

A GUIDE TO FAMILY WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP

God commands us to disciple our children as we parent them - in the little and big moments - and he calls us to worship together. This simple guide includes ideas and resources to equip you to disciple and lead your family in worship.

We pray that as we seek to respond to God's call, we would all grow in our worship of our Heavenly Father, our dependence on Him, and our urgency to share Jesus with the people He's placed in our lives - starting with our kids.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP?

*These commands that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them **when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.** Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6.6-9*

*We will not hide them from their descendants; **we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.** He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, **so the next generation would know them,** even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. **Then they would put their trust in God** and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Psalm 78.4-7*

*Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for **the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.**" Matthew 19.13-14*

***Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.** Ephesians 6.4*

*I am reminded of your sincere faith, which **first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice** and, I am persuaded, **now lives in you** also. 2 Timothy 1.5*

***...and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures,** which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." 2 Timothy 3.15*

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but a few things stand out in these passages:

- The importance of in-home discipleship and telling the next generation who God is
- The value God has for children - He does not discount the ability of someone to connect with Him because of their age
- Children should study the Scriptures from an early age
- Parents, especially fathers, are primarily responsible for the spiritual instruction and vitality of their families

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY WORSHIP?

- **Family worship brings glory to God** as we follow His command to gather together.
- **Family worship sets an example of gathering to praise God as a regular part of our daily lives**, teaching kids from an early age that we were meant to live out our faith in community.
- **Family worship helps center our hearts on Jesus**, bringing peace and restoration in our broken relationships with one another.
- **Family worship produces joy in the home**, as the love of Christ will more easily abound in a home where worship of Him is central.
- **Family worship affects change in the world** as it points our hearts to Jesus, allows Him to transform us, and then activates us to be sent out to share the good news.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO DURING FAMILY WORSHIP?

Keep it simple. Consider including the following elements as you gather with your family at home and disciple your kids. These things can be done all together in a regular, routine gathering time and throughout the day with your kids.

READ—Read a portion of the Word together. Talk through difficult words and concepts. Walk through discussion questions that **help all of you learn and praise God for who He is**, and **see what God wants you to do as a result of your reading**. Here are some questions you can ask when reading:

- What is this passage saying (describe it in your own words)? What's happening?
- What is confusing/are there any big words you don't understand?
- What does this passage reveal to you about who God/Jesus is?
- What stands out to you in this passage? What questions do you have?
- What does God want you to do as a result of what you've read?

PRAY—Consider voicing prayers of praise, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication (prayers for needs) together. You might even follow the acronym PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield). Lead your kids in what each of these mean. A child may not know what confession or repentance is. Be the first to model all of these, especially repentance or confession. Additionally, you may want to maintain a prayer journal that enables you to keep track of prayer requests and God's answers to those requests.

SING—Sing together as a family. If someone in your family has musical gifts, they may lead some simple songs. If no one in your family is musical, use a recording or just sing acapella. Driving in the car is a great time to put on music that celebrates Jesus.

MEMORIZE—Whether a verse (or verses) is suggested or selected by a family member, work on hiding God's Word in your heart together. The beginning of the week or month may be spent both understanding and memorizing the verse(s). By the end of the week or month, allow everyone to repeat the verse(s). Use motions or songs to help, especially if your kids are really young. Keep pointing back to these verses you have memorized as you have conversations with your kids throughout the day.

SERVE—Take time to serve together as a family. Talk about why we serve - because Jesus modeled this for us and calls us to live not for ourselves, but to serve Him and others. Teach your kids what it looks like to be out in your community, to tell others about Jesus, and to be generous with your time and gifts. Anytime you are serving, bring them along and prioritize opportunities to serve others on your calendar - whether it's a big event or an individual in your neighborhood.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

[*Family Worship: In the Bible, in History & in Your Home*](#) (Donald Whitney).

[*Shepherding a Child's Heart*](#) (Paul Tripp).

[*Visionary Parenting: Capture a God-Sized Vision for Your Family*](#) (Rob & Amy Rienow).

[*Give them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus*](#) (Elyse M. Fitzpatrick & Jessica Thompson)

- [*The Big Picture Story Bible*](#) (David Helm). If you have young children, this is a must have resource. Simple but gospel-rich storytelling. Great pictures.
- [*The Jesus Storybook Bible*](#) (Sally Lloyd-Jones). Another must have for those with young children. Beautiful pictures and writing. Like Big Picture, the author connects each Bible story to the Bible's central character and central message, Christ and His saving work.
- [*God's Very Good Idea*](#) (Trillia Newbell). A wonderful explanation of the gospel! This book will help children see how people from all ethnic and social backgrounds are valuable to God, and how Jesus came to rescue all kinds of people.
- [*Mighty Acts of God*](#) (Starr Meade). Much like the previous, except that it gives more detail and tells more stories. It's a good Bible to let your reading-age son/daughter take to bed and begin his/her personal times of reading Scripture.
- [*Thoughts to Make Your Heart Sing*](#) (Sally Lloyd-Jones). Sometimes a great sign of maturity in faith is seen through one's increasing ability to connect the gospel to everything in life. This book is a primer on seeing how the gospel relates to everyday life.
- [*The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New*](#) (Marty Machowski). An excellent book to help kids of all ages understand who God is and how we, as his children, relate to him. While this book is very helpful for kids, parents will gain a lot from it as well.
- [*The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden*](#) (Kevin DeYoung). an exciting journey through the Bible, connecting the dots from the garden of Eden to Christ's death on the cross to the new heaven and new earth. This book has great illustrations and is best for elementary age children.
- [*Long Story Short: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God*](#) (Marty Machowski). A one-stop-shop resource. Gives brief Bible reading, brief

devotional thought, asks good questions for family discussion. Offers helps for family prayer. Gospel-centered.

- [*The Big Book of Questions and Answers: A Family Devotional Guide to the Christian Faith*](#) (Sinclair Ferguson). Ferguson does a good job making big truths accessible to little children.
- ***The Real Story* books by Paul Maier: [*The Real Story of the Creation*](#); [*The Real Story of the Flood*](#); [*The Real Story of the Exodus*](#); [*The Very First Christmas*](#); [*The Real Story of Easter*](#)**; These are great books to use during family worship, particularly as you approach a holiday (Christmas/Easter).
- [*Grandpa's Box: Retelling the Biblical Story of Redemption*](#) (Starr Meade). Meade uses a story of children visiting their grandpa as the backdrop for teaching the one big story of the Bible. Readings can take (if memory serves) 10+ minutes, so it's probably better for older kids (maybe 8 and up).
- [*Big Truths for Young Hearts*](#) (Bruce Ware). Devotional chapters written to unpack major doctrines (God as Creator, etc.). Can be doctrinally heavy (in a good way). For older kids. Readings take about 15 minutes.

Some resources for bedtime reading, road trips, etc....

- [*Dangerous Journey*](#) (Hunkin/Bunyan). An easy to read (and with pictures!) version of Bunyan's classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*. Younger ones will have a hard time comprehending it all and (warning) some pictures are a little gruesome.
- [*Keeping Holiday*](#) (Starr Meade). A Christian allegory akin to *Pilgrim's Progress*. Excellent portrayals of how temptation works and many other biblical motifs. Great refrains about "the Finder." Older kids (maybe from 8+) will get the most out of it.
- [*The Priest with Dirty Clothes*](#) (R.C. Sproul). Helpful teaching and conversation starter toward understanding the vital doctrine of imputation/justification.
- [*The Lightlings*](#) (R.C. Sproul). A retelling of the big story – creation, sin, salvation.
- [*The Prince's Poison Cup*](#) (R.C. Sproul). Helps teach the truth that Christ took our curse for our salvation.
- [*The Barber Who Wanted to Pray*](#) (R.C. Sproul). For centuries the main go to's for family worship were the Lord's Prayer, the 10 commandments, the Apostle's Creed (see Westminster for some help here as well). So when Martin Luther's barber asked him how to pray Luther went to those three. This is a storied and kid-friendly version of what Luther wrote to his friend the barber.
- [*The King Without a Shadow*](#) (R.C. Sproul). The concept of God's holiness/otherness is a bit more difficult to capture in story form. So this is abstract at times and may be more difficult for young children to grasp.