Ages 5-10)
The Biggest Story by Kevin DeYoung (5-10)

Teenage Devotional Guide:

What's Up: Discovering the Gospel, Jesus, and Who You Really Are (Student Guide) by Harrell and Klumpenhower.

Full-Text Children's Bibles:

The Big Picture Interactive Bible – Full-text HCSB translation that has Gospel Project materials embedded in the text.
The Adventure Bible for Early Readers - NIRV Translation.

Online Resources:

The Bible Project - 5-8 minute videos describing the books of the bible in creative and understandable ways. www.jointhebibleproject.com

What's in the Bible? A puppet show that marches through the bible book by book in fun and memorable ways is free to everyone at Covenant on rightnowmedia.com

The Truth Project (for Teenagers) www.thetruthproject.org

D6 Weekly Family Devotional Subscription: www.d6family.com/splink

* The following pages were adapted from Sojourn Community Church in Louisville. To see more of their resources visit sojournkids.com

MEMORIZATION & CATECHISMS CAN HELP OUR CHILDREN GAZE ON GOD

One of the ways we respond to God is by meditating on the truths in his word— repeating these truths over and over in our minds so that we remember them.

As D. Martin Lloyd-Jones encourages in, "Nurture and Admonition," teaching children should not be done in a negative, repressive, or manipulative manner. This violates both the child's personality and God's way of salvation. Rather the truths of God should be taught in an atmosphere of love, and special care should be taken to ensure that the child's understanding of what he learns grows over time.

"Discuss the material being memorized with your child. This should be done during the actual memorization as well as at other opportune times in the day. Daily experiences and observations provide a world of opportunities to illustrate and apply God's Word. For example, the inevitable "night frights" which young children occasionally have, become wonderful occasions to comfortingly remind them that, though we cannot see God, He always sees us. Take time to define difficult terms. Question your child in order to discover the level of his [or her] understanding. When you feel that understanding is being achieved, pray with and for the child, including in your prayer some of the concepts just discussed. Expect your child to learn, and rejoice with him [or her] over his growth in knowledge and understanding of God's Word." (Thomas K. Ascol, Truth and Grace Memory Book, Book , Founders Press, 2000, iii.)

Use the Take Home Handouts given to each child age two years and older after our Sunday Coveant Kids classes.

My ABC Bible Verses: Hiding God's Word in Little Hearts by Susan Hunt. (Crossway, 1998)
—Bible verses for each letter of the alphabet. Each verse is related to life situations with an easy-to-read children's story.

Hide the Word: Scripture Memory Songs, Volumes 1-8, by Mark Altrogge (Forever Grateful Music)—This set of CDs puts scripture to rock tunes. This isn't necessarily just for kids. Adults will enjoy it too.

PRAYER CAN HELP OUR CHILDREN GAZE ON GOD

We can teach and model the Christian faith daily, but only God can convict our children of their sins and give them new life in Christ. It is imperative that we pray for and with our children—not only that God will enable them to trust in Christ, but also that they will be guarded from evil influences and the devastating effects of sin.

Pray for your children:

- That they will grow up to love and trust in Jesus. We desire for them to be God-gazers and to hope in his gospel.
- Pray that they will have godly friends and godly spouses one day.
- Pray that they will be protected from Satan and his schemes.

Pray with your children:

- It is helpful to pray with your kids in the morning and at night before bed, much like bookends for the entire day.
- You can be short and simple with your prayers without being shallow.
- By modeling prayers for our kids, we model for them our spiritual priorities and values, and we teach them to pray.
- In prayer, we show our children that we depend upon God, His mercy and His protection.
- Teach them to adore God in prayer.
- Teach them to confess their sins.
- Teach them to have times of thanksgiving prayer.
- Teach them to ask God to meet specific needs.
- Teach them to pray for their community group friends at Sojourn.
- Teach them to pray for unsaved family, neighbors and friends.

Some families find it helpful to put their prayer requests on a whiteboard in a prominent place and to celebrate answered prayer. Instead of immediately erasing an answered prayer, it is more helpful to mark that answered prayer request and thank God for his answer for an entire week. When the request is erased after the week, add the answered prayer to a tally at the top of the white board. Kids will enjoy seeing the number of prayers their God answered at the end of the year!

Older children and teens can keep a prayer journal that records their request, the date first prayed, and the date of answer. We've also found the following prayer guides to help us learn to pray with our smaller children:

Infants & Toddlers:

I Can Say to God, I Love You by Carine MacKenzie, Prayer Board Books series (Christian Focus, 2001)—A prayer book with prayer responses for young children that teaches them to praise God for his love and care. Other titles in this series include: *I Can Say to God, Thank You*; *I Can Say to God, Please*; *I Can Say to God, I'm Sorry*.

My 1st Book of Bible Prayers by Philip Ross (Christian Focus, 2004)— Model prayers for children based on Bible verses.

Preschoolers:

My Thankful Heart by Sally Lloyd-Jones, (Tyndale, 2004)—An illustrated board book that teaches prayers of gratitude to children.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES CAN HELP OUR CHILDREN GAZE ON GOD

Jesus practiced spontaneity. He was not tied to traditions. He healed on the Sabbath, allowed His disciples to harvest grain on the Sabbath, and washed his disciples' feet. He was led by the Spirit and took advantage of teachable moments using things like nature, money, and family as object lessons.

Have some fun with your kids and remind them that your God invented fun. Christians should be the most fun people to be around (Prov. 15:13). Try to set aside at least one family night per week where you turn off your cell phone, computer, tablets and simply have fun with your family.

- Tell stories of how God has worked in your own life. Jesus was a storyteller. Stories have always been one of God's means for passing down the faith (Psalm 78:5-7).
- Letting your kids act out Bible stories is a great way to put the Bible into action. They will enjoy the stories and remember them much better.
- *101 Secrets A Good Dad Knows*. This book includes great ideas for exposing your children to God's creation in fun and interactive ways. It includes 101 tips on such things as: catching frogs, rowing boats, flying a kite, finding the north star, building a snow fort, skipping a rock, and photographing lightning.
- Being active in a Missional Community reminds your children that God is a God of community and invites us to experience that community with others.
- Doing service projects together helps you live your service identity with your kids. Walk with your children. Listen to them.
- Dads, date your daughters. Moms, spend time with your sons.
- Doing crafts based on Bible stories stirs both you and your kids' imaginations.

MUSIC & MEDIA RESOURCES CAN HELP OUR CHILDREN GAZE ON GOD

Music is the language of children. It is often what a person sings about God that he or she really believes. When choosing music for our SojournKids worship service, both biblical accuracy and God-honoring musical excellence are pursued. Here are a few ideas for making God's truth a primary musical influence for your family:

Sing your favorite hymns or songs about Jesus to your children when you rock them to sleep at night. Sing and dance to Christian songs with your children. Some families incorporate a time of singing into their regular family worship. Others prefer to have music playing as their children go to sleep at night.

- *Inspired by the Bible Experience: Old and New Testament*, Audio CDs (Zondervan, 2006)—Dramatic reading of the entire New Testament in a modern version by a cast of African-American actors and pastors. A free Bible Experience podcast is available for iTunes at Zondervan's website.
- *Songs that Jesus Said: Scripture Into Music*, by Keith and Kristyn Getty (Getty Music, 2005).
- *Awesome God* by Sovereign Grace Kids (Sovereign Grace Music, 2004)—A biblically faithful CD of worship music for kids.
- *Teach Me While My Heart is Tender* by Judy Rogers (Judy Rogers, 1995)—A CD with songs written to help young kids memorize basic biblical truths.
- *Patch the Pirate* has produced over 100 albums of children's Bible-learning musicals. Each album contains nearly 20 fun songs with themed adventure skits between each song. Popular albums include: "Afraidika Fever," "Polecat's Poison," "Down Under," "Once Upon a Starry Night," and "Mount Zion Marathon." See an overview at www.patchthepirate.org. Albums can be purchased from iTunes or from www.majestymusic.com/patch-the-pirate.html.
- *Jungle Jam and Friends* is a Christian radio show with Bible-learning narratives and humor. Hear & download more at www.fancymonkey.com.
- Focus on the Family continues to provide great content and fun with their Adventures in Odyssey material. Hear more at www.whitsend.org.
- *Seeds Family Worship* provides relevant resources, engaging events and biblical coaching on discipleship in the home. Watch the videos and download the music at www.seedsfamilyworship.net.
- The Center for Christian Family Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary provides a wealth of resources and perspectives at www.familyministrytoday.com.

- Tim Kimmel and his team provide a wealth of podcasts and other encouraging grace-based resources at www.familymatters.net.
- What if you could receive a week's worth of family devotional material in your inbox each week? You can! Visit www.d6family.com/splink to sign up for the weekly content emails.

Good Books for Grace-Based Parenting

- *Dedicated: Training Your Children to Trust and Follow Jesus* by Houser and Harrington
- *Family Ministry Field Guide* by Timothy Paul Jones
- *Give them Grace* by Fitzpatrick & Thompson
- *Parenting is your Highest Calling* by Leslie Fields
- *Family Worship* by Don Whitney
- *Grace Based Parenting* by Tim Kimmel
- *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp

Good Books for Strengthening Your Marriage

- *You and I* by Francis and Lisa Chan
- *The Meaning of Marriage* by Tim and Kathy Keller
- *This Momentary Marriage* by John Piper
- *Gospel Centered Marriage* by Tim Chester
- *What did you Expect?* by Paul Tripp