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### **My Two Children and the Bible**

I could write a long list of things I wish I’d done to foster faith in my kids, but if I had to pick one thing I’m glad I did do, I would have no trouble choosing: I read to them from the Bible each morning.

When our oldest was two, we got a little red toddler Bible, ([The First Step Bible](#), Mack Thomas, Gold’n’Honey Books.) It was the simplest, most pre-school friendly Bible story book I’ve ever found, and I cannot count how many times our son wanted me to read, “The Little Lunch,” the story of the feeding of the 5000 from the little boy’s perspective. The book is falling apart now; but it’s still the first thing I read to any little visitor who comes over.

It was easy to read the Bible to our three boys during their early school years because we home-schooled them. Before academic work started, I settled on the couch with a boy or two or three nestled near me, and read to them from an NIV simplified to a third grade reading level, ([NIV Kids’ Study Bible](#), Zonderkidz.) Sometimes I would have them retell the story to me, or act it out during a second reading.

Before beginning to home school, I talked to others who seemed to be doing a good job of it to see what I could learn. Most seemed to be teaching the Bible in the same way they taught academic subjects, with workbooks and lesson plans. I recall asking a wise lady who homeschooled all five of her kids, what Bible curriculum she used. She answered, “I don’t use curriculum. I just read them the Bible. And after I read a passage, I ask them three questions, “Who is wise?”, “Who is foolish?” and, “What do you learn about God?” That seemed a lot more appealing and sustainable.

When we stopped homeschooling after the primary years, and the boys went to grade school, finding time to read the Bible in the morning was a lot more challenging. There was no peaceful time when everyone was together in the same room. I ended up settling into a

pattern of reading to them as they ate breakfast. Sometimes this meant reading the same passage three different times, but we stuck with it.

### **The Teenage Years**

It got even tougher when they became teenagers. One liked to sleep in until the very last minute and grab something to eat on his way out the door. Another was resistant to having to listen to anything in the morning. Another just didn't want to be told that he had to do anything at all. My response to all this attitude was some version of, "This book is the story of how God saves people and how he wants us to live, so it's really important to read it. Either you read it yourself, or you listen to me read it."

I didn't require comment or discussion from them as they got older, and I kept commentary to a bare minimum. I didn't want to come in between them and their experience of Scripture. I think this approach of just reading, not pushing it, has been a good approach for teenagers. I let the word of God speak for itself, and if their eyes are glazed and far away as I read, that's their business. You can only lead the horse to water!

Now that they are in high school, two of the three boys prefer to read by themselves in the morning, which is the habit I always hoped would form. The other guy says, "You better keep reading it to me because I know if it's up to me I won't make time for it." So I read on.

Recently I asked one boy - the one who most resents being told what to do, if he thinks it has been good for him to have the Bible read to him for all these years. After thinking a moment, he answered, "Yeah. I think it kept me from doing a lot of stupid stuff."

That's all the validation I need.

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