

## HOW TO START FAMILY DEVOTIONS

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Doing devotions as a family provides us valuable time to get our kids into God's Word and pray with them. It demonstrates to them what making real time for God looks like. This is God's great calling to us as parents and caregivers: to teach our children to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength, and more specifically, to "Impress [these commandments] 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" ([Deuteronomy 6:5-7 NIV](#)). God has given us a great responsibility and privilege in raising our children to know and love God. Family devotions are a great opportunity to do just that.



Before going on, let's take a moment to address the elephant in the room. *Initiating and sticking with family devotions can be really tough.* We have an idyllic image of the family seated around the living room or dinner table, all attentively listening and participating, when in reality, the kids are fighting over who gets to hold the cat or sit in a particular chair, and little Hannah would very much like little Elijah to stop looking at her. Cards on the table, that has been my family's experience: we've had varying degrees of success with "regular" family devotions. If that has been your experience, too, take heart and don't be discouraged; you're not alone. Ask God for the grace to persevere. Set simple goals that let your family experience success. Let your devotion time fit the rhythm of your family life and emphasize substance over when, how much, or how long.

Here are some ways to share family devotional time with your children and model loving God and the importance of meeting with him in person.

### READ THE BIBLE

When my kids were little, I found that reading the Bible to them helped my children think about their Creator. It started when my children wanted to hear the stories of their biblical namesakes. For the next few nights, I read to them from those books. Next thing you know, we're back at the beginning of Genesis, and we just kept going until we had read most of the Old Testament and large portions of the New Testament. When I finished reading each night, we prayed, thanking God for his Word and how that story brought us into a personal relationship with him through his Son, Jesus. I let my children ask questions naturally without much prompting, and I saw them grow in their understanding.

My kids loved me reading to them. Other parents might have their children take turns reading. Do whatever seems natural for your family when it comes to who reads. Devotional time is more about meeting God than "learning something." You can process your reading through prayer rather than a question-and-answer discussion.

### READ A STORYBOOK BIBLE

For small children, parents have lots of choices for storybook Bibles. The stories focusing on God's character, love, and goodness resonate especially well with the youngest listeners. My personal favorite is [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) by Sally Lloyd-Jones. Beautifully illustrated, every story points to Jesus, highlighting God's love and his rescue plan for his children. The stories marvelously anticipate kids'

questions, usually answered in the next paragraph. A well-written storybook Bible can lead naturally into prayer after each story, making them a great tool to help you teach your child about loving God and seeking his presence.

## USE A CHILDREN'S DEVOTIONAL

Finally, you might try a children's or family devotional. These are great resources even if you have kids across a wide age range (our oldest was 14 when our youngest was born). These devotions often share stories about God's love and presence in kids' lives. Children's devotions are not hard to find. Devotional books and online and mobile app resources abound. Right here at *Kids Corner*, you will find [weekly devotions for kids](#) you can get in your email or listen to on your [favorite podcast platform](#). Each KC devotion includes a fun Casey's Day comic strip and links to other excellent faith formation resources like videos, audio Bible stories, and *Kids Corner's* classic *Liz & Friends* adventures. Just as with an adult devotional, the point of a kids' devotional is for kids and families to spend time together in God's presence.

For a whole bunch of reasons, many families struggle to spend time together in worship. Be encouraged: we can't pray enough, or read the Bible enough, to earn God's favor. He favors us because he's God; his Son died and rose again so we can have a direct relationship with him. That's what devotions are all about: growing closer to God and knowing him more. God keeps no record of wrongs for those in Christ. To try again, and even to fail again, is better than doing nothing at all. God invites us and our kids to spend time with him to experience his love so we might become more like Jesus.

*Kids Corner* is a place for your children to discover their parts in God's big story and learn how God calls them to live out their Christian faith every day! Subscribe to receive weekly *Kids Corner* [children's devotions](#) in your email (see below). And don't miss the fun with our classic "[Liz & Friends](#)" podcast or our "[Kids in Action](#)" videos to see the amazing things kids are doing for God's kingdom right now.

Check out our *Faith Practices for Families* ebook series, which includes [Prayer](#), [Bible Reading](#), [Serving Others](#), and [Worshiping Together](#).

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