

Teaching Bible At Home (Infant to Pre-teens)

With your children at home, you face a two-fold dilemma. First, how do you grow in the Word during such a busy and often exhausting season? Second, how do you inspire and train your children to grow in the Word?

Ask God to help you cultivate a godly home where His Word is known.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." 3 John 4

Tonight, let's consider some intentional tips for studying the Bible with children at home.

1) Study the Bible as a family.

- This can be family Bible time, a devotional, or discussion of a spiritual concept. Include a song, prayer and Bible story or scriptures. Talk about what is trying to be communicated to us today, what can we learn from it, etc.
- Find a frequency that works in your family (minimum 1 per week).
- Pick a time that works mostly on a routine. Right after dinner, before bedtime, or morning.

2) Read story book type bibles or the actual Bible with them.

- As toddlers, find a picture story Bible to use.
- As they become readers, have children read from the Bible stories like Creation, Noah, Joseph, Jesus miracles, etc.
- Pre-Teen: re-read the stories again and pull out deeper meaning and application.

3) Memorize scripture or learn books of the Bible together.

You can teach/decide on verses that your young one can handle. Maybe work on one per week. As they learn one, work on another.

4) Let them see you read your Bible.

You can implement this a couple ways; one is by teaching them you have Bible time (mornings, during nap time, etc.) You could even set 10 minutes to start. Invite them to get their Bible or Bible story books to look at when you do yours. Or give them a quiet-time activity while you read yours. Then join them when your time is up. This reinforces the idea that Bible time is important and expected by saying, "We spend time with God each day!"

5) Listen to the Bible.

Play an audio version. They could even follow along if they can read. You will be surprised at what they pick up by listening.

6) Practice observing and writing out scripture with them.

Get a special notebook to write out scriptures you go over together. They could also draw a picture instead. This gives you opportunity to talk about the scripture too.

What to study and Resources

In today's information age, there are lots of resources available for ideas on teaching materials, learning through crafts, and automated bible stories.

You can be resourceful if you choose to be! (Of course, in all things, just review for biblical accuracy and teaching)

Look for short and meaningful Bible studies that keep it interesting and make it fun to learn from God's word.

You can begin with a series of Bible stories (Creation, Noah, Joseph, David, etc.) and also use biblical concepts (obedience, contentment, speech, love, etc.). Paint the picture of God and Jesus; look at their characteristics. Look at worship.

As the child progresses . . .

Babies:

Hold a little Bible and sing about it. "Love the Bible, pat the Bible." Cradle roll songs about God. Special books to pull out during Bible story time.

Toddlers:

Make Bible time fun by your dialog, activities, crafts and excitement. Read the story with some drama (tone, inflection and excitement). Read the same story multiple times during the week. Take some time to discuss what you are reading.

Example: Add an element of play

Young children learn best through play, so it's a great idea to add that into your story time. It's very easy to do as well! Just take an element of the story and make it into a game or act it out. When you play through a story, you have a great opportunity to reinforce themes and vocabulary from what you just read.

For example, the other day K and I read the Noah story. Afterwards, I grabbed a laundry basket and some stuffed animals and K pretended to be Noah. He piled all his stuffed animals into his "Ark" basket and jumped in with them, having a blast. The whole time we did this I called him Noah, cementing into his brain through play the name of the person God told to build a boat. We also talked about obeying God as he put the animals in the ark and pretended together that his boat was in the stormy flood. He had tons of fun and was learning God's truths all at the same time!

Pre-teens:

They are getting to an age it is important to teach them how to study the bible for themselves. There are many techniques: topical study, read Bible through in year, book of the Bible, object lessons and character study.

You can supplement Bible study with Christian books for teens, daily devotional books, and more. Look on our website or other reputable church of Christ teen websites for online video studies. Watch lessons together and discuss them. Gospel Advocate has an online store that has many teen books. Let them help pick one out to study together.

Additional Ways to talk about and teach about God in your home:

Deuteronomy 6:7, "You shall teach them diligently to your children, talk of them when you sit in your house, walk by the way and lie down and when you rise."

Babies:

Throughout the day point out God's creation. Thank God for good things (food, bottle, toys). Talk about pleasing God by obeying mom and dad, making good choices, showing love. Sing them "church" songs and begin saying prayers with them at dinner and before bed.

Toddlers:

Continue what you began when they were babies. Let them begin to say the prayers sometimes at dinner and bedtime. Take turns so they can learn from you too. Sing "church" songs together. Bible study time begins to be routine. Point them even more towards God. Begin working on their character.

Young Children:

Continue to go deeper with concepts that you began to instill as toddlers. Have a routine study at home time. Talk to them when in the car. When on way home from school or Bible classes. Anytime you have opportunity. During Bible study time, ask them what they think the scriptures are saying. What is God trying to tell them? (Use a worksheet at home during your study)

Pre-Teen:

Topical studies are important during this time. They begin to focus more on social aspects of their life. Help show them what God would want them to wear, say, act, be involved in, modesty, what a good friend looks like, and more! Go to the scriptures! Make lists of scriptures they can refer to on their own during these uncertain times in their life. Watch videos together as we mentioned. Your goal here is to "just keep them talking!" Get them to think for themselves and begin to reason what God's will is for their lives.

Conclusion:

God will bless your efforts. Fathers and mothers lead an important role in sharing the Bible with their children. Remember, you are God's ambassadors!

Questions:

1. If you have not decided to have a routine Bible study time in your home, what is keeping you from doing it? List out possibilities and see if they are plausible.
2. What needs do you see in your children that could be helped by studying the Bible together? Start here.
3. Am I making time as a parent for time in God's Word? Can I expect them to want to do it if I am not?
4. What do I hope our family gains by spending time in God's Word together.
Write out a list of objectives for this time. Keep it where you can see it!
5. Pray today to God about it.