

AN INVITATION TO THE BIBLE

Your eight-year-old is reading independently, so this is the perfect time to help them engage in the book that will change their lives: the Bible. Most of us, as adults, struggle with reading the Bible on a consistent basis. Our lives and the time we spend in the Bible would probably be different if someone had helped us understand when we were younger that the Bible is personal, prepares us for life, and is true. (This didn't happen for many of us.) Our goal is to make the Bible personal for your child.

Why?

Often we see the Bible as something we study at church and not necessarily something that we use personally.

What's your child's favorite superhero? Batman? Superman? Iron Man? Maybe your daughter has a favorite princess? Snow White, Cinderella, Princess Barbie? Your child loves those characters because they love the story behind the character. Stories are powerful. The stories found in the Bible are not only powerful, they're true.


Give Them the Tools

Here is how this invitation to the Bible will look this year: we are going to give you **three activities for your child to continue to learn to read the Bible**. Your first step will revolve around three different activities where you and your child check out a passage in the Bible and then work together through a hands-on activity.

These three activities will help your child understand that the Bible is personal, that it prepares us for life, and that it's true! For years to come they will remember what their mom or dad said about the Bible: The Bible is a story that is powerful. The stories found in the Bible are not only powerful they're true.

At this time in your child's life, you are the biggest influence in your life-the example that you set is the one that they see. If Bible reading is not something that you regularly do, that is okay! This next year is an opportunity for both you and your child to experience what the Bible has to offer.

Your **next step in this journey is presenting your child with a new Bible!** This Bible will be one they will cherish for the rest of their life. What Bible should you choose? Don't fear-we know that there are so many different Bible options that the thought of picking one out can seem overwhelming, but we have included a Bible resource guide to help you out with the selection process.





IT'S JUST A
PHASE

Part of what will make this specific Bible something your child will cherish forever is that we are going to ask you to have significant people in your family and church highlight and sign their favorite verse or verses for your child in this new Bible.

We also encourage you to **write a short letter to your child in the front of the Bible.** We pray it always reminds them to make the Bible a part of their daily life!

Share Your Hopes for the Coming Year

Our hope for your child is that they would begin to see how amazing the Bible is and that it would be something that shapes their future from here on out, but make sure you share with your child *your* hopes for them. As their parent, you know them best. You know the areas in which they need encouragement, so share your hopes and prayers for them this year.



Activities:

Activity 1 - Why the Bible?

What You Need: Blank Paper, colored pencils or crayons

What You Do: Read **Luke 8:4-15 NIRV** below or use a kids' Bible:

A large crowd gathered together. People came to Jesus from town after town. As they did, he told a story. He said, 'A farmer went out to plant his seed. He scattered the seed on the ground. Some fell on a path. People walked on it, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky places. When it grew, the plants dried up because they had no water. Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up with it and crowded out the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It grew up and produced a crop 100 times more than the farmer planted.' When Jesus said this, he called out, 'Those who have ears should listen.' His disciples asked him what the story meant. He said, 'You have been given the chance to understand the secrets of God's kingdom. But to outsiders I speak by using stories. In that way, "They see, but they will not know what they are seeing. They hear, but they will not understand what they are hearing."' [Isaiah 6:9]

Help your child understand these verses by asking:

1. Can you draw a picture for each thing that happened in this lesson (4 total)?
2. Can you circle the picture that shows the way God wants us to respond to the Bible?
3. How does God want us to respond to the Bible?
 - a. God wants us to read the Bible, put it in our hearts, and do what it says. In this way, the Bible is very personal. Every time we read it, God is trying to teach us something.



Activity 2 - The Bible Prepares Us for Life

The Bible is so much more than knowledge and information. It can impact every area of our lives. In fact, it has information on how to handle money, interact with others, live a life of integrity, and other important areas. It prepares us to live this life.

What You Need: Dry erase marker

What You Do: Read **2 Timothy 3:14-17 NIRV** below or use a kids' Bible.

But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned. Don't give up what you are sure of. You know the people you learned it from. You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right.

Using a dry erase marker, let your child write verses 16 and 17 on a mirror (maybe a dresser mirror or bathroom mirror) so that they see it every day. Encourage them to read the verses every single time they look in the mirror, until they have them memorized.

What You Say: By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing. Memorizing Bible verses is something that will equip us to live life God's way.

Activity 3 - The Bible Is True

By now, your child knows the difference between reality and fantasy, between what is true and just a story. The Bible isn't just a story and isn't just a fairy tale. It is the true account of how God saved the world through His Son Jesus.

John was one of Jesus' disciples. He spent time with Jesus, watched Him do miracles, heard Him teach, watched Him die on the cross, and saw Him come back to life. At the end of the book of John (John 21:24, 25), this is what he said: This is the disciple who gives witness to these things. He also wrote them down. We know that his witness is true.

What You Do:

Share with your child the ways you know the Bible to be true. Is there a story of when a verse in the Bible helped you make a decision and/or comforted you during a tough time? Telling this story to your child will help them see how true the Bible has been in your own life.

How to Pick a Bible:

A few well known Bible translations for children include - New International Readers Version, New International Version, New Living Translation, Adventure Bible, International Children's Bible, Life Application Bible, God's Word for Boys, and God's Word for Girls. For a personal touch, you can get your child's name inscribed on the front of the Bible.

Additionally, there are tabs that you can purchase to put on the different books to make it easier to find the 66 books of the Bible.

There are many resources available on the Internet to help you with your research.

Memorizing Bible verses is a way to equip kids for life. Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won't sin against you."

These are great verses for kids to memorize:

- Deuteronomy 6:5
- Matthew 22:39
- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- Psalm 139:14
- Isaiah 43:5
- Psalm 119:11
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Philippians 4:13
- John 3:16
- Romans 3:23
- Romans 10:9-10
- Psalm 46:1
- Psalm 46:10
- Psalm 25:5
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Philippians 4:8
- Psalm 62:1-2
- Psalm 23:1
- John 14:6

How to Present the Bible:

1. Write a letter on the inside of your children's Bible

Sample Letter:

Dear _____,

You are a great reader!! Because of that, we want you to grow to love the greatest book of all time: the Bible. The people who love you most have taken the time to mark their favorite verses in this Bible. We hope it will be a guide for you as you seek to know God on your own.

We desire for you to read the Bible, because it is personal, prepares you for life, and is true. Enjoy reading God's letter of love to you!

Love, Mom and Dad

Date: _____

2. Set aside a special time to read the letter when you present the Bible to your child.

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH MY 8-YEAR-OLD?

The biggest developmental jump in the life of an eight-year-old is in the area of social development. Kids are beginning to develop significant friendships and recognize the needs and feelings of others. Another big milestone is in the area of reading. This year children will read more independently than in any previous years.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Can have vast differences in their size and physical abilities, as compared to other kids their age, which may affect concept of self
- May not want to rest when tired
- Should be riding a two-wheel bicycle
- Can do simple chores like making the bed, sweeping the floor, etc.
- Have well-developed hand/eye coordination

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your eight-year-old may:

- Be sensitive to adult evaluation
- Care very much about fairness
- Become more serious
- Begin to reason logically
- Want to assume more responsibility
- Have a rising level of confidence as a student

RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Compare themselves to others, which can lead to self-criticism
- Place importance on having friendships
- Seek security in groups, clubs, etc.
- Begin to understand others' perspectives

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Still see things as right or wrong, black or white, with no middle ground
- Begin to recognize differences in others' beliefs (They may have questions regarding why other children believe differently than they do.)
- Can understand reasoning and make right decisions
- Have a tendency to worry more than they did in the past