

# Parent pages



Resources for Christian parents in the 21st Century

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## A New Year for Family Devotions

**W**hat New Year's resolutions have you or your family set for this year? Maybe less ice cream and more exercise, or perhaps more reading and less television?

These are laudable goals and important to the physical and educational development of your children. Please, do not forget your family's spiritual development. Any time is a good time to recommit to worship as a family.

"Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

DEUT. 11:19

God's Word, given to us through Moses and the prophets and through the writers of the new covenant, is for us and for future generations. God assigns the task of passing this on to parents. Your church and your child's school are here to help you in this endeavor.

Your ability and desire to do this comes from God Himself. Family devotions are a wonderful way for you to pass on God's teachings to your children. You will be blessed to watch as their

faith grows and develops along with their bodies and minds.

Setting aside time for family devotions is often easier said than done. When your children are young, scheduling family devotions right after supper seems to be a popular option. As our children get older and there are evening activities that interrupt the family schedule, encouraging your children to read a devotion before bedtime and scheduling a once-a-week family devotion time can be a more workable option.

Once you have determined a routine for devotions, the next step is to find resources that meet the faith needs of your family. Here are some resources for teaching the faith. Many of them are from Concordia Publishing House, which serves The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Web site for CPH and other publishers mentioned are included at the end of this message.

### Infants

Music is the best way to share your faith with your baby. Sing him to sleep with your favorite songs from your growing-up years or soothe her with a CD of Christian lullabies.

#### Recommended

■ *Sleep Sound in Jesus* by Michael Card.

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### Toddlers and Preschoolers

Music offers you a valuable way to teach your young children about their Savior. Simple songs with actions are most easily learned by this age group.

#### Recommended

■ *Jesus and Me* by the Kuhlmann Sisters.

Toddlers are ready for Bible story books. Look for something with very simple text and intriguing pictures. Rhyming text is very appealing to young children.

**A Growing Christian makes the Best Parent!**

### Recommended

- *The Rhyme Bible Storybook for Toddlers* from Zonderkidz.
- *Read-Aloud Bible Stories Vol. 1-4* from Moody Press.

As toddlers develop attention span they are ready for simple devotions. Devotions that are very short and tackle one scriptural concept at a time are good for this age group.

### Recommended

- *Little Visits for Toddlers* from CPH.
- *Little Visits with Jesus* from CPH.

### Elementary

Children reading at the third grade level are ready for their own copy of scripture. Those children who are still learning to read will enjoy a Bible story book written at a beginning reading level.

### Recommended

- *Begin-to-Read Bible* from Karyn Henley.

There are many good resources available for devotions for elementary age children from CPH.

*My Devotions* is a quarterly publication that has as an added bonus the fact that your child will receive his or her own copy in the mail. You can also get these devotions in a book form called *Little Visits 365*.

### Recommended

- *Bible Discovery Devotions* includes puzzles and Family Faith Walks suggest family activities to extend devotions into family life.

- If your family has an interest in science experiments, check out *It Only Takes A Spark*.
- For children who enjoy art activities try *Paper, Paint and Print*. All are available from CPH.

The children in my family are spread apart age-wise. Our challenge was finding a resource that was interesting for the older child but not over the head of the younger. An organization called Youth and Family Ministry has two resources to encourage faith discussions in families. *Scripture Talk* and *Faith Talk* allow you to create your own devotion through parent-guided discussion. A topic can be discussed at the level of a teenager but can also include participation from the younger sibling as well.

As a parent, if you are going to be able to instruct your children in the faith, you need to be spiritually fed too. Regular church attendance and Bible study are essential ways to grow in the grace of God.

For personal Bible study, CPH offers three good options. The *Today's Light Bible* is God's Word with short devotional messages spread throughout the book. This book will help you read and study the Bible in two years. For parents of young children, the book *Timeouts With God* will provide you with pertinent devotions. If your children are older, try *From the Moment They Were Born*.

Does your church offer support for parents in training little ones to know and love God? Do you look for these opportunities and take advantage of them? If your church is looking for resources to help families there are many out there.

*Sharing Faith in Families* is a video/workbook series, completed in three sessions, offered by CPH to help parents understand this task and to give them ideas for sharing faith in their family. Your church's family ministry board might be interested in a book titled *Funtastic Family Nights*, which includes, among other things, directions for 19 family activities for the church, home, or neighborhood that promote faith development.

God created the family as a method of passing on faith from generation to generation. When the family works with God's plan, this goal is accomplished. However, the job of creating faith is not ours as parents. It is God's job.

He sends His spirit into the hearts of our children at their baptism and as they read and hear His word. This is how faith is born and grows in the heart of a child. What a wonderful blessing we have as parents to be a part of this process and to watch it happen.

Where to find these resources:

- [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org)
- [www.kuhlmannsisters.com](http://www.kuhlmannsisters.com)
- [www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org](http://www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org)
- [www.michaelcard.com](http://www.michaelcard.com)
- [www.zonderkidz.com](http://www.zonderkidz.com)
- [www.moodypublishers.com](http://www.moodypublishers.com)
- [www.karynhenley.com](http://www.karynhenley.com)

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