



## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES**

**“As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household.” – Luther, 1529**

Over five hundred years ago, Luther understood the importance of families sharing time together with God’s Word and all that it teaches. Family life has changed significantly in five hundred year, but the need for God’s Word to be shared and for families to encourage one another in the faith has not. The following resources are intended to give you and your family beginning ideas for how to share God’s Word with one another. Many thanks to DCE Brandon Metcalf of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Lake Ozark, Missouri who originally compiled this list in March of 2018.

### **BIBLES**

**Jesus Storybook Bible-** This is a new favorite preschool-aged Bible, as it paraphrases many Bible stories with illustrations. Each story ends with how it connects to Jesus and what He has done for us.

**The Story Bible-** This is the children’s Bible from CPH, and has 130 different Bible stories included- focusing on connections to Christ. It’s illustrated, easy to read and is meant for ages 3-8.

**One Big Story Bible-** This is the Bible we give to our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders each August, and is a step up from a story Bible. It is the whole Bible in the CSB translation, with many call outs, Christ connections, memory verses, and even an accompanying app to bring various illustrated stories to life.

**The Action Bible-** Puts Biblical accounts into a comic book style form without losing the Biblical substance of each story. Recommended for upper elementary and middle school students.

**The ESV Student Study Bible-** The full text of the ESV translation, with study notes, cross-references, and introductions to each book. This is the Bible high school youth use in weekly Bible study and is a great step between children’s and more dense adult study Bibles.

**The Lutheran Study Bible-** The full Bible in the ESV translation, with detailed commentary notes, Law/Gospel connections, parallel passage references, and a concordance. This is the study Bible we recommend for our adults and older youth.

### A Note on Bible Translations:

A few years ago, the LCMS released an explanation about various Bible translations. Search online for “All those translations LCMS” to find the document.

Some Bibles (like “The Message”) are better described as paraphrases. This article explains the difference between translation and paraphrase: <http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-do-you-think-about-paraphrased-bible-translations>

## DEVOTIONALS / BOOKS

Luther’s Small Catechism- There’s a good reason why this has been the primary family devotional book for Lutherans for hundreds of years- it explains the basics of the Christian faith in an easily understandable way. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at Our Shepherd each receive their own copy.

Portals of Prayer- Short daily Lutheran devotional available in print or digital. The church does have some of these available every quarter, so check with the church office if you want a printed copy.

Treasury of Daily Prayer- This is a pretty hefty book, but the daily devotions with Scripture, passages from the Lutheran confessions, prayer prompts, and more are well worth it. Also available in a cheaper electronic format via the “Pray Now” app from CPH.

Lutheran Service Book (LSB)- The hymnal we use at church is a great resource for any family, especially to help learn the words and tunes to hymns that we use in worship regularly. The hymnal has been referred throughout the history of the church as the “layman’s theology book” and is a great way to teach the faith. Families can learn a “song of the month” together in a devotion time.

Jesus Calling- This is a very popular devotional book written by Sarah Young. It written as a paraphrase from God’s perspective towards us as His children, based on a few Bible passages for each daily devotional (read the passages themselves if you’re unsure about something in the paraphrase). There are multiple different books in the series, including one that is meant as a devotional for kids.

My First Hymnal- This takes the words and music for many of the most popular and easy to learn hymns from the LSB and puts them in an illustrated book to help kids learn the songs and the faith.

New Morning Mercies- Paul David Tripp’s 365 day devotional offers a wonderful Gospel-centered thought and application for each day.

Sticky Faith- A very practical, research based book that is all about everyday ideas to build lasting faith in your kids, written by Dr. Kara Powell and Dr. Chap Clark.



**Box of Questions- Faith Edition-** Like the title describes, this a box of discussion question cards produced by the Melissa & Doug Company that can spark good family discussion about faith topics.

**The One Minute Bible for Students-** A great way to start reading the Bible is to start small. This one-minute daily devotional does exactly that. Intended for middle school or high school students.

**The Simple Truth Bible:** Another one-minute daily devotion for middle or high school students. This daily devotional book from Group Publishing includes Scripture, prayer suggestions, pointers to help students journal, and indexes of Bible verses by topic.

## WEBSITES

**LCMS.org-** The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has a lot of good resources, FAQs, and theological papers on their website which are very helpful to further understand the Lutheran position on certain topics. They also have a “Locate a Church” search feature to find Lutheran churches across America. Also available as an app, this search feature is helpful when planning a vacation or finding a church during the college years.

**BibleProject.com-** a continually updating storehouse with hundreds of free animated videos, podcasts, study guides, blogs, and scholarly articles. Learn about various themes of the Scriptures, or learn about each book of the Bible individually. BibleProject helps people experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus; subscribing to their YouTube channel is highly recommended.

**Theparentcue.org-** A treasure trove of regularly updated information for parents about raising their kids in the faith, and also available via their app, The Parent Cue.

**Commonsensemedia.org-** A Christian guide to media, movies, apps, and more.

**Famtime.com-** Includes quite a few paid resources as well as a monthly selection of free family faith activities.

**ItStartsatHome.org-** Tons of free family night activity ideas and other parenting tools, in addition to their videos available on RightNow Media.

**Faith5.org-** Faith5 is a simple 5 step practice to promote spiritual conversations in your home.

**CPYU.org-** The Center for Parent & Youth Understanding has a host of resources like articles, guides, blogs, and podcasts to help you “understand and reach today’s youth culture.”

**Axis.org-** Axis is perhaps the most up-to-date resources for understanding current teen culture, with some paid content as well as regularly available free resources.



Fulleryouthinstitute.org- The research group that led to the Sticky Faith book and ministry runs a website which takes research and puts some practical application to it.

Thisource4parents.com- This site has a whole host of articles, topical guides, discussions, and parenting curriculum as well as links to other Christian parenting websites.

HomeWord.com- The ministry homepage of Dr. Jim Burns and Doug Fields. They focus on parenting, marriage, and culture with free resources and some good books as well.

CPH's Everyday Faith Calendar- This free monthly calendar includes a daily Bible verse and reflection or activity for kids of any age. <https://blog.cph.org/serve/tag/everyday-faith-calendar>

## APPS

YouVersion Bible app - The number one app for reading the Bible. You can read almost any translation and download up to three translations for reading offline. Hundreds of Bible reading and devotional plans make this a great resource for couple and family devotions.

ESV Bible app- A great companion to the ESV Student Study Bible. This Bible app contains a powerful search engine for finding familiar verses, quickly connecting cross-references, and taking or reading study notes. Available for free, with more material available to those who purchase a print copy of the ESV Study Bible or ESV Student Study Bible.

Read Scripture app- A year-long Bible reading plan that includes BibleProject videos along the way to help readers visually explore daily readings. The app is very reader friendly, with no verse numbers or footnotes to distract from the flow of the message. The app tracks what you have and haven't read, so you can read to a scheduled plan or read at your own pace.

Parenting Today's Teens- This app hosts regular podcasts, articles, and blogs meant to equip parents to spiritually and practically lead their family.

Lutheran Hour Ministries- Lutheran Hour Ministries has great daily devotionals and a lot of other great Lutheran resources. If you have a smart speaker, ask it to "play Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries." You'll hear a new five minute devotion day. Many smart speakers can also make this kind of command part of a regular morning routine along with a weather report, news update, or personal calendar overview.

Worldwide KFUE- KFUE is the radio station for the LCMS and hosts a wide variety of great programs from music to cultural and theological discussions that can be streamed at any time.

Luther's Small Catechism- FREE app from CPH so you can take the catechism with you on the go!



## REIMAGINING FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Family devotions are a vital way to connect family members to one another and to their Lord. Families with busy schedules often ask how a regular family devotion is possible. Perhaps if we broaden the definition and scope of what a family devotion is, then we can be more intentional about encouraging each other's faith. To that end, the following three categories can act as crucial parts of family devotions: Time, Moments, and Milestones.

### TIME

These are the stereotypical "gather the family all together" devotions that are centered on the Word, prayer, and fellowship within the family. These work well during family meals, car rides, bed time, or other times that you already have together as a family.

A very successful option for many families is Sunday lunch/dinner, discussing what was taught in Bible class/worship that Sunday morning, prayer time about what's coming up that week for each member of the family, and fellowship around the meal. Other families read a devotional together and talk about it, pray and sing a favorite hymn before bedtime, use a storybook Bible, or watch a BibleProject or Our Shepherd Confirmation video together. With so many different ways to gather together in this way, try as many or as few options as it takes to find something that works for your family!

**A Tip for Keeping Each Family Member Engaged:** Use Sticky Notes to write down key Bible verses, good questions or statements made by individual family members, discussion topics, prayer requests, etc. Put these Sticky Notes somewhere visible in the house (fridge, mirrors, front door, etc.) where they will serve as reminders for the family of the devotions and also help each family member know that their voice matters in the discussion.

*Scripture basis for Time as a devotional category:*

**Acts 2:42, Matthew 4:23, Deuteronomy 6:7, 1 Corinthians 11:3, and 1 Timothy 3:2-4**



## MOMENTS

Throughout each day, we have opportunities to teach the faith in the context of whatever is going on in the life of the family. These “teachable moments” are a constant part of parenting and are also a great opportunity for teaching about the faith. The key is to let Scripture be the center of that teachable moment, to use the context already given by the circumstances, and to help give perspective on the situation. These are often one on one encounters, very relational in nature, and occur “on the road” throughout the day rather than at a set time each week.

**Example:** Driving home a child after their sports team lost the game, parents can direct the conversation to Scripture, which teaches us our identity comes from Christ (and a sports loss doesn't mean we're less valuable). By talking about their identity in Christ and sharing with them your and God's care for them, you are making much more of an impact than a simple “better luck next time” or “let's blame the officiant” conversation would, and you're giving your child a better perspective from which to view similar circumstances later on.

*Scripture basis for Moments as a devotional category:*

*1 Thessalonians 2:8, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 24:32-35, Romans 8:18*

## MILESTONES

Milestones are regular remembrances or anniversaries that give us an opportunity to focus on the deeds and faithfulness of God. The Old Testament celebration of the Passover is a perfect example of a milestone (*Exodus 12*).

There are numerous natural milestones throughout the life of each Christian (Baptism, receiving a first Bible, starting confirmation, first communion, Confirmation, marriage, etc.).

The church year includes many regular milestones and seasonal opportunities for family devotions (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.).

Personal family events may also serve as milestones that spark conversations about faith (birthdays, anniversaries, awards ceremonies, graduations, funerals, accomplishments, surgeries, family vacations trips, reunions, etc.).

The key to using milestones well is to celebrate God's deeds and faithfulness to us instead of focusing only on our accomplishments or our own attempts at goodness.

*Scripture basis for Milestones as a devotional category: 1 Corinthians 11:25-26, Deuteronomy 5:6*

