

# TEN TIPS FOR LEADING FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

*Summertime is the perfect time to start some new family rhythms in your home. Parents, as the primary faith trainers of our kids, family devotionals should be a regular occurrence. **Here are ten tips to get you started leading family devotionals.***

## 1. Set Realistic Expectations

I'm not sure about you, but I've never been able to successfully lead an hour and a half Bible study with my fourteen-year-old and four-year-old. I learned a while ago through trial and error that 10-15 minutes of Bible reading, discussion, and prayer over many days add up. If all your kids can do is manage a short time to read God's Word and discuss, then build on that!

## 2. Keep it simple

When it comes to a family devotional, keep it simple. There are so many different ways to lead a family devotional. Our simple method usually consists of looking at a passage of Scripture, asking some questions and discussing for a bit, and then praying for one another. Keep it that simple and it will be sustainable and repeatable, which is what you ultimately want.

## 3. Pick the easiest time

For a while, my wife and I tried to schedule a once-a-week Bible study after dinner on Monday nights. Inevitably, something would come up or we would get done with dinner and need to clean up and get the kids cleaned up. By the time we looked up it was almost bedtime. We decided to keep a family devotional book and Bible on the kitchen table. Now, before we clean up from dinner, we grab the devotional book and Bible and have a discussion. Every family meal (which isn't always every day) is completed with this routine. Our kids have come to expect and enjoy this time. The point is to find what works best for your family's rhythm and is repeatable.

## 4. Pray Throughout

One of the best pieces of advice I ever received from a friend was to pray and ask the Lord to show me what He wants me to do. This translates easily to my family. When you lead a family devotional time, ask the Lord to show you where He might be trying to disciple your kids. Invite Him into the conversation. This attentiveness to the Holy Spirit will lead you as you discuss.

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## 5. Ask Questions and Listen

The best Bible studies are filled with lots of conversation. This means lots of questions and listening. As you pray, the Lord will sometimes give you the right question or allow you to sit quietly and just listen to your kids. When they talk, it means they are engaged, and this opens a great window into their heart. Don't feel you have to talk the entire time. As a matter of fact, you'll get better results if you don't talk the entire time.

## 6. Use Your Resources

There are so many great resources to leading a family devotional. Two of our favorites are Dinner Table Devotions and Discussion Starters, by Nancy Guthrie, and If I Could Ask God Anything: Awesome Bible Answers for Curious Kids, by Kathryn Slattery. Your church should have some great suggestions for you depending on the age of your kids. Whatever you use, the important part is to open your Bible and read together!

## 7. Have Fun

If you or your kids aren't having fun opening God's Word together and being together, then something is wrong. Yes, there will be times where we will have more serious discussions, but spending time with your family in God's Word should be enjoyable. Make it fun for your kids, so they'll be that much more likely to want to sit down with you the next day. Be silly. Be creative. Laugh.

## 8. Let Them Lead

Depending on their maturity level, give your kids a chance to lead your family devotional. Kids beg to be challenged. And just think about how much you personally learn when you prepare to teach something. If anything, allow your kids the opportunity to read God's Word aloud for the family and/or pray at some point during your time together.

## 9. Pray Out Loud

This is important. Prayer should be a part of every family devotional. Allowing your kids the opportunity to hear you pray instills a foundation for prayer. It also gives you an opportunity to regularly bless them and let them hear your blessing aloud. Pray for one another, pray for neighbors, pray for enemies and pray the Lord's Prayer.

## 10. Stay Faithful

Remember the point of regular, family devotionals isn't to have the most polished, prepared Bible study in the world. There will be times when it will feel like you did nothing or there was no good conversation, but put that out of your mind and get back to it the next day. Quantity is just as important as quality!