

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER WITH JESUS

September 26, 2021

A Children's Ministry leader asked this question, "Let's dream...If a child was going to spend time with Jesus, what do you think they would want to do?" People answered:

"Play."

"My 10-year-old would have lots of questions. My son would want to play soccer."

"Hear stories."

"My 8-year-old daughter would love to dance and sing with him. My 11-year-old boy has the mind of an engineer/scientist, so he would love to talk to Jesus about some interesting stuff."



How would your child answer the question?

Three gospel writers—Matthew, Mark and Luke—retell today's story right in the middle of Jesus' ministry. People were bringing their children to Jesus "to place his hands on them and pray for them" (Matthew 19:13). Maybe these parents had seen Jesus heal someone or heard that he was a great teacher. They wanted Jesus to give their children a blessing.

How can our children encounter Jesus today and be blessed by him?

Make a commitment to reading the Bible

Read the Bible with your children daily. Whether it's in the morning to start the day, at a mealtime, or to close the day, reading the Bible provides a spiritual practice that can become important for both your child and you.

Find age-appropriate Bible story books with bold and beautiful illustrations that lead to wonder and discussions together. But also read the actual Bible to your children. Let them hear and read for themselves the words of Scripture. Let them hold the Bible and see its value in your own life.

Talk about Scripture

Invite your child to explore the story. Don't be afraid of your child's questions. It's okay to say that you don't know the answer. Invite them to find the answer together or ask them what they think first.

I enjoy when children place themselves in a story and wonder what it would be like to be there. "I wonder what the children saw as they walked through the Red Sea," or "I wonder if there were kids in the crowd on Palm Sunday and at Jesus' crucifixion."

Elizabeth F. Caldwell's book *I Wonder: Engaging a Child's Curiosity about the Bible* suggests a simple approach to spending time together with your child with a Bible story through five steps: Enter, Hear, Pause, Wonder, and Bless.

Pray

Invite your child to pray. Learning to say thanks to God, making prayer requests, having awe for God, lamenting and confessing are all important spiritual practices to build up.

Teach prayers of intercession or “God, please bless....” Invite your child to name people and places that they want to remember in prayer.

Spend time with Jesus together with your children. To show them what he's like, *be like* Jesus. How? Play. Listen to them, play soccer, tell stories, dance and sing, and finally, talk about some interesting stuff.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article <https://familyfire.com/articles/giving-our-blessing>

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<https://kidscorner.net/parent-blog/spending-time-together-with-jesus>

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