



# MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE



*Putting God's Word  
in Your Heart*



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Take a moment and picture yourself and your family spending joy-filled time together working to build a foundation based on the powerful, living words of God, a foundation on which your children can forever stand strong ([Ephesians 6:13](#)). The overall goal of this section is to establish a foundation of scriptures that will guide your children through not only childhood, but also into adulthood for the rest of their lives. This section provides suggested building blocks for that foundation.

### *Pause and reflect on the reasons why God instructs us to know His words and keep them in our hearts.*

Before introducing a Bible verse to your children, take the time to become familiar with the material offered here and plan for success. Pause and reflect on the reasons why God instructs us to know His words and keep them in our hearts. Then take time to carefully examine the remainder of this section. Move through the variety of methods offered to help your children enjoy learning God's Word. This perusal will bring you right back here with a plan in mind.



### *Three questions*

Sometimes just the thought of memorizing scriptures can be overwhelming. Understanding this, one specific goal of this section is to put your mind at ease by providing the information you need to make memorizing scriptures a rewarding and enjoyable experience for the whole family. This section covers three of the most commonly asked questions concerning memorization:

**Why** memorize scriptures?

**How** do we memorize scriptures and keep them in our hearts?

**Which** scriptures should we memorize?

We will begin by addressing the first and perhaps the most important question. It is a question often asked by children and one that deserves a solid answer.



## Why memorize scriptures?

The obvious answer is this: because God tells us to. But for what purpose? Why? God lovingly explains why it is important for us to follow His instructions in **Proverbs 4**: “My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh” (**verses 20-22**).

## He shows us that paying attention means more than listening carefully and reading regularly.

We find three of God’s loving, inspiring answers in this passage.

### 1. God’s Word in our hearts brings blessings.

God wants to give us the kind of good life and spiritual health His living words produce. He fervently desires for us to receive all the benefits that having His words in the midst of our hearts can bring. In this inspired passage, it is as though God is talking directly to us through His servant Solomon, addressing us as His children—and that includes our children. He instructs us to pay attention to His words. He shows us that paying attention means more than listening carefully and reading regularly. His emphatic instructions are to keep His words in the center of our hearts!



### 2. God’s Word in our hearts helps us teach our children God’s way.

God once again ends His instruction to parents and children with a loving reminder of why it’s important to store His words in our hearts. God planned to abundantly reward the obedience of the children of Israel; however, they did not follow God’s instructions, and they missed out on all that He desired them to have. (Read **Deuteronomy 6:10-11** and share with your children what God desired to give those who listened and obeyed.)

To further illuminate this concept, take a close look at **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**. In this passage God gives detailed instructions on how to etch and embed His words into the hearts and minds of our children. He begins (in **verses 4-6**) by focusing on the parents and instructing us to listen to Him, to remember what He has said and done, and to love Him with all our heart, soul and strength. He inspires us to *first* set an example and *then* teach—exactly what He and Jesus Christ have done.

In **verses 7-9**, God moves on to how and when to instruct our children: “You shall teach them [His words] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

### 3. God’s Word in our hearts helps us resist sin.

Jesus knew what was written in the Scriptures. The words were hidden in His heart and He understood the meaning and intent of these Scriptures. As a result, He was able to wisely apply God’s Word to the situation at hand. Satan had no defense against these powerful, living words of God! When Satan



attempted to tempt Jesus and Jesus remained firm, wisely quoting scriptures that countered Satan's approach, "the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him" (Matthew 4:11).

## *Rather than following Satan's suggestion, Jesus quoted God's Word.*

Jesus shows us the immeasurable value of having God's Word hidden in our hearts. Visualize this scene, this pivotal point in the history of humanity. Jesus had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, and He was hungry (verse 2)! The devil seized this opportune moment to tempt Jesus with, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (verse 3).

Rather than following Satan's suggestion, Jesus quoted God's Word: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (verse 4). Jesus knew the written Word of God and used this "sword of the Spirit" to resist temptation.

Not willing to give up, the devil tried again and again to tempt Jesus to sin. When he challenged Jesus to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the temple, Jesus did not take the bait. Instead He again replied, "It is written again, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God"" (verse 7).

The devil's last temptation was an offer to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would just fall down and worship him. Jesus would not yield and said, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve"" (verse 10).

As parents we have the responsibility to equip our children to stand against the deceptive lies of Satan and the alluring pulls of this world. With God's help we can do this! We can do our part as we:

Obey the **instructions** God gives us in **Proverbs 4:20-22**.

Commit to following the detailed instructions **to parents** in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**.

Study along with our children, in effect creating our own continuing **education** class!

Live **God's Word**.

## *How do we memorize scriptures and keep them in our hearts?*

The simple answer is this: by using methods for learning and remembering scriptures. Take a close look at each of the methods offered in this section. Visualize your children drawing or singing the scriptures, filling in the missing words, playing a matching game, or taking part in a sword drill. Consider which of these methods your children might enjoy most and which method might best help them remember the memory scripture you have chosen.

## *Which scriptures should we memorize?*

Look at each of the topics and scriptures. Consider which memory scripture you might like to introduce. Is there a particular challenge your family or your child is facing? Perhaps one scripture will stand out as you ponder this. Scan several of the suggestions for family interactions, giving special attention to the one that accompanies the memory scripture you are considering. Think about which portions of this interaction you might use, or maybe just collect ideas and create your own interaction.



## Where do we start?

You are ready to start introducing memory scriptures to your children. **Method #1** provides the best possible starting point. **Method #2, “A 7-Step Plan for Introducing a New Memory Scripture,”** offers a detailed plan on how to implement the process. As you begin, you may find it helpful to use a pre-designed plan like this, or you may find ideas here that help you and your family develop your own personal method for memorizing scriptures.

You will need to aside a time to meet together with your family for the specific purpose of introducing, reviewing and etching the memory scriptures into your hearts and minds. Make this a top priority.

If possible, make sure that each person participating has access to his or her own Bible, a pen or pencil, and a spiral notebook, laptop or something in which to record memory scriptures and keep them together for further review.

## As you begin

Determine to make learning God’s Word a positive, successful experience. To attain this we suggest you keep it simple. Begin by selecting *one* verse. Then work together as a family to memorize this scripture. Seeing your enthusiasm, watching you set the example, and hearing you recite the first memory verse will do much to engage your children in this process of memorizing God’s Word.

Since memorization will not be truly effective and lasting unless children understand the meaning of the words and are able to relate the scriptures to their own lives, each memory scripture is followed by an interaction. These are designed to encourage active group participation and to equip you with a variety of ways to:

- Introduce a **new** memory scripture.

- Involve the children in discussing and discovering the **meaning** of each verse.

- Implant the **value** of this particular scripture into the children’s hearts and minds.

- Experiment creating and writing your own **interactions**.

Interaction is a major key to enjoyable, successful memorization and comprehension. The most meaningful interactions will occur when you:

- Involve** all your children in all the ways you can.

- Remember that in contrast to a lecture, a discussion involves **active participation** from several people sharing ideas and perspectives.

- Encourage **communication**, listen carefully and give positive feedback.

- Set the **example** of enthusiastically approaching a new scripture.

- Keep things **positive** and moving at a nice steady pace.

- Enjoy this time **getting to know** your children and helping them get to know you and God’s Word.

It is certainly not necessary for you to cover *everything* that any interaction suggests. The ideas, questions and activities are there for you to choose from. You choose how many or how few you would like to use. The longer interactions provide enough material for you to use a portion for introducing the scripture, another part for reviewing the verse later, and still another portion for etching the verse into the minds and hearts of your children. Alter the interactions to best address the ages and interests of your children and your family size, or create your own interaction.



# METHODS

## *for Learning and Remembering Scriptures*

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. —2 Timothy 2:15*

### GOD'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

God has shared with us the most valuable educational textbook in the world. It prepares students for an eternal future. He Himself is the founder and has personally inspired every word. So as a parent, you will never have to worry about its content or validity. After all, it is the truth!

God expects us to do our daily homework by reading, studying and praying. Our textbook is the Bible—the very Word of God, the truth, the sword of the Spirit. It is designed to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path ([Psalm 119:105](#)). There are history lessons, poetry and songs to read. There are mysteries, biographies, futuristic studies and social studies. We are told to ask Him directly when there are things we don't understand, and He will answer us ([Matthew 7:7](#)).

*Our textbook is the Bible—the very Word of God, the truth, the sword of the Spirit.*

God uses the very best teaching method for long-term memory: teach, review and repeat, review and repeat, review and repeat. For example, along with our daily studies, every week on the seventh day He calls us together—to teach us. And He never misses a class! By applying this method of repetition, we learn who God is and what unfailing love He has for us. We learn why we are here and what His plan is for all humanity. Teach, review and repeat can be very effective!

Listed next are a variety of methods you can begin using as you introduce, practice and review the scriptures your children have recorded in their memory books. These methods can be used with almost any verse. Search for the ones that work best for your children.

### *Method #1: Ask for God's Help*

Pray daily with your child, asking God to give each of you a zeal for His Word. Ask God to help you remember the verses you study and to embed them deep into your hearts.





## *Method #2: A 7-Step Plan for Introducing a New Memory Scripture*

This is a method guided by [Proverbs 4:20-22](#).

### **1. Pay attention.**

Ask the children to pay close attention as you introduce the new memory verse (or separate verses if there is a wide gap in the ages of your children).

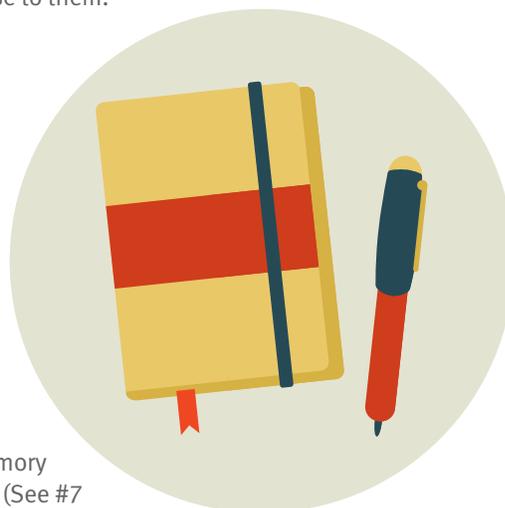
### **2. Listen.**

Instruct them to listen carefully as you read the scripture aloud. State the book, chapter and verse as you turn to it. Modeling what you will be asking the children to do will help them learn to do it.

### **3. Read.**

Ask the children to open their Bibles and find the book, the chapter and the verse from which you just read. (Provide all the help needed for the very youngest to find this.) Then ask them to focus their eyes and mind on the words in that verse and to read the words silently. You can stand by young children and show them how to point to each word as you read the verse to them.

*If possible, supply a memory book in which the children can record memory scriptures.*



### **4. Write, read and remember.**

Have the children open their Bibles to the memory verse and copy it as neatly as they can. If possible, supply a memory book in which the children can record memory scriptures. (See #7 at the bottom of this list for more information.) Ask them to be sure to write out the name of the book and record the number of the chapter and the verse in which it is found. (With young children, use **Method #3: Copywork**.) Next, practice reading and saying the verse. After reading it aloud several times, ask the children to close their eyes and see how much of it they can say without looking at the verse. As the children become accustomed to this, they may enjoy forming partner groups. Each one of the partners would take a turn at being the teacher and the pupil. They would encourage and help each other learn small segments at a time and would listen to each other repeat these segments without looking back at the verse. Those who feel they are ready may want to stand up and recite the verse.

### **5. Clarify.**

Check to see if the children understand the meaning of all the words in the verse. Then create ways to involve them in a discussion about the verse. Ask one of the children to paraphrase the verse. Encourage all of the children to give an answer to why it is important to learn and remember this verse.



*Draw a picture, write a poem or a song, or create a poster with artistic designs that get to the heart of each verse.*

#### 6. Display.

Ask the children to prepare something they can display that illustrates the meaning of this verse. Draw a picture, write a poem or a song, or create a poster with artistic designs that get to the heart of the verse. Encourage the children to come up with their own ideas. They may want to work on this all week and share it with the family at your next appointed time.

#### 7. Commit.

Encourage your children to commit to learning God's Word. Provide them with something permanent in which they can write each memory verse you introduce, date each verse as it is memorized, and still have space to record their thoughts concerning the verse. Suggest they make a plan and set aside a time for learning God's Word. Encourage the older children to record their own favorite verses as they find them in their Bibles, to write them in their memory books as an "extra," and to memorize them as they can.



*Children thrive on repetition as long as what's being repeated is approached in a variety of different ways.*

You will think of many other ways to begin etching a new memory scripture in your child's mind and heart. Feel free to try your ideas or to interchange other methods found below into this 7-step plan as you use it. Children thrive on repetition as long as what's being repeated is approached in a variety of different ways.

### *Method #3: Copywork*

This method can be set up in a few different ways depending on the child's age and ability. Basically, have the scripture your child is in the process of learning printed on a work sheet with space for the child to write it out. Sometimes the scripture can be on the top of the page with lines below. Sometimes the scripture can be traced. The value of this approach is that it allows the child not to worry about spacing, spelling, capitalization, and the like. The child can just focus on writing out God's Word. Copywork can also be used to occupy a younger child during a family Bible study when the discussion becomes too long or goes beyond his or her level of comprehension. The copywork can keep him or her focused on learning God's Word.

### *Method #4: Read Your Age*

As you are able, provide each child with a Bible. Build a habit of opening your Bibles and reading at least one verse each day. One method is to read the same number of verses as your age. For example, if you are six years old, you read six verses; if you are 70, then you read 70 verses; if you are 12, you will read a dozen Bible verses each day. It is amazing how regularly reading God's Word helps us to memorize it!



*Place visible copies of these verses in key places throughout your house—places where children will be sure to see them and remember them.*



### *Method #5: Say Them, Display Them*

This approach is explained in detail in [Deuteronomy 6:7-9](#). God has assigned this method specifically to parents. A modern version of this scripture might read this way: “Teach God’s Word diligently to your child. Talk about these verses when you are sitting in your house and when you are riding in your car. Listen to your child say them before you go to bed at night and when you get up in the morning. Place visible copies of these verses in key places throughout your house—places where children will be sure to see them and remember them. Write the verses out, say them and display them.”

*Many of these active games will require the participation of family or friends.*

## ACTIVE GROUP PARTICIPATION METHODS

Children learn best by repetition and by active participation. Listed next are activities that can be modified and adjusted to help a child memorize more easily. Many of these active games will require the participation of family or friends. So join in—that’s what makes them fun!

### *Method # 6: Missing Words*

Write each word of the scripture you are trying to memorize on a different note card. (You can simplify this by writing each phrase on a different card.) The object of this game is to place the words in the correct order to recreate the verse you are learning. [Matthew 22:37](#) will be our sample verse.

For younger children, lay almost all the words out and place them in their correct order, leaving out only the key words. The words you did not use in the verse should be randomly placed near it and visible to all the children—in this case “God,” “soul,” “love,” “mind,” and “heart.” You can read the verse without the words to your young children: “You shall \_\_\_\_\_ the LORD your \_\_\_\_\_ with all your \_\_\_\_\_, with all your \_\_\_\_\_, and with all your \_\_\_\_\_.” Then hold up the missing words one at a time and read them aloud if needed. Allow the children time to think about where that word should be placed. When all the blanks are filled in with the correct words in the correct order, the verse is complete and it is time to read it aloud.



For older children, add the scripture reference by writing the book, chapter and verse on separate cards and including them. You can approach this in two different ways depending on how well you think the children know this verse. (And if you have two sets of word cards, you can let the children play in teams and see which team can complete the puzzle first.)

Follow the same directions as above, except leave out more words in the verse and omit the numbers or the name of the book in the scripture reference. They pick up the missing words and place them in the correct blanks.

Scramble the words and randomly lay them out like puzzle pieces. Allow the group time to look at all the pieces and decide where each fits.

Be sure to stop and read the verse aloud when it is complete.

### *Method #7: The Matching Game*

This game can be very challenging or quite simple. It is a good method to use when your children are trying to learn the Commandments in order or need to remember where a certain story, person or verse in the Bible can be found. As you will see, each game will require two sets of cards. We'll use the 10 Commandments as an example.

## *Players take turns turning two cards at a time face up so all can see.*

You will need one set of cards on which each Commandment is written out and another set of cards on which the numbers 1 through 10 are written. The game can be played as an easier version with all the cards face up and the players taking turns matching them. If a player incorrectly matches, he or she loses the next turn. The player with the most correct matches is the winner.

Or you can mix the cards up and lay them face down and play the game like you would "Concentration." Players take turns turning two cards at a time face up so all can see. If the two cards match (for example, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" would match the number 4), that player has made a match and stacks the two cards together then continues to try to make more matches. If the two cards do not match, the player turns the cards face down leaving them in the spot they were originally in. This goes on until all the cards have been matched. The player with the most matches is the winner.

If you want to create a memory verse match, you could do it by writing each of your memory verses on separate cards to form one deck with the scripture reference for each of those verses on separate cards to form the other deck. Then follow the same directions as before.





## EXPRESSIVE MEMORY METHODS

### *Method #8: Express it Through Drawings*

Encourage all ages to express a memory scripture by drawing it. When finished, write the memory scripture on the back of the drawing as the child dictates it to you, or if the child is old enough, ask him or her to write the scripture. Then have the “artist” point to the key elements of the scripture in the drawing and describe them.

### *Method #9: Express it With a Rhythm and a Beat*

(This method works wonderfully well for younger children.)

Find a scripture that has a little rhythm and create movements that fit the rhythm and words. Then let the children move with the words and see just how quickly they learn that scripture!

### *Method #10: Express it in Song*

Using the words in the scripture, create a melody, or use a well-known tune. Sing the verse.

### *Method #11: Wash, Rinse, Repeat*

Sometimes there is no substitute for repetition, going over and over the verses you would like your child to remember. Make it a part of their school work and rehearse the scriptures when you are traveling, when they are waiting with you for an appointment, or when riding to swimming lessons, the library or the store.



*Sometimes there is no substitute for repetition, going over and over the verses you would like your child to remember.*

### *Method #12: Sword Drills*

The idea for “Sword Drills” comes from [Ephesians 6:17](#) and [Hebrews 4:12](#). In [Ephesians 6:17](#), the Word of God is called the “sword of the Spirit,” and it is listed as part of the armor of God. [Hebrews 4:12](#) says, “The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

1. Have your child, the “soldier,” stand straight and tall with Bible held by his or her side (the spine of the Bible directed at the floor).

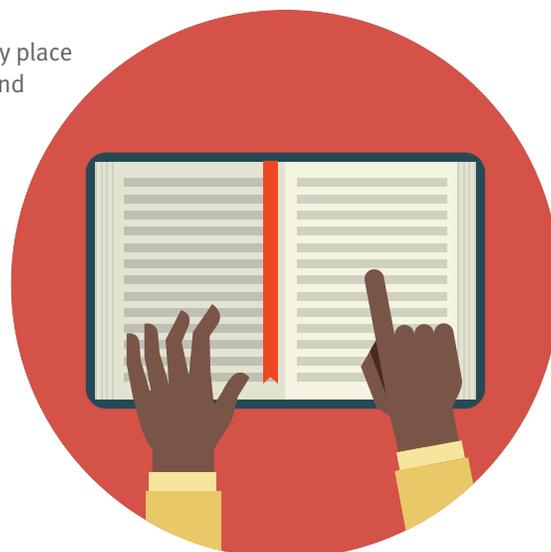


2. The parent says “Attention!” At this command the soldiers crisply place their Bibles in front of them with one hand under the Bible, one hand flat on top of the Bible. The front cover of the Bible faces the child.

3. The parent says “Draw swords!” At this command the soldier sandwiches the closed Bible between his or her hands (the spine of the Bible again directed at the floor).

4. The parent then gives the directive of where the soldier will go: “Ephesians 6:17,” for example. The soldier holds still even after the book, chapter and verse are stated. Then the parent says “Charge!” At that command, the soldier as quickly as possible finds the passage, and once his or her finger is on the exact scripture silently steps forward indicating completion of the task.

5. As each child steps forward, the parent quietly checks to see if he or she has found the correct scripture. When all children have stepped forward, the parent asks the first one who found the correct scripture to read it aloud while the other children follow along reading silently.



*As children get more familiar with their Bibles and more comfortable using them, challenge the children with “directives” that require knowledge of how the Bible is organized.*

The sword drills method can be expanded upon to help reinforce your children’s memory work. Try these add-ons or variations:

**Familiarize children of all ages with their Bibles.**

When children first begin to learn the names and placement of books of the Bible, the directive may be simply to find the name of one book of the Bible. Next, progress to adding a chapter, then finally add book, chapter and verse. As children get more familiar with their Bibles and more comfortable using them, challenge the children with “directives” that require knowledge of how the Bible is organized and where certain key stories and verses can be found. Simple directives, for example, might be to find the first book of the Bible and say its name, find the last book of the Bible and say its name, find the first book of the New Testament, find the last book of the Old Testament, find the middle book of the Bible, etc. Move to more complex directives as the children show ability and interest.

**Practice and review verses your children are working to memorize or have memorized.**

Conduct the sword drill using those scriptures your children are striving to memorize. After finding the book, chapter and verse, have them read it out loud. Then have all of the children read or say it together. Ask all the children to look up at you. Then call on them one at a time to tell you where this verse was found or to repeat the verse from memory. Remember, reviewing and repeating a verse or passage over a long period of time is the best way of etching and retaining it in your mind and heart.



**Help children remember where to find Bible stories and retain the key concepts.**

As a variation, have children locate specific Bible stories instead of specific Bible verses. For example say, “Find the book of the Bible in which we find both the story of Samuel anointing David as the future King and the story of David facing Goliath. Charge!” After everyone has found the book, ask the one who found it first to name the book. If this came easy for the children, challenge them to find and look through chapter 16 for a key verse that explains why God chose David to be King. If

*Think of other ways to use sword drills to help your children remember what they are learning and to challenge them to stretch their memories.*

needed say, “You will find it somewhere in verses 1 through 10.” Then call on the one who found it first to read it. Think of other ways to use sword drills to help your children remember what they are learning and to challenge them to stretch their memories.



# WHICH SCRIPTURES?

## *Choosing Specific Verses to Memorize*

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. —2 Timothy 3:16*

According to God, you really can't go wrong here! In the remainder of this section, you will find suggested memory scriptures with an accompanying suggested interaction. Rather than just memorizing a verse by rote, using the interaction will help your child understand the context and meaning of the verse.

### **TOPIC: GOD**

The goal of placing this topic first is twofold. First, it is to help children see the reality of God (whom they cannot see) through the things they do see and experience, as well as through God's own inspired words. Second, it is to help children get a glimpse of how awesome God is and how much love He has for each one of us.

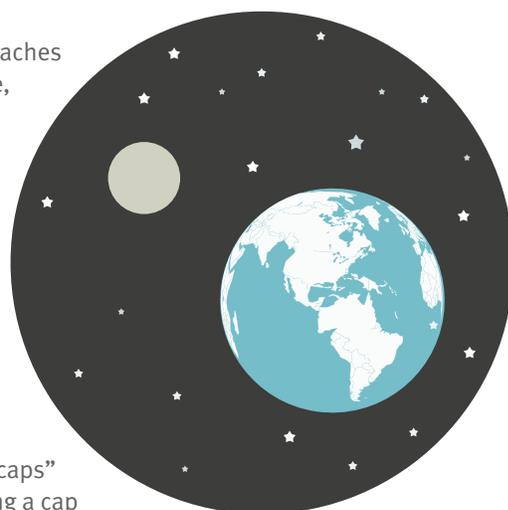
*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. —Genesis 1:1*

### *Interaction*

Before you begin ask, Does anyone know the very first thing God tells us and teaches us in His Word? Then read the first verse of the first book of the Bible. This verse, along with the whole first chapter of Genesis, provides clear, direct, simple answers to questions that still leave some of the greatest intellects of all time stumped. Take the time to read through the details of creation.

*Ask your children why they think God would begin the Bible by talking about creation.*

Before moving on and asking your children to answer some thought-provoking questions, you might tell them they are going to need to put on their "thinking caps" for this one. (They can do this just by going through the motion of firmly securing a cap to their heads, or you can create clever-looking "thinking caps" they can really wear.) Each time you pull out the thinking caps, the children will know they are about to be challenged with some questions that require some extra thinking.





Ask your children why they think God would begin the Bible by talking about creation. Why do they think God created man on the sixth day and not the second or the fourth? Relate this to a time when your family prepared for an event—maybe a relative coming to visit or a Thanksgiving that was held at your home. Discuss preparation. What meaning does *preparation* convey? (Some related concepts might include *consideration, interest, anticipation, understanding, respect, concern, and love.*)

## *Spend as much time as you can looking at specific aspects of creation and discussing how each reveals the compassion, the provision and the love God has for us.*

You can actively punctuate this point by going outside and taking a good look at a tree, a cloud, and so on. Invite everyone to think of all the benefits people and animals receive from each part of a tree and from the clouds. If you don't get much response, try first rephrasing the question in another way: "Why do you think God created trees, bees, and so on?" If needed, give them a hint by saying something like, "Trees provide homes for \_\_\_\_\_." Children may enjoy finding something they really appreciate that God created and telling you all the ways it helps them. Remind them of their "thinking caps," and ask everyone to keep thinking even when they think all possible answers have been given. They will be amazed at the thought and preparation God put into His creation! Spend as much time as you can looking at specific aspects of creation and discussing how each reveals the compassion, the provision and the love God has for us, along with His ability and power to manage it all and care for us.

*Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.*  
—Psalm 145:3

### *Interaction*

First be sure your children understand the meaning of the word *praise*. Have them name synonyms that could accurately replace "praise" in this sentence: "I [praise] you for learning God's words and keeping them in your heart." (How about "applaud" or "acclaim"? ) How is *praise* different from *compliment*?

Let children choose from one of the following partner-friendly activities which focus on the application of praise. You will probably need to set a designated amount of time for these two activities.

#### **1. Sing praise to God.**

Children choosing this activity should search the index of the hymnal for songs focused on praising God. They will practice singing the words of the song and make note of all the things for which David and other lyricists praise God. (Take this opportunity to teach your children how to use the index if they don't already know.)





## 2. Read one of David's psalms of praise.

Providing a list of psalms to choose from could be helpful. Children choosing this activity will look for an inspiring psalm of praise, practice reading the one they choose, and note all the things for which David praises God.

Those singing praise to God may sing the song to you or ask all of you to sing along with them. Ask, Does anyone want to be the songleader or choir director? Afterward see if you can remember everything the author praised God for in the hymn. Next listen while those reading the psalm of praise present their psalm of choice as an expressive reading as if they were up on stage. Afterward see if you can remember everything David praises God for.

## *Listen to the ideas your children have, and have fun discussing the greatness of our God!*

After discussing the meaning of *praise* and after singing, reading or listening to a psalm of praise, have the children read or recite the memory verse and ask them what they think the verse means when it says that “His greatness is unsearchable.” Listen to the ideas your children have, and have fun discussing the greatness of our God!

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. —Psalm 46:1*

### *Interaction*

When David describes God in [Psalm 144](#), he uses very concrete terms that younger children can understand. He describes God as his rock, his shield, his high tower, his fortress ([verses 1-2](#)). Discuss these objects with your children and ask them to describe, show, draw or build one of these things and explain how it could help in a time of trouble. Assure them that David was talking about not only his God but also *our* God, and He is the same rock, shield, high tower and fortress yesterday, today and forever.

## *He describes God as his rock, his shield, his high tower, his fortress.*

For older children, you might want to have a “God is my \_\_\_\_\_” contest. Provide 15 minutes and see who can come up with the most words from the psalms and elsewhere in the Bible that finish the sentence above. Write out the sentences in list form, and read the list to the family.

If you have some creative family members, you could request that they make an eye-catching visual reminder of the many things God is to you. Display it in your home and add on to your list as you find or think of new words or phrases that complete that sentence.





*God is love. —1 John 4:8*

### *Interaction*

Encourage family members to tell about ways God has shown them love. Ask them to share memories they have of God clearly showing love to others you know.

You can set a bowl out on the table and ask your children, “What is that like?” See what creative comparisons they come up with (a cradle, a shell, a pothole). Then ask them, “What is it?” (“It’s a bowl.”) Consider the difference between what something is *like* and what something *is*.

## *Discuss as a family how God could be showing love for us by not giving us what we ask for.*

Then go back and talk more about what it means that God *is* love. Give a test that all will pass, one that will etch this scripture on the children’s minds and hearts. Tell them, “I’m going to ask you some questions, and I am telling you now that the answer to all of these questions is ‘love.’ Listen very carefully and consider each of the questions, then answer loudly, clearly, and with complete confidence because you know ahead of time that the answer will always be love.”

Ask:

Why doesn’t God always **give us** what we ask for when we pray? (Love!)

Why does God want us to **learn** His words? (Love!)

Why does God tell us to **be kind** to people even when they aren’t kind to us? (Love!)

Why does God tell us to **keep** the Sabbath? (Love!)

Customize your own questions to meet the age or stage of your children.

Discuss as a family how God could be showing love for us by *not* giving us what we ask for, or by instructing us to be kind to people even when they are not kind to us.

Refer to times you have—out of love—said no to something your children wanted, or have—out of love—required that they do something they really didn’t want to do. Let the children know that even though they may not see or understand how God’s answer shows His love for us, we can be sure that everything God tells us to do and every answer to our prayers is given out of God’s great love for us, because *God is love!*

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. —Hebrews 13:8*

### *Interaction*

Use the example of something constant that provides security, safety and peace of mind. Discuss gravity and ask them questions like, Does gravity change because of circumstance? Is gravity something that was one way back in Moses’ time but is different now? Why does that matter? What difference does it make?



For younger children, have them round up three to five items each (make sure they get something heavy, something lightweight, something small, something oddly-shaped, and so on.) Do a “gravity check” and see if the outcome is different just because the items vary. How does gravity reflect God’s love for us? Discuss what makes this kind of reliability an important trait and assure your children that they can always count on God and His Son Jesus to do exactly what they have said they will do.

## *Help each family member set a goal and make a plan for how he or she can apply reliability in daily life this week.*

Now it’s time to apply reliability. In **Ephesians 5:1**, we are told to imitate God “as dear children.” Talk about ways each of you can develop the godly trait of reliability. Help each family member set a goal and make a plan for how he or she can apply reliability in daily life this week. Be sure your children understand the meaning of the word *reliable*. Ask them to give you some examples of what reliability looks like.



Each person should have his or her goal written down so it can be read and remembered. Play a game throughout the week: for the next seven days, try to catch each other being reliable. If you have stickers you don’t mind the children using, you can tell them that each and every time they catch someone being reliable, they should put one sticker on that person. Then explain what you saw them do that demonstrated reliability and give positive feedback. When you see your children *not* being reliable, remind them of their goal. (The game will be more fun if *you* join in, demonstrating reliability, getting and giving stickers and providing positive feedback.)

*If God is for us, who can be against us? —Romans 8:31*

### *Interaction*

During this interaction we will concentrate on:

#### **1. Etching this verse in our memories.**

Ask everyone to open their Bibles to **Romans 8:31**, and read it aloud while the children listen. Then ask each person to read it or say it as you provide help. Now, try looking up from your Bibles and saying it, closing your eyes and saying it, giving a little beat to the words and moving to the beat and saying it. Try adding your own creative ways of saying this verse. Repeating the same thing over and over works well as a memory tool, but repeating the same thing over and over in a variety of ways works better.

#### **2. Proving that we can count on what this verse says as being the absolute truth.**

First, ask your children to think about a person in the Bible that faced a seemingly impossible situation from which only God could provide rescue. If they need a hint, mention a name: David; Daniel; or Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. Follow up by also writing the names the children mentioned on a chart, chalkboard, or piece of poster board. Be sure they are written large enough that everyone can plainly see each name. Remind your children that these people were real people that lived a long time ago.



Next, demonstrate for the children an example of what you are about to ask each of them to do. First you, then each of the children, one at a time:

Point to the name you mentioned and read it aloud.

Describe the seemingly impossible situation this person finds himself or herself in.

Explain what caused this person to be in a situation he or she can't possibly get out of.

Describe how God rescues him or her.

Let the children know that after each one finishes, you will call out in a louder-than-normal voice: “**Romans 8:31.**” And you would like them (all together) to say in an emphatic manner and with a little louder-than-normal voice: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” By the end of this, you may have a family motto nailed down!

### *He rescued them and He can rescue us also. Nothing is too hard for God!*

The next time one of your children is faced with some difficulty or challenge such as a hard test coming up, a difficult task, or a conflict or concern, you can say in your louder-than-normal voice or can encourage them to think with their louder-than-normal thoughts: “**Romans 8:31.**”

Conclude by reminding your children that though they lived long ago, the people you talked about today were real people like us. God is the same yesterday, today and forever! He rescued them and He can rescue us also. Nothing is too hard for God!

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. —Jeremiah 29:11*

### *Interaction*

Did you know that God thinks about you? He thinks about you a lot! Isn't that awesome!? As you read the verse, ask the children to be very still and quiet so as to let the words soak into their minds and their hearts. Pause for a few quiet, still seconds. Then ask a few questions about the verse to see how much they understand and how well they grasp the magnitude of it. Explain that God is always thinking about us in a positive and hopeful manner.

Ask, Do you think the word *you* in this verse means only you, or does it include all of God's people? Our great, loving and awesome God has unlimited brain power. He has enough room in His mind and heart for all of us plus an unlimited amount left over for others. Therefore we can be sure that the “you” in this verse includes us all! With that in mind, let's all think about what we have just read. *Wow!* This means that the most powerful, most loving, most merciful Being in the whole universe keeps us in His thoughts all the time and looks forward to giving us a good future!



## TOPIC: GOD'S WORD

The goals of this topic are to show children that the Bible is a very special book—unlike any other book that has ever been written—and to help children begin to see the great value of knowing God's Word and keeping it in their hearts.

*My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart. —Proverbs 4:20-21*

### Interaction

These verses provide clear, direct instructions on how to keep God's words in the midst of our hearts. After opening your Bibles and reading this memory scripture, see if your children can simply and clearly state the three instructions given here:

1. Pay attention!
2. Listen carefully.
3. Keep God's words before your eyes.

Work together to design a visual reminder of these three instructions. Design it so it can be displayed in an area where you meet regularly.

*Encourage your children to do the best job they can in making their visuals attractive and meaningful.*



Ask the children how they would go about keeping God's words before their eyes. Then read what [Deuteronomy 6:8-9](#) has to say about this. What did God tell His people to do to keep His words before their eyes? After discussing the purpose of having visual reminders around the house, ask, Which of you would like to make memory scripture bracelets for each of us? Who would like to design a large poster that artistically visualizes a scripture we all need to remember? Where would it be displayed? Do we have a doorpost? Who would like to look up what "frontlets between your eyes" might look like? Please create an example to show the family.

Encourage your children to do the best job they can in making their visuals attractive and meaningful. Be sure to display them and read them as you pass by. Look at what the children of Israel missed out on because they did not follow God's instructions ([Deuteronomy 6:10-11](#)).

Incorporating hand gestures can facilitate memorization of the key parts of this scripture:

For "give attention to my words," stand at attention, very straight and tall.

For "incline your ear to my saying," cup your hand behind your ear as if you are attempting to hear.

For "do not let them depart from your eyes," shape your hands like binoculars and put them on your eyes.



*Your word is truth.—John 17:17*

### *Interaction*

Have children hold their Bibles in their hands while you read this scripture to them. Then based on the verse you read, ask them if they can tell you two things about the book they are holding in their hands. (It's called God's Word and it is the truth.)

Ask questions, listen and discuss. Would God ever lie to you? No! Why not? God cannot lie because it's against His very nature (**Titus 1:2**)! God hates lies. We can count on God to always tell the truth and always keep His promises. Can He count on us to do the same? Why is it important for *us* to keep our promises and to always tell the truth?

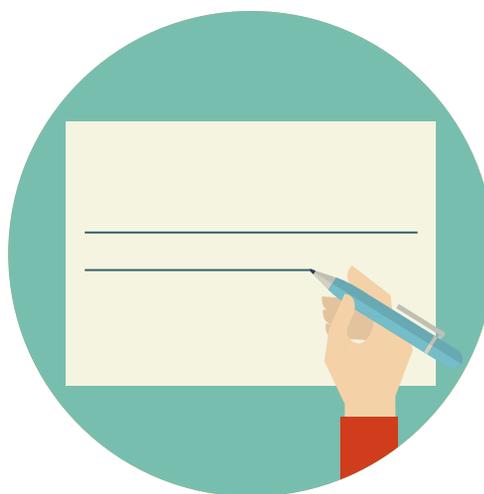
Who told the first lie? Read the story from Genesis 3, pointing out that along with lying comes trouble! But what about "little white lies"? If you only lie a tiny bit, that's not really bad, is it? Of course it is. A lie is a lie is a lie.

To create a visual example of truth, obtain a piece of long, wide paper—the longer and wider the better—and a yardstick. Poster board could also work. Explain the meaning of the words *parallel* and *indefinitely*.

## *Truth always leads us in the right direction and it always remains the same: you can count*

As the children closely watch, draw one long straight line from left to right. As you extend the line all the way to the edge of the paper, explain to them that *truth* always leads us in the right direction and it always remains the same: you can count on it!

Another great thing about the truth is that it is exactly in line with God because He and His Word are truth. Begin drawing another line parallel to the first, creating a "narrow path." Ask them if they see that the lines form a narrow path. Let them know that when they tell the truth and live by God's Word, they are right where God desires them to be: walking along the narrow path, guided and guarded by God and His truth.

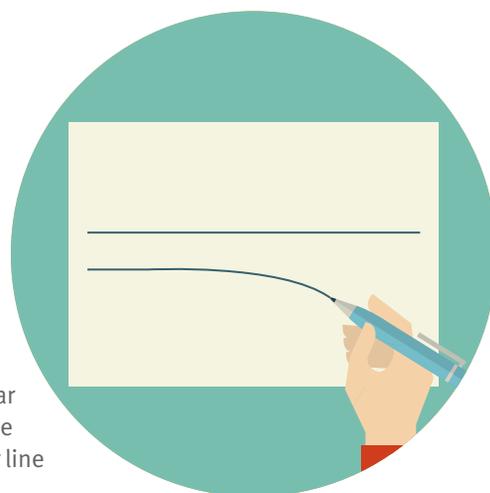


## *Ask, Did these lines look like parallel lines at first? What changed the way they appeared?*

On another similar piece of paper, draw a straight line across the page. Ask the children to watch very closely as you draw and ask them to tell you when, or if, they can tell a difference in the lines on this page. Then draw a second line looking like it is going to be a parallel line, but very gradually continue moving further and further away from your first line until one of the children notices. Keep creating a wider space curving off away from the first drawing while you question the children. Ask, Did these lines look like parallel lines at first? What changed the way they appeared?



## *Knowing God’s words and having them hidden in our hearts helps us recognize when a “line” is not quite parallel to God’s.*



Show your children how although at the start the lines looked fairly parallel, in reality they are moving toward a different place, and the distance between the two will be huge, no matter how close it was at the start. At first, they didn’t look far enough apart to really matter, similar to the idea that “it couldn’t hurt to not tell the *exact* truth.” But as the lines continued they got farther and farther apart. The *only* line that can run indefinitely alongside the other is a parallel line: the truth.

Knowing God’s words and having them hidden in our hearts helps us recognize when a “line” is not quite parallel to God’s. Relate this comparison to daily life “lines” (attitudes, behaviors, words, actions) that might look parallel at first glance, but when compared to the truth revealed in God’s Word, they are ultimately headed in the wrong direction.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. —2 Timothy 3:16*

### *Interaction*

To help your children remember the four points scripture is profitable for, you can use “DRCI” as a memory tool (Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction). You may even want to further reinforce these words by using the sign language letters for DRCI.

Ask each child to name someone who wrote a book, or books, found in the Bible. Ask them how these authors knew what they should write, and give them a clue: the answer can be found in this memory scripture.

Ask an older child to look up the word *profitable* and share its meaning. Pair up and look up the other words in the verse. After working together to come up with simple words or definitions for *doctrine*, *reproof* and *righteousness*, have each pair present the results.

Discuss how each of these four points can be profitable to you, your children and your family.

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. —Psalm 119:11*

### *Interaction*

After reading this memory scripture together ask, What should we do if we want to obey God’s laws and avoid sin? The answer: Hide God’s Word in our hearts. Share an example or two about how God’s Word hidden in our hearts can help stop us from disobeying God’s laws. Encourage your children by letting



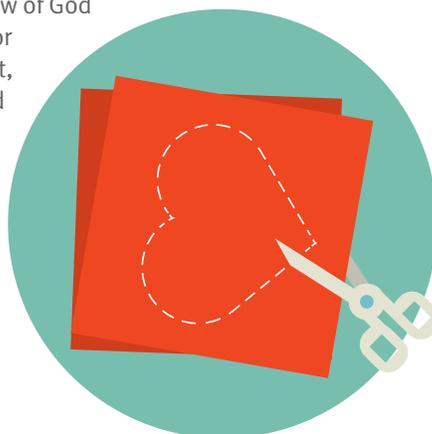
them know that they just took a big step toward hiding these words in their hearts as they looked at the words in this scripture, read the words, and listened to others read it. These actions etch God's words into our minds. Pause here to describe *etching*.

## *Hiding God's words in our hearts also takes both time and effort. It is very important for us to do this.*

Using **Method #3: Copywork**, have your younger children copy or trace the words of this verse in their memory logs. The older ones can copy it from the Bible. Acknowledge good work and help them see that they just took yet another step toward hiding God's words in their hearts. Writing these words continues the etching process. Etching takes time. Hiding God's words in our hearts also takes both time and effort. It is very important for us to do this. Why? Again this verse holds the answer: so we might not sin against God.

What is the biblical definition of *sin*? Take time to have everyone look up **1 John 3:4** and listen while one volunteer reads it aloud. Ask the children to name some of the laws that God commands us to keep. Provide 10 slips of paper and ask one of your children to write out each of the 10 Commandments in simple form, one commandment on each slip of paper. Distribute one commandment into the hand of each child. Be sure to keep one so you can begin by reading the law of God that is in your hand, moving on as each child reads the law in his or her hand. After listening to each child say or read a commandment, present each child with a big heart with an opening at the top, and ask the children to tuck, or "hide," all the scriptures they have written today into their hearts.

To make the hearts: Take two pieces of red construction paper (per child) and cut out two big matching hearts. Staple, tape or glue the edges together, leaving the top of the heart open (making a pocket). Have the children put their names on their hearts and deposit God's laws there.



*The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.*  
—Hebrews 4:12

### *Interaction*

Take this opportunity to try **Method #12: Sword Drills**. Before directing this interaction, it would be helpful to read the introduction to "Sword Drills," as well as the portion that relates to practicing and reviewing verses.

After the drill when the children have been "dismissed" and are sitting "at ease" again, explain how God's Word can be "living." Ask, What gives His Word power? Then talk about the sharpness of a two-edged sword and the purpose of these types of swords. End by reading the memory scripture again but this time add the ending and see what this powerful sword is capable of doing: "piercing even to the



division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Explain how detailed God’s Word is and how it gives us principles to apply in every situation we may face. Having God’s words in our minds and hearts can help us distinguish between what is right and wrong.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. —Psalm 119:105*

### Interaction

This is a fun scripture to address when it is dark enough to do an interaction with a flashlight.

Place a few soft, unexpected obstacles in a darkened room in your house. Have your children carefully walk through the area. When they complete their course, ask them what they experienced. Where was their focus? How far ahead and how far around them were they able to see? Did they feel confident, or did they feel more suspicious of the things that could be obstacles around them in the dark? Ask them if they would be able to walk faster, more easily, more confidently with light. Could they also climb things, move things around, interact more easily with others with light?

*Discuss ways the Bible acts as a light in our lives. How does using God’s Word as our light benefit us?*



Then turn off the light again and in the dark, hand them their Bibles and a flashlight and ask them to walk across the room. Discuss the difference. Discuss ways the Bible acts as a light in our lives. How does using God’s Word as our light benefit us? What dangers might we run into without this light? A flashlight with this verse attached to it might be a nice gift for the children because it is a gift they can use and one that would help keep this verse embedded in their minds.

*Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. —Psalm 119:97*

### Interaction

There is no doubt that David loved God’s laws. The longest chapter in the Bible is full of verses in which he expresses his love for them. Ask one of your children to show the great value David placed on God’s laws by reading [verse 72](#). Ask another to read [verse 35](#) and show how seriously David desired to keep God’s laws. Pause after each reading to encourage comments or questions. Ask everyone to turn to [verses 97-100](#) and have the children take turns reading the benefits David gained from loving and keeping God’s laws. These benefits are available to us as we grow in knowledge, obedience and love for God’s laws.

David delighted in God’s laws. And he meditated on them all day long. Discuss what this means. All day in his quiet places and going about his kingly duties, David was thinking about God, His Word and His laws. David was quietly praying, singing praises and writing beautiful scriptures.



## *All day in his quiet places and going about his kingly duties, David was thinking about God, His Word and His laws.*

He wrote a song about how much he loved God's words. You can find this song in our hymnal. Sing or read as a family "O How Love I Thy Law!" (Hymn 98). Have each family member take a line of the song and explain what it means. Ask all participating to think about what takes up most of their thoughts during the day. Why?

What can we do to increase our daily thoughts on God and His Word? Ask, Would saying one of the memory scriptures in the morning and reading another before bed help us think about God when we wake up and when we go to sleep? Would it help keep His words in our hearts during the day? Ask children to share their ideas and their plans for implementing them.

### TOPIC: GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS

Before introducing these verses, it would be helpful to demonstrate or discuss with your children the importance of listening to, understanding, remembering and following instructions. You might relate this to taking part in a sporting event, playing a new board game, following a recipe, or assembling a new swing set. Good, clear instructions are important. If followed, they help us succeed in what we are trying to do. Does God want us to succeed? What kind of instructions does God give us? Is it important to follow His instructions?



*If you love Me, keep My commandments. —John 14:15*

#### *Interaction*

Ask your children, Do you know that I love you? How do you know this? Thank your children for specific ways they show you love, especially in relationship to following instructions and being obedient. This exchange will lay the groundwork for the memory scripture.

## *Remind the children that before we can keep the commandments, we have to know the commandments.*

Discuss ways each of you can show God that you love Him. Listen and encourage the children to name as many ways to show God we love Him as they are able. If no one mentions it, tell them this memory



scripture tells us another way we can show God that we love Him. Remind the children that before we can *keep* the commandments, we have to *know* the commandments.

Check to see how well your children know God’s Commandments—His top 10 instructions. Play a quick game of “Stand and Follow God’s Instructions.” Explain to the children that you will say: “If you love God, you will\_\_\_\_\_.” An answer might be “keep the Sabbath day holy.” The first one who completes this sentence with the essence of a commandment that has not already been said comes to stand by you and takes the lead by saying: “If you love God, you will\_\_\_\_\_.” Other answers might be “not steal” or “tell the truth.” The next to answer comes to stand with the two of you and the game continues until everyone participating is standing together. Give help to those who need it so that in the end, everyone is standing together.

If there are commandments that have not been addressed, ask those with you to take turns thinking of these commandments. As a child names one he or she sits down. When all are seated, you could hand each child a card or piece of paper on which a simple version of the 10 Commandments is written. Encourage them to keep this list of God’s top 10 instructions and to read, understand, remember and follow them.

An application challenge: Look for ways to show God you love Him by being especially mindful of keeping the Fifth Commandment this week. You can find this commandment in [Exodus 20:12](#). Delight in God’s law.

*“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.” And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. —Matthew 22:37-40*

### *Interaction*

Read the verses and plan to create a visual representation of them. Be mindful of ways to include even the youngest in learning the commandments and having a part in this project. **Method #7: The Matching Game** might be a good method to help learn this scripture.

Another idea would be to work together with the children to make an attractive, strong mobile—a “Commandments Mobile”—that they can hang in the house and read regularly. Use **Method #5** as you assemble your mobile. If you have a good version of the 10 Commandments set to music, consider playing it while the children are creating the Commandments Mobile. This will reinforce what they are focusing on.

A lot of enjoyable learning and reviewing can occur while you work on the mobile, creating opportune moments to discuss which of the 10 Commandments should hang under which of the two great commandments. Discuss the ways the first four commandments show us how to love God and the last six show us how to love our neighbor.

### **Instructions for creating a Commandments Mobile:**

These instructions can be adjusted to fit whatever size mobile your family would like to make. The goal is to “hang” the 10 Commandments on the two great commandments.

**Supplies needed:**

- 5 sheets of white card stock paper
- 1 yardstick
- yarn or cord
- markers, crayons and supplies to decorate the strips
- scissors, hole punch or tape

Group 1 assignment: Use 2 sheets of the white card stock. On one sheet of card stock, write the “first and great commandment” from **Matthew 22:37**. Decorate it however you would like. Take the second sheet of card stock and cut it into 4 equal-size strips. On the first strip, write the First Commandment. On the next strip, write the Second Commandment. Do this for the first four commandments, decorating each one. Your group might even look up additional scriptures that demonstrate specific commandments and write that book, chapter and verse on the back side of the corresponding commandment.

Group 2 assignment: Use 3 sheets of the white card stock. On one sheet, write the second great commandment. Then take the other two pieces of card stock and cut each page into 4 equal-size strips. Write Commandments 5 through 10 onto these strips (you will have two unused strips left over), decorating each one.

When both teams are finished, attach the full sheets of card stock with the two great commandments side by side onto the yard stick. Either punch holes in the bottom of those pages or use tape to attach yarn or cord that will then connect to the 10 Commandments. Under the first great commandment, hang the first four of the 10 Commandments. The First Commandment might hang under the great commandment and be centered. Then the Second, Third and Fourth should hang down directly under it in that order. Under the second great commandment, hang Commandments 5 through 10.

To tackle this longer memory scripture, try memorizing each verse one at a time. **Method #6** works well with these verses. You could also make the verses into a puzzle by taking one verse at a time and neatly writing it out in large font. Then cut the verse into words, mix the words up and put them back together so it reads the exact same way as it did before. Repeat this process with each verse. Keeping all the words for each verse in a separate labeled envelope really helps as you add on a verse each time you’ve mastered one.

*Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. —Philippians 2:4*

**Interaction**

Ask each child to bring something, draw something, or be prepared in some way to share something that he or she has a strong interest in. Examples might be a guitar, a book, a game, a toy, or a souvenir. Give each of them the opportunity to share their interests with you. Listen attentively and pay special attention as the children share their interests. Give positive feedback through comments or questions. If time permits, take time to play the game, listen to the music, look at the book, and so on. Demonstrate what showing interest means.

Ask the children how it makes them feel when others show interest and even get excited about what they are doing. How does it feel when people don’t listen when you are trying to tell them something you think



is very important? That's not a good feeling, is it? Since we don't like that feeling, we surely don't want others to feel that way. We can continue to grow in this area by helping our children learn that looking and listening for things others are interested in is a lot like a treasure hunt. We end up finding lots of surprises, we get to know people better, and in the process we are exposed to new places, ideas, interests and talents. We learn a great deal.

*Make a habit of walking across the room with one of your children each Sabbath to say hello and spend a few minutes getting to know this person better.*



Set a goal as a family to get to know the special interests of people in your congregation. Perhaps start with an elderly person. Make a habit of walking across the room with one of your children each Sabbath to say hello and spend a few minutes getting to know this person better. Demonstrate showing interest in that person throughout the week by sending a card or doing a little research on your own concerning what they are interested in so that you can have something to contribute to a conversation with them the following Sabbath. Help your child prepare to have a conversation that is interesting and that shows interest.

*Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. —Ephesians 6:1*

### *Interaction*

You can see this scripture broken down in the “Guard and Guide” portion of the Shepherding the Heart lesson on obedience. This verse repeats one of God's 10 Commandments. It is the only commandment with an accompanying promise for obedience.

Children, read the verse. Say the verse. Parent(s), ask the children to join together and write a good definition of *obey*. Then post it on a card stock size poster on which you have copied this verse and decorated it to reflect the verse. Prepare it for display.

Give the children six note cards to begin and ask them to neatly and legibly write the words *pleased*, *displeased*, *obey*, *disobey*, *right*, and *wrong*—one word per card. Have the children place *pleased* and *displeased* next to each other and explain that our actions and attitudes can either please or displease God. Then ask the children to place the other cards beneath them, creating two columns. Write other words on note cards to teach this point as it applies in your children's lives. You might use words such as *give* and *get*, *love* and *hate*, *hug* and *hit*, *honest* and *dishonest*, and so on. Choose your own antonym pairs based on what is currently relevant for your child and family.

Discuss the opposing choices our children have every day and point out that when the choice is disobeying parents—doing what is wrong in God eyes—it displeases God and your parents. Both God and your parents love you, but they do not love the choice you made. Why? Because wrong choices



bring trouble. Do the same thing with the positive cards and end by saying, “Right choices come with blessings. Do I want to choose trouble or blessings?”

Children, try planning an **“Honor Your Parents Week”** with a focus on showing love for your parents and obeying quickly, completely and cheerfully. Your challenge is to be alert to the small things parents ask of you as well as the big things. Listen for any instructions parents give this week and try your very best to obey quickly and cheerfully.

Parents, keep your eyes open to the positive behavior of your children and make a physical or mental note of quick, cheerful obedience. Think of a way to thank the children for their responsiveness. Then during dinner on the Sabbath, or another time when you are all together, show your appreciation, recalling specific examples you remember.

*Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth. —Proverbs 27:2*

### Interaction

(Use **Method #6: Missing Words** to teach this verse.)

You could quickly get the children’s attention by having one of them come marching into the room blowing a loud horn and then lead into the interaction. Ask, You know the saying, “He’s tooting his own horn again”? Well this old saying and our memory scripture are talking about the same thing. Let’s open our Bibles and read **Proverbs 27:2**. Can anyone figure out how the scripture [horn starts tooting again] and that tooting horn are alike?

What do you think it is talking about? What does the word *praise* mean? Two synonyms are *applaud* and *cheer*. Substitute these words for the word *praise* and see what the memory scripture sounds like: “Let another man applaud and cheer for you and not your own mouth.”

Is it wrong to praise people if they do well? No. Is it wrong to feel pleased that you did well and be happy about it? No. Well, what if your Sabbath school instructor said that he or she was going to present a huge gold trophy to the young person who memorized the most scriptures this year and [name a child] worked really hard memorizing verses and won that big gold trophy. We would all clap for him, we might even cheer, and we’d certainly tell him we thought he did a great job. We’d let him know how proud of him we are. In other words, we would praise him.

But what if right at that same moment, that child started cheering for himself and clapping for himself in a haughty way, then after the program, he started bragging—I mean really big-time *bragging!* Can any of you show us what his bragging might have sounded like? (Listen to their idea of bragging.) What if he said, “Yeah! I learned a lot more than anyone else! [horn toots really loud] *You* are probably wishing [horn toots] you had a big trophy like mine [horn toots], aren’t you? Nobody in our church has ever gotten one this big.” [All the while the horn is blaring.]





What part of our verse talks about bragging? What was [child's name] doing when he was bragging and praising himself? Look at the verse and see if you can find an answer.

Get your children's feedback on how they felt about the horn blaring. Was it obnoxious? loud? distracting? Did it drown out all the other sounds?

## *Who should we praise for all the good things that we receive? God!*

It is a wonderful feeling to do something really well and be applauded for it. But the Bible says to let other people praise you and cheer for you and applaud you. Don't toot your own horn! That is one of God's instructions to us: don't brag and praise yourself. Who should we praise for all the good things that we receive? God!

Now let's see how well we can memorize this verse and begin etching it into our minds and onto our hearts. You will need one envelope with your name on it and 12 note cards. We're going to use **Method #6** to memorize this scripture. Pass out 12 note cards to everyone. Your instructions are to write each word in your memory scripture on a different note card, so you should have 12 note cards and a pencil. Be sure your Bibles are open to **Proverbs 27:2** so you can see the words you will be copying. And you'll need to write "Proverbs" on one note card and "27:2" on another. You'll need to write neatly and large enough that you can easily read the words. When you finish, put all your note cards in your envelope.

*Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. —Philippians 4:11*

### *Interaction*

We may not be able to change the situation we are in, but we can change the way we look at it and the manner in which we handle it.

A pair of brightly colored glasses and a second pair of dark, dreary glasses would be perfect accessories for this interaction. You can use old glasses, sunglasses, children's plastic play glasses, or glasses you create yourself. One pair makes the world look clear and bright, and the lenses of the other make it appear drab and dreary. This can be done easily and quickly by covering the lenses of one pair of glasses with brightly colored cellophane and the lenses of the other with anything that makes the world look bleak (you could use wax paper, a dry-erase marker, or anything else that would obscure the lenses).

Have you ever heard someone say, "Keep on the sunny side of life"? That old saying conveyed a message. Do you have any idea what that message was?

After listening to the children's thoughts, let them know if they are close to the meaning of the old saying or not. "Back in the day" to keep on the sunny side of life meant looking on the bright side of things—even if others didn't think there was a bright side! It meant being positive in a predominately negative situation, like seeing the silver lining in a rain cloud. It can be found if you look hard enough. Staying on the sunny side meant looking for possibilities rather than problems.



How does it feel to be around people who look at most things in a positive way? How does it feel to be around people who look at most things negatively? Now, turn the situation around and do the same with dark- or dreary-colored glasses, asking the same questions.

Explain that while we looked at the same things, the filter through which we see things makes a big difference. The color of the lens—positive or negative—affects how we see a situation.

Give out slips of paper with scriptures like [Psalm 118:24](#) and [Proverbs 17:22](#)—one for each child—and ask each child to read one aloud. If you have older children, you can take this opportunity to teach them to use a concordance. They can look up as many similar scriptures as they can and make a collage or use these scriptures in some other way. Remember: You may not be able to change the circumstances, but you can change the way you view them and how you respond.

*Be imitators of God as dear children. —Ephesians 5:1*

### *Interaction*

This is a scripture you can break down into a variety of interactions. You might first want to focus on “imitators” and play a game of following the leader or “monkey see, monkey do,” where your child mirrors your actions. Then switch rolls and imitate him or her.

Afterward, discuss *imitating* and what it takes to be good at it (close attention to detail.) It requires focus and an ability to overlook distractions. It requires our response to be as quick as possible and without delay or we will forget what the leader did.

Then broaden this interaction by asking, How then can we imitate God if we can't see Him? Ask your children how they could imitate you if you weren't home? Have them look around the house and identify five things they know that you do by observing how your house looks. For example, if the beds are made in your house, they can deduce that you make the beds daily. If you have plants in the house that are healthy and thriving, they can deduce that you tend to the plants regularly. If you have food in your refrigerator, they can figure out that you plan the meals, work to make money to purchase the food, travel to and from the grocery store, make sure the items that need refrigeration end up in the refrigerator, and so on. They might even start adding that they can see you think of them, predict their needs, prepare to meet those needs and love them. Once they have identified things about your behavior by looking around the house, ask them how they then would imitate that in their lives.

Bring all this together by asking the children to think of two ways they can observe God's behavior and become imitators of Him. The Bible is full of examples of the behavior and the actions of God and Jesus, His Son. By observing these actions and behaviors as we read through the Bible, we can become imitators of God. If we look closely at [Luke 4:16](#), we will see Jesus obeying the Fourth Commandment. Ask, Who remembers what the Fourth Commandment says? Jesus was going to church on the Sabbath. Should we imitate that action?

Take the children outside and challenge them to identify five things they can know about God and His actions by looking at nature. Once they have identified things that show God's behavior, ask them how they then would imitate that in their lives. Share some of your own observations and ways that you plan to imitate God.