



## 4 Ways to Teach Kids About Personal Devotions

Devotions are a time to get your kids into God's Word, and to get them praying; to teach them to make real time for God. Our sister ministry, [Family Fire](#), calls the family "the crucible of discipleship." Indeed, [Deuteronomy 6](#) commands parents to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength, and more specifically, to "Impress [these commandments] on your children." Here are four ways to model and share personal devotions with your children, to teach them to love God, and the importance of meeting with him in person.

### Read the Bible

In my own family, I found that reading the Bible together was the simplest way to help my kids tune-in to their Creator. It happened almost by accident. One night at bedtime, my daughter, Hannah, wanted to hear the story of her namesake. So, I cracked open 1 Samuel and started reading. The next night we picked up where we had left off, and in the nights after, we just kept going until we had read most of the Old Testament and large portions of the New. When I finished reading each night, we prayed, thanking God for his Word and how that story brought us into personal relationship with him through his Son, Jesus. I found that my children asked questions naturally without prompting, and I saw the lights of understanding burn brighter than ever.

My kids love for me to read to them. Other parents might have their children take turns reading. Do

whatever seems natural for your family when it comes to who reads. And don't count your teenagers out; they probably still like it when you read to them...even if secretly. Devotional time is more about meeting God than "learning something." You can process what you've read through prayer rather than question and answer discussion.

## Use a daily devotional

Sometimes, we just need a little structure. A daily devotional, such as [Today](#), provides a framework that will guide your family's reading of God's Word. A devotional normally includes a short Bible passage and a reflection by a mature Christian author offering insight and practical application into the biblical text. Devotionals often conclude with a short prayer, the perfect segway into a time of prayer with your family. A daily devotional is ready to go any time. For years, my friend Mark read Today Devotional to his family after dinner as a daily time of family devotion. Family members can even take turns reading different parts of the devotional—one child might read the daily scripture, while another reads the author's reflections and someone else can lead the family in prayer. The regularity of a daily devotional helps create a space in which the Holy Spirit can teach and guide our children.

## Use a children's devotional

You might choose to use a children's devotional, especially if your kids are young. Written for little ears, these devotions often use story to share the truth of God's love and presence in kids' lives. And they're not hard to find. Devotional books abound. Online and mobile app resources are available aplenty, including podcasts like [Kids Corner](#), another Today sister program from [ReFrame Media](#). Kids Corner offers a weekly audio adventure and episode devotion. Another partner ministry, [Keys for Kids](#), features a daily web-based devotional. Just as with a "regular" devotional, the point is for kids and families to be renewed in God's presence.

## Read a storybook Bible

Just like children's devotionals, parents have lots of choices for storybook Bibles. The stories that focus on God's character, his love, and his goodness resonate especially well in a devotional context, even with the youngest listeners. I especially like [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) by Sally Lloyd-Jones. Beautifully illustrated, every story points right to Jesus, reinforcing God's love and his rescue for his children. The text marvelously anticipates kids' questions, usually answering them in the very 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.

Certainly parents have additional options beyond these four when it comes to teaching their kids about personal devotions. Seek them out; explore.

If you're like me, you might be saying to yourself, "well, we've tried some of this before...we just can't seem to keep it up." For a plethora of reasons, many families struggle to spend time together in worship. Ask God for the grace to persevere. Set attainable goals that let your family experience success. Schedule your devotion time to fit the rhythm of your family life and emphasize substance

over how-much or how-long. Be encouraged: We can't pray enough, or read the Bible enough, to earn God's favor. He favors us because he's God and his Son died and rose again so we can be in 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. He just wants us and our kids to spend time with him so that we might be more like Jesus.

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