

IT BEGINS WITH YOU

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

TAKE ACTION

You're now entering a stage when your child's questions may outpace your ability to answer them. Just like math and science, questions about the Bible, faith, and life will become more and more complicated. Unfortunately, many people don't develop their own faith much beyond the level of a middle schooler. We'd like to encourage you to continue to expand your biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity as your child develops theirs—even if it's simply right alongside them. Watching you grow in your faith will help them grow in theirs.

PRAYER

God, first show me the richness of your Word and instill within me a passion for reading and studying it. Help me grow in my understanding of your great story and the Bible's overarching themes of redemption, faithfulness, sovereignty, sin, forgiveness, holiness, your kingdom, and others. Help me then, to also nurture within my child a love for your Word, a curiosity that drives their passionate study, and an understanding of these same themes. Help me navigate the difficult questions and complicated issues in a healthy way. And, help me cultivate a culture of conversation about you and the Bible in our family.
Amen.



MOUNTAINPARK
CHURCH

PARENTING MATTERS

READING THE BIBLE

— FOURTH & FIFTH GRADE —

YOUR CHILD'S LIFE

Your fourth or fifth grader has begun to enter into the world of pre-adolescence. As a preteen girl, she will outpace the boys in her physical development and may begin to struggle with self-esteem. As a preteen boy, he will begin to feel the competitive pressures of masculinity and will need some nurturing for his emotional side. All preteens will begin asking questions about more complicated matters related to faith and the Bible, and need to start connecting the dots by seeing the overarching themes that connect biblical stories and other passages to each other.

YOU WIN AS A PARENT WHEN YOU

KNOW:

This age group needs to establish a sense of competence in their budding adult skills so they can overcome feelings of inferiority with courage and confidence. They're also starting to think a little more abstractly and it's the right time to start making new associations between Bible stories, virtues, and theological concepts. However, fun is still a motivating factor and dopamine still presses the "save" button.

EXPECT:

They may throw challenging or seemingly inappropriate questions at you—growing their faith by testing yours. They'll get bored with the simple retelling of the same stories but excited again when they connect the dots to other stories, notice new and intriguing details, and see how they apply to their life.

PREPARE:

Gender-sensitive Bibles can be helpful during these years. Resources like maps, timelines, book and author summaries, etc., help preteens see that the Bible is true history, not fictional stories. Stay familiar with what they're reading so you can anticipate their questions.

TALK:

Continue to cultivate a culture of conversation by affirming their questions, pointing out things about which you're curious, and ask them equally (appropriately) complicated questions. Begin nurturing their ability to discern God's leading in their life by asking them what they think or feel God is trying to tell them through what they are reading.

PRACTICAL IDEAS

READ - Encourage them to read on their own. Teach them how to write notes in the margins, underline things that are important, and use colored pencils or Bible-safe highlighters (e.g., green can highlight a command or instruction from God, yellow can highlight a problem someone is facing, blue can highlight a praise, etc.). Encourage them to be creative!

MEMORIZE - Start a family challenge to see who can memorize the most verses, the Beatitudes, or Psalm 23. Make it fun and talk about their helpfulness. Reward them with something fun like a pizza party, bowling night, spa day, or a nerf war with friends.

TALK - Be sure to follow up regularly about what they are reading by asking leading questions. If they ask you a question to which you don't know the answer, stay calm and say "I'm not sure. Let's figure that out together." Be cautious about "googling" for the answer. There are many opinions out there.

PRAY - By this age your child is likely ready to advance to a more mature bedtime prayer routine. If you haven't started already, now is a great time to help them own their prayer time. Identify prayer requests or things they can thank or praise God for. Then encourage them to lead the prayer to help them get comfortable praying out loud with others.

RESOURCES

> Bibles

The Action Bible
Guys Life Application Study Bible
Girls Life Application Study Bible
Kids' Visual Study Bible
Illustrated Study Bible for Kids

> Apps & Websites

Bible App for Kids
Parent Cue App
Superbook Kids Bible
Kidsreadtruth.com

> Bible Handbooks

The Radical Book for Kids
The Ology, Machowski
The Biggest Story, Deyoung
What the Bible is All About
Bible Handbook for Kids
The Good Book for Kids
Bible Infographics for Kids