

BORED WITH THE BIBLE

HOW TO MAKE FAMILY DEVOTIONS MORE
ENGAGING FOR YOUR KIDS

LAURIE CHRISTINE



Bored with the Bible — How to Make Family Devotions More Engaging for Your Kids by Laurie Christine

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www.LaurieChristine.com

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“We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders....

“So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.”

PSALM 78:4, 7 (NLT)



“When we face the Lord at the end of our lives, God will ask us: ‘What did you do with those precious eternal beings that I entrusted into your hands? Did you sacrifice your own life to give them My life? Did you pass on My purposes? Did you do the work in your children that will result in praise to My name throughout all of eternity?’ Let us hope that we may all answer yes, and that we may hear, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’”

— Sally Clarkson, *Mission of Motherhood*



INTRODUCTION

Do you struggle to spend time in God's Word together as a family? Is it difficult to engage your kids in family devotions? Are you tempted to just give up before you even begin? And why is it important to have family devotions, anyway?



In this short booklet, I will answer the following questions:

- What are family devotions and why are they important?
- What does the Bible say about teaching the Word of God to our children?
- What are some barriers to having family devotions?

- What if I've failed?
- How do I make devotion times fun and engaging for my kids?
- How do I get started?
- What resources are available?

WHAT ARE FAMILY DEVOTIONS?

What are family devotions and why are they important? Devotions, quiet time, Bible study, Bible time... there are many different names for this special family time. Basically, when you tell your kids it's time for "Family Devotions," it means you are going to sit down together as a family and study or read God's Word in some way.

You might read a chapter from a children's storybook Bible, such as *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or *The Big Picture Bible*. You may read a section of a daily devotional for kids such as Louie Giglio's book *Indescribable: 100 Devotions for Kids About God and Science*. (My boys love this book, by the way!) Or you may read a few verses or a chapter directly from the Bible. Whatever type of content you choose, make sure it is based on scripture, and not just morality lessons. (I have

included a list of my favorite resources at the end of this book.)

INTENTIONAL FAMILY BIBLE TIME CREATES A NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO CONNECT WITH YOUR KIDS

Intentional family Bible time creates a natural environment in which to connect with your kids and have deeper conversations about spiritual topics on a regular basis. If you establish a routine of spending intentional time in God's Word as a family when your kids are young, spiritual conversations will become a more natural part of your family life as your kids grow older.



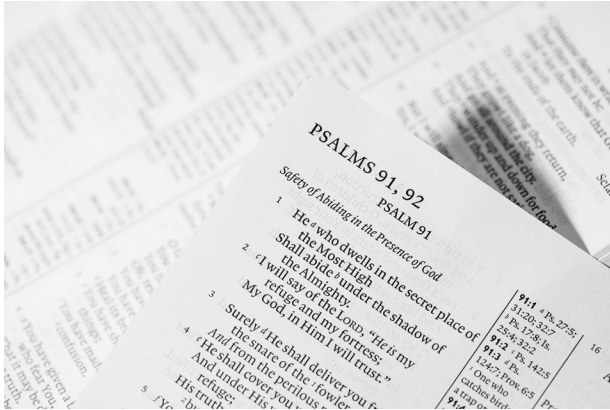
Additionally, you are able to guide your children through the process of learning how to study the Bible and spend time with God on their own. Taking responsibility for your

own faith is an essential part of growing up to be a mature follower of Christ.



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

As parents (and grandparents!), God has given us an important responsibility to train our children and teach them about him. While pastors and Sunday school teachers are a great resource, our children's primary exposure to the Bible should be at home. Over and over again, the Bible emphasizes the importance of teaching the next generation to love, obey and fear the Lord.



One of the saddest verses in the whole Bible is found in the book of Judges:

Judges 2:10

“After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel” (NLT).

When I read this verse, I have to ask myself: *How did this happen?* How did an entire generation of people (who had seen God’s power and deliverance first-hand) neglect to teach their children about God? (If you’ve ever read the book of Judges, you know what sorts of trouble the Israelites got themselves into, all because they turned away from God.)

Psalm 78 also speaks about our responsibilities as parents to teach the next generation about God:

Psalm 78:4, 7

“We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders....

“So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands” (NLT).

In these verses, the psalmist declares that the Israelites will not hide God’s truth from their children. They promise to tell the next generation about:

- God’s glorious deeds
- God’s power
- God’s mighty wonders

For what purpose? So that each generation will:

- Renew their hope in God
- Remember God’s glorious miracles
- Obey God’s commands

As I tell my children about God's glorious deeds, his power and mighty wonders, my prayer is that they too would put their hope in God, that they wouldn't forget the glorious things God has done for them, and that they would obey his commands.

*MY PRAYER IS THAT MY CHILDREN WOULD PUT THEIR
HOPE IN GOD.*

It is clear from these verses and many others that we as parents (and grandparents too!) have been tasked with an important job.



BARRIERS TO FAMILY DEVOTIONS

What are some of the barriers to spending time in God's Word together as a family? Maybe you're simply too busy, and there are not enough hours in the day. Maybe it's not something you consider important for your family. Perhaps you feel like you don't know the Bible well enough, or you don't know where to start. Or maybe, despite your best intentions, your kids are out of control and they refuse to sit still and listen! (Ahem. I don't know *any* families like that!)

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO PUSH THROUGH THE CHAOS
AND DOING WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO.



You're probably thinking: "You haven't been to my house. You don't know my kids. We're lucky if everyone brushes their teeth once a week!" As a mom of four boys (currently ages 4 to 9) I get it! Here's what family devotions often look like in our house: one kid is jumping on the sofa, one is hanging upside down by his knees while his face turns tomato-red, one is wiping a booger onto his brother... oh, and one almost certainly is not wearing any pants! Sound like your house? I am right there with you. As parents, it's not always easy to push through the chaos and do what God has called us to do.



YOU'RE NOT A FAILURE

Before I get to the practical ways we can engage our kids in family devotions and Bible study, let's just talk about failure for a minute. Raise your hand if you've ever said something like: "I know I *should* be reading the Bible with my kids more often, but..." Cue the guilt. Well, guess what? I am writing this to help ease some of the guilt you may be feeling and to encourage you!

GOD GIVES SO MUCH GRACE.

We've ALL failed at this thing called parenting (in more ways than just the area of Bible teaching), but God gives so much grace. While the Bible is clear that we need to teach our children about God, there is no formula that explicitly states HOW we are to teach our children. There is a lot of

room for grace in this area! There is no verse that states “You must read exactly one chapter of the Bible together as a family every single night before bed.”

So, what do you do when you see a gap between what the Bible teaches and what is actually taking place in your family?



1. ACKNOWLEDGE

The first step is to **ACKNOWLEDGE** the importance of teaching our kids about God—about his glorious works, his power, his commands and his love. Decide if this is a value you want for your family. (If you’re still reading this booklet, you probably already have this desire!)

2. ADMIT

The second step is to **ADMIT** where we have failed. Admit that the reality you see in your home does not line up with the desires God has placed in your heart. Without God’s strength, we are completely helpless to do what God has asked us to do. But God is at work in your life, and he will give you the desire and power to do what pleases him! (Philippians 2:13)

3. ASK

The third step is to **ASK** God for grace and wisdom to teach our children the truth of God's Word and to model to them the depths of God's love. God promises to give wisdom to those who ask for it! (James 1:5-6)

4. ACT

The fourth step is to **ACT**. Start small. Start by reading one verse with your kids, every day for a week. If you've never opened the Bible with your children or read a Bible story to them before, keep reading this booklet! I will go into more depth on how to get started, as well as tips to help you make it fun for your kids.

5. ACCOMPLISH

Lastly, trust God to **ACCOMPLISH** his purposes in the hearts of your children. While we do have a responsibility to teach and train our children, God is not limited by our shortcomings. God chooses to use imperfect people to do his work. Ultimately, there is nothing we can do to assure the eternal salvation of our kids. We need to continue to trust God and hold our kids in an open hand. (I Corinthians 3:5-7)

6. ASSURANCE

The following Bible verses will give you further **ASSURANCE** as you continue to trust God to work in the hearts of your children:

I Corinthians 3:5-7

“After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God’s servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What’s important is that God makes the seed grow” (NLT).

I Corinthians 15:58

“So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless” (NLT).

Philippians 2:13

“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him” (NLT).

Hebrews 4:15-16

“This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do,

yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most” (NLT).

James 1:5-6

“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind” (NLT).



HOW TO ENGAGE KIDS IN FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Using my background as a public-school elementary teacher, more than twelve years of experience as an elementary Bible teacher at my church, and nearly ten years (so far) of Christian motherhood, I have created a collection of eight practical ways parents can engage their kids in family devotions and Bible study.

I. Be Passionate

Teach your kids from the overflow of a full heart. If you're not excited about reading and studying God's Word, then they won't be either. Show your kids that you are excited to read the Bible and learn about God with them.

TEACH YOUR KIDS FROM THE OVERFLOW OF A FULL HEART.

This may seem basic, but reading with expression will make a huge difference in how well your children engage with the story. Nobody likes listening to a dry, monotone voice. Try using different voices for different characters!

2. Take a Picture Walk

If your devotional book or Bible story has illustrations, a “picture walk” will help your kids prepare their minds to engage with the story.

HELP YOUR KIDS PREPARE THEIR MINDS TO ENGAGE
WITH THE STORY.

First, read the title and look at a few pictures. Ask your kids, “What do you think this story is about? Do you have a prediction about what might happen?”

3. Connect to Prior Knowledge

If your kids have grown up going to Sunday School, they may feel like they’ve “already heard” this Bible story and may not be interested in hearing it again. (Of course, you and I know that there are endless truths in the Bible to learn or apply to our lives).

One way to help your kids engage in a story they have heard before is to help them connect to knowledge they already have. Ask your kids, “What do we already know

about this character or topic?” In a journal, ask your kids to draw or write everything they know about this particular story. Then at the end, compare their journal entry with what you learned. “Did you learn something new? Did you remember all the parts of the story?”

ALL THE STORIES IN THE BIBLE FIT INTO ONE OVER-ARCHING ADVENTURE OF GOD’S PLAN TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE AND RESTORE GLORY TO HIS CREATION.

Another way to help kids comprehend what is happening in the Bible story is to put the story in context of the entire Bible. The Bible is not merely a collection of unrelated stories. Rather, all the stories fit into one over-arching adventure of God’s plan to save his people and restore glory to his creation. Discuss with your kids: “Where does this story fit into the big story of the Bible? Is it in the Old Testament? New testament? Where do the events of the story fit into the timeline of biblical history?”

4. Model Your Thought Process Out Loud

Allow your kids to see into your head and hear what you are thinking! As you read, pause throughout the story to make comments:

- Wow, that’s so interesting! Did you know that before?
- That’s crazy, I can’t believe he said that.

- This reminds me of another story I read...
 - This reminds me of something that happened to me...
 - This makes me think about...
 - I wonder if...
 - I think that...
 - I predict that...
-

ALLOW YOUR KIDS TO SEE INTO YOUR HEAD AND HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS.

After you've modeled this process, allow your kids to share their thoughts as well:

- Is there anything you're wondering about?
- Does this story remind you of anything?
- Does anyone have a prediction about what might happen?



5. Use Object Lessons

You would need to spend some time beforehand to prepare your materials, but using physical objects can be a very effective strategy to help your kids stay focused during the Bible story. The more senses you stimulate throughout the Bible lesson, the more impactful the story will be. Think about how you could include taste, touch, smell, sight and sound in your lesson. I have provided some examples below, but you can be creative!

THE MORE SENSES YOU STIMULATE THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE LESSON, THE MORE IMPACTFUL THE STORY WILL BE.

- Jesus feeds five thousand people — have a picnic on the ground and eat crackers and Swedish fish while you read the story.
- Jesus is the light of the world — turn off all the lights and light a candle.
- God created the world — give everyone a lump of play-dough to create something while you read.
- Tower of Babel — hand out building blocks and see who can build the tallest tower.
- Daniel in the lions den — look up a video on YouTube of real lions.

6. Use Total Participation Techniques

The concept of Total Participation Techniques (TPT's) was developed by educators Persida and William Himmele. TPT's are methods that engage both the mind and body and encourage active learning.

ENGAGE BOTH THE MIND AND BODY TO ENCOURAGE
ACTIVE LEARNING.

These methods were designed to help teachers in a classroom engage all their students at once, rather than just calling on one student at a time. These techniques can easily be adapted to use in your home as well! The following are just a few examples that can be used during family devotions:

- "Put your hand on your head if..."
- "Give me a thumbs up or thumbs down..."
- "Let's all whisper the answer together..."
- "Everybody write down one word in your journal..."
- "Whisper your answer to your brother/sister..."
- "Let's all say the answer as loud as we can..."

7. Learn to Ask Great Questions that Inspire Discussion

I have found that there are few children's devotional books or Bible story books that include thoughtful questions to help children process what they have heard and apply it to

their lives. I often need to improvise with my own questions.

For younger children, it's okay to ask more concrete questions that have a specific answer found in the story. ("Who was Jesus talking to? What did Adam and Eve do?" etc.) But for older children, your questions should be more open-ended. Help your kids imagine themselves in the shoes of one of the characters in the story. Help them to think more deeply about the meaning of the story, and ask them if there's a lesson that needs to be applied in their own lives.

HELP YOUR KIDS TO THINK MORE DEEPLY ABOUT THE
MEANING OF THE STORY.

The following are some sample questions that could be applied to any story:

- How do you think that character was feeling when that happened?
- How would you feel in that situation?
- Why do you think the character responded in that way?
- What did God mean when he said....
- What can we learn about God from this story or scripture passage?
- Is there a lesson we can learn from this story?
- Is there a promise that we can hold on to?

- Is there something I need to do or some way I need to change?

8. Use Journals for Personal Reflection Time.

Giving your children something to do while you read will help them to stay focused on the Bible story. Provide kids with a journal and colored pencils. While you are reading, allow kids to draw or write whatever comes to mind. This helps them keep their hands busy and allows their minds to focus. At the end, allow kids to share their pictures with the family.

GIVING YOUR KIDS SOMETHING TO DO WHILE YOU READ
WILL KEEP THEIR HANDS BUSY AND ALLOW THEIR
MINDS TO FOCUS.

You can also use journals at the end of the story for a personal reflection time. This is a great opportunity to teach your kids how to develop a personal relationship with God, but within the structure of family time. Explain to kids that this is their own time to spend with God. With their journal and a pencil, ask them to find a quiet spot where they won't be distracted. Set the timer for 2-5 minutes (depending on the age of your children). You could choose one of the questions I listed above (in part seven) or use a simple structure like this:

- God, I praise you because you are _____.
- Thank you for _____.
- Forgive me for _____.
- Please help me to _____.

Close in Prayer

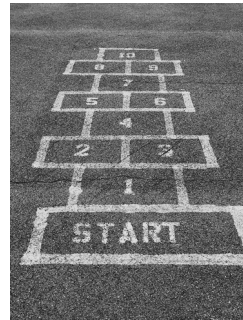
Close your family devotional time in prayer. Praise God for who he is and for his character qualities that you learned about in the story. Allow your kids to pray out loud, if they feel comfortable doing so.



WHERE DO I START?

If you've never had a family devotional time before, don't be overwhelmed! It's okay to start small. You could begin by reading a verse each morning at breakfast before you start your day.

Or maybe try reading one verse at night before you tuck your kids into bed. If you need some ideas to get you started, I have a free printable download [HERE](#) that includes 18 printable verse cards about fear and anxiety.



IT'S OKAY TO START SMALL

Children's Bible storybooks are a great place to begin as well. Start by reading one story a week. You can find a list of some of my favorite family devotionals and children's storybook Bibles at the end of this booklet. Ask God to show you what it could look like in your home to "bring (your children) up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4, NLT).



TIPS FOR KEEPING IT FRESH

The following are a few general tips to help keep your family Bible study fresh and exciting:

- Choose different types of content: Select a Bible story book, devotional books, or read straight from the Bible.
- Choose a different location: Make a fort in the living room, sit on the back patio, snuggle up on mom & dad's bed, or pull up lawn chairs by the campfire.
- Choose a different time of day: In my family, we've recently started having our devotion times in the morning after breakfast, instead of right before



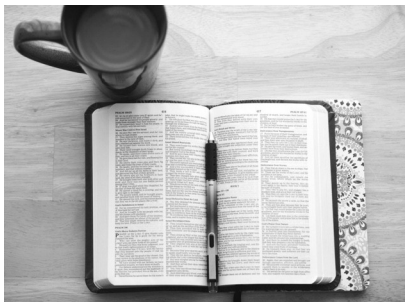
bed. My kids are much calmer and more focused in the morning! And it makes bedtime much less crazy as well.

- Choose a hands-busy, mind-focused activity: Allow kids to quietly color or draw or build with Legos while you read and discuss the Bible.



NOTE TO PARENTS

I have given you a lot of practical tips and encouragement in this booklet, but above all, my prayer and desire is that *you* are spending time with God yourself. As parents, we minister to our children out of the overflow of a full heart. If we are not filled with the Spirit of God through the Word of God, then we will be dry, empty sponges with nothing left to pour into the lives of our children.



Maybe your first step in creating a Christ-centered culture in your home is to dive deep into God's Word for yourself. Start reading in the book of Psalms, or the gospel of John. Read about God's glorious works, his unceasing faithfulness, and his never-ending love for you. Allow God to soak into all the empty cracks in your soul, so that you will overflow His love into the lives of your children.

IF WE ARE NOT FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD
THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD, THEN WE WILL BE DRY,
EMPTY SPONGES WITH NOTHING LEFT TO POUR INTO
THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN.



FAVORITE STORY BIBLES & DEVOTIONALS

You can find a list of my favorite books and resources for family Bible study and devotions here:

<https://lauriechristine.com/family-bible-study-resources>



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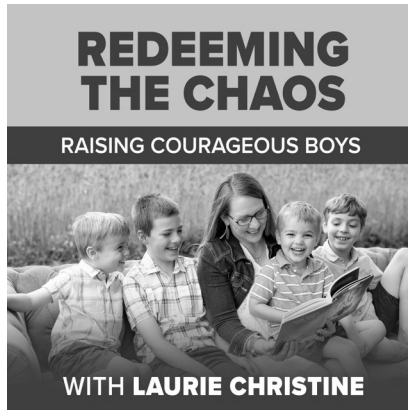
This is the podcast for moms who may feel a bit frazzled and overwhelmed by the responsibility of raising boys. If you want your boys to grow up to be strong, courageous young men who are fully committed to following Jesus, this show is for you.

In all the chaos of raising boys, we recognize that Christ is the only who can redeem the chaos in our world, our homes, and our own hearts.

I know that I can't do this alone. I desperately need God to give me strength every step of this journey.

But guess what... I also need YOU.

I'd love for you to join me on this wild, wonderful, chaotic adventure of raising courageous boys and connecting their hearts to Christ.



www.RedeemingtheChaos.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laurie Christine is an author, podcast host, certified Biblical Parenting Coach, wife, and mom of four wild, loud, adventurous boys.

Her podcast, **Redeeming the Chaos**, invites moms of boys to join her in the wild, wonderful adventure of raising courageous boys and connecting them with Christ.

In addition to hosting a podcast, Laurie writes devotional Bible stories for families. As a mom of four young boys, she understands how important it is for parents to connect with their children, while communicating the truth of God's Word to them in a way they can understand.

With degrees in Creative Writing, Biblical Studies and Education, Laurie has more than fourteen years of experience in teaching the Bible to young children as well as writing Sunday School curriculum for her local church.

Laurie also serves as the administrator for the Christian Writers Institute and the producer for the Christian Publishing Show Podcast and Novel Marketing Podcast.





CONNECT WITH LAURIE

I would love to hear from you! If you have any questions I can help you with or comments regarding any of the information in this booklet, feel free to email me at Laurie@LaurieChristine.com. You can also find me at www.LaurieChristine.com. I'm looking forward to hearing stories of how God is working the lives of you and your children!



If you found this resource to be helpful, please share the following link with your friends so they can download their own copy!

<https://www.lauriechristine.com/family-devotions/>