

Recommended Resources for the Bible and Children

Ray Van Neste

Family Worship

The Family Worship Book, Terry Johnson (Christian Focus)

Thoughts on Family Worship, J. W. Alexander

The Christian Father's Present to His Children, John Angell James

Family Worship in the Bible and Your Home, Donald Whitney

Rediscovering the Lost Treasure of Family Worship, Jerry Marcellino

Catechism

****NEW CITY CATECHISM** - Book by Sam Shammas and Tim Keller (Book, App version – 52 Questions, prayers, commentary, and songs) Excellent resource!

Big Truths for Little Kids, by Susan and Richie Hunt (Crossway)

Truth & Grace Books, ed. Tom Ascol

Small Talks on Big Questions, Selah Helms and Susan Thompson

The Gospel for Children, John Leuzarder (Shepherd Press)

Study Bible

ESV Children's Bible

Jesus storybook Bible (Zondervan – Sally Lloyd-Jones)

Video: Jesus Storybook Bible Stories put to art video

Youtube playlist: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLN0gR53ULGppUSgdOfZaqcJaxZJdfqcPS>

Bible Stories

- ***The Learn About God series*** (Christian Focus), 3-6 yrs old – God is kind, has power, never changes, knows everything, is everywhere, is faithful. These are simple little chunky board books covering some of the attributes of God. Each page repeats the title, gives a specific application and a related verse.
- God's Little Guidebooks, by Hazel Scrimshire (Christian Focus), 3-6 yrs old – This series of little booklets covers the 10 Commandments. Sibling duo Sam and Katy present each commandment and explore how it can be applied to young lives.
- ***Bible Time & Bible Wise, by Carine Mackenzie*** (Christian Focus), 3yrs & up These are some of the best bible storybooks we have seen. The stories are faithfully retold pausing at key points to make appropriate applications. For example one story tells that Gideon was afraid when he saw the angel and here the author mentions the propriety of the fear of God. Several of the OT stories are particularly good in how they make application to the new covenant. (note other Bible stories by Mackenzie)
- ***Hear Me Read series, by Mary Manz Simon*** (Concordia Publishing House) 3-6 yrs old – There is a level 1 and a level 2 in this series and we have used level 1. These colorful books use a minimal number of words (about 12-20) to tell basic bible stories. They help children learn to recognize certain words and are easy for them to learn to read on their own.
- ***My First Study Bible, by Paul Loth*** (Thomas Nelson), 3-6 yrs old- This is actually a collection of bible stories going through the entire bible. It has little asides for children a bit older to fill in some more details. The stories are faithfully told using sizeable quotations directly from Scripture. This is a refreshing contrast to other books which add so much extra (non-biblical) detail that distracts from the actual story. Also this book does not shy away from the issues of God's wrath against sin and even includes some lesser-known stories. For the wisdom literature, many of the prophets and the New Testament letters where it would be difficult to actually present a story, a page is given with the prophet or author giving a summary of the book. While one might wish they had given more on these

books, at least with this format they have covered every book of Scripture. One of the great things about this book is it allows one to read straight through the bible with your children. Of course not everything has been covered but something from each book has been covered- which is more than many adults have ever done. As we approached the end of the book on our first time through I began building up the fact that we were close to having read through the entire bible and our boys got really excited. Even today they speak with excitement about having read through 'the whole bible story.' Of course a side benefit is that the parent can begin to see connections across the whole of scripture in ways they have not before!

- ***The Big Picture Story Bible, David Helm*** (Crossway), 3 yrs & up- Perhaps the best overall Bible story book I have seen. Focuses especially on showing how the whole bible fits together, how Jesus fulfills the OT, etc.
- ***The Picture Bible, Iva Hoth*** (Chariot Victor)
- ***Discovering Jesus in Genesis & Discovering Jesus in Exodus, Susan & Richie Hunt***
- ***I Love My Bible, Debby Anderson*** (Crossway), 3-5 yrs- great little book on why you should love the Bible.
- ***Herein Is Love Commentary Series, Nancy Ganz*** (Shepherd Press)

Christmas/Advent

Christ in Christmas: A Family Advent Celebration (NavPress)

The Wonders of Christmas, Melody Carlson (Crossway)

The Advent Book, Jack and Kathy Stockman (Crossway)

Other

Dangerous Journey- a nice retelling of Pilgrim's Progress with good illustrations

The Evergreen Wood, Alan & Linda Parry- another good adaptation of Pilgrim's Progress this time with animals as the characters. Good for younger children.

On Bible Literature for Children

by Ray Van Neste

We give our children all sorts of stuff, but how much of the Scripture do we give them from their early days- the Scriptures – which you have known from your infancy which are able to make you wise unto salvation' (2 Timothy 3:15)? This came crashing home to me some time back when I realized that my children were more familiar with some cartoon characters and their stories than with Bible characters and Bible stories. I think this has been corrected now (I hope!), but it reminded me of the need to be proactive and diligent in passing on the faith to my children. One thing I have begun doing is watching carefully for quality bible story material for our boys and holding these things up as more special than any other gift they might get.

However, so much that passes as bible stories for children these days is a sham. The great stories of scripture are turned into cute and cuddly little tales. The result of this is that many people think of Bible stories as something for children; but, I submit to you that if you read them they most certainly were not written primarily with children in mind. There are enough cute cuddly little stories around without domesticating Scripture to turn it into one. Our children need to encounter the Scripture not emasculated stories. Of course, they need not have every gory detail, but renditions of Noah and the ark which are only about nice animals and fun on a boat but fail to deal with the wrath of God against sin are perversions of the story. Renditions of David and Goliath whose main point is that little people can do things too, simply miss the point. If we want to raise children who have the same deep reverence for God and passion for His glory which compelled David to take on the giant, then we must give them the pure milk of the Word.

What then are some good resources?

I have obviously not seen everything, and there has been an absolute explosion of Christian children's literature, but here are some resources which are particularly good for younger children.

- 1) ***The Learn About God series*** (Christian Focus, \$3.99 each)- God is kind, has power, never changes, knows everything, is everywhere, is faithful. These are simple little chunky board books covering some of the attributes of God. Each page repeats the title, gives a specific application and a related verse.
- 2) ***God's Little Guidebooks, by Hazel Scrimshire*** (Christian Focus, \$1.50 each)- This series of little booklets covers the 10 Commandments. Sibling duo Sam and Katy present each commandment and explore how it can be applied to young lives.
- 3) ***Bible Time & Bible Wise, by Carine Mackenzie*** (Christian Focus, \$2.99 each) – These are some of the best bible storybooks we have seen. The stories are faithfully retold pausing at key points to make appropriate applications. For example one story tells that Gideon was afraid when he saw the angel and here the author mentions the propriety of the fear of God. Several of the OT stories are particularly good in how they make application to the new covenant.
- 4) ***Hear Me Read series, by Mary Manz Simon*** (Concordia Publishing House, \$2.99 each)- There is a level 1 and a level 2 in this series and we have used level 1. These colorful books use a minimal number of words (about 12-20) to tell basic bible stories. They help children learn to recognize certain words and are easy for them to learn to read on their own.
- 5) ***Big Truths for Little Kids, by Susan and Richie Hunt*** (Crossway Publishers, \$10.99)- My wife recently purchased this book, and it may be the best Christian children's book we have. The book divides a children's catechism into units of about five questions and provides a modern story to illustrate the truths of those catechism questions. The stories form a continuous narrative of some young children (8-10 years old) who are in Christian families and are being taught the catechism. They deal with everyday situations in a realistic and fresh way illustrating lives in which God is not simply a nice addition on the side but is central and all things are done for His glory. The children also befriend another young boy who subsequently comes to Christ. The stories and their application of Biblical truth are excellent.
The book uses the Children's Westminster catechism. It is very good except that, as would be expected, it contains a section on infant baptism. However, a Baptist revision of this catechism (which only changes the section on baptism) can be found on the internet at <http://www.toto.net/npsc/bgcat5.html>. One can easily print off the baptism section and substitute it.
- 6) ***My First Study Bible, by Paul Loth*** (Thomas Nelson, \$10.99)- This is actually a collection of bible stories going through the entire bible. It has little asides for children a bit older to fill in some more details. The stories are faithfully told using sizeable quotations directly from Scripture. This is a refreshing contrast to other books which add so much extra (non-biblical) detail that distracts from the actual story. Also this book does not shy away from the issues of God's wrath against sin and even includes some lesser-known stories. For the wisdom literature, many of the prophets and the New Testament letters where it would be difficult to actually present a story, a page is given with the prophet or author giving a summary of the book. While one might wish they had given more on these books, at least with this format they have covered every book of Scripture. One of the great things about this book is it allows one to read straight through the bible with your children. Of course not everything has been covered but something from each book has been covered- which is more than many adults have ever done. As we approached the end of the book on our first time through I began building up the fact that we were close to having read through the entire bible and our boys got really excited. Even today they speak with excitement about having read through 'the whole bible story.' Of course a side benefit is that the parent can begin to see connections across the whole of scripture in ways they have not before!

Of course there is much more and we have not touched on other sorts of Christian books, videos, activities, etc. But perhaps these brief observations of a fellow traveler will be useful, particularly at a time of year when we begin to think of presents for our children
