**A SIMPLE GUIDE TO FAMILY WORSHIP**

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The idea of family worship is at once both attractive and intimidating. The thought of

beginning a new pattern of worship in the home can be overwhelming for those just beginning.

This simple guide includes answers to basic questions that we hope will embolden and equip

you to lead your family in worship in addition to your time in personal worship.

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP?**

The importance of the home in discipleship is prominent throughout the Bible (Deut. 6:6-7;

Ps. 78:5-7; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual instruction and vitality of their families (Eph. 6:1-3). This task is great and weighty, but God’s grace is greater, and the eternal rewards are beyond anything this world can offer.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY WORSHIP?**

* Family worship brings glory to God. It is a visible reminder for all in the home that God is

worthy of our time, attention, and affection.

* Family worship produces joy in the home. The joy Jesus brings to individuals He will bring to families who delight in His worship together. The love of Christ will more easily abound in a home where worship is central.
* It unites family members together with the same love Jesus offers us. It also opens up opportunities for spiritual conversations that otherwise may never have taken place.
* It sets a good example to our kids. Seeing their parents worship God provides a wonderful model and memory for kids and youth.
* Family worship affects change in the world. As families pray, study, and sing together, they join from their homes in what God is doing across the nations while affecting each other’s lives for generations to come.

**WHAT SHOULD WE DO DURING FAMILY WORSHIP?**

Keep it simple. Consider including the following elements as you worship in your home:

* Read—Read a portion of the Word together. You may consider reading the sermon text and additional passages listed in the SOMA study guide that matches the week’s message (i.e. This Sunday we will look at encouraging one another). If children are present and able to read, allow them to do so. Of course, you’ll want to explain difficult words and concepts (but don’t worry too much if you can’t explain everything!).
* Pray—Consider voicing prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication

together. You can pray for things related to what you read together or for things that are pertinent to your family. Definitely pray for our nation that we might get through this pandemic as quickly as possible. Pray for opportunities to serve your neighbor and the community. I’m sure there are a lot of anxious people. During times of crisis people are open to spiritual conversations. Invite them to go online and listen to the messages and call the church for prayer. Pray for them yourself.

* Sing—Sing together as a family. If someone in the family has musical gifts, they may lead

some simple songs. If no one in your family is musical, either use a recording (you can find them on YouTube or on most streaming music services) or just sing a cappella. We are working to see if the Praise Team is able to get together and record the worship set so we can post them for use in people’s homes.

• Listen to the message and discuss it as a family. Consider using the questions in the SOMA guide.

* Memorize—Whether a verse (or verses) is suggested or selected by a family member,

work on it together. The beginning of the week may be spent both understanding and

memorizing the verse(s). By the end of the week, allow everyone to repeat the verse(s).

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP**

**What if my kids are very young?**

Having very young children will change the dynamic of family worship considerably.

Remember, however, that the goal for every child in the family is not the same. With very

young children, the goal is probably not understanding of all matters of doctrine. A more

“modest” goal of impressing upon them the importance of family worship (and God) is more

reasonable and beneficial at their particular age.

**How do I keep things interesting if I have children of different ages and different**

**abilities?**

For young children, try to include them as much as possible and appropriate. Of course, all

members of the family can pray and sing (at least some songs). Furthermore, allow younger

children to read when possible. For the older children, try including them in the teaching and

application of the Scripture reading for the rest of the family and in the leadership of prayer

and singing on occasion.

**What if I have a child with special needs?**

Having children with special needs participate in family worship is very possible and even

beneficial! Depending on your child’s abilities, make the family time play to their strengths;

add in visuals, act out the Bible story, and don’t worry if you need to make sections shorter if

some children have a shorter attention span.

**What time of day is best for family worship?**

The time of day is not the most critical element of family worship. Some families prefer to

worship as the day begins. For others, the morning hours are simply too hectic for family

worship. In these cases, evening may work best. Many families prefer to adjoin family worship

to the evening meal since all the family may be present at that time. In short, timing is far less

important than consistency.

**Resources for the Family**

At the moment it looks like the schools will be shut down for several weeks. If you do not have resources to keep your kids engaged and active consider the following which has been compiled by several Christian educators. I’ve added several that I have used, some of which are in my office if you’d like to borrow. There are also a lot of great books in our Church Library and Family Resource Center that you can check out.

If your kids are in Sunday School, Mary will be sending weekly emails out to you with the curriculum, videos, and extra helps. If you aren’t on her email contact her at childrensministry@klamathfpc.com.

* *The Big Picture Story Bible* (David Helm). If you have young children, this is a must

have resource. Simple but gospel-rich storytelling. Great pictures.

* *The Wonder Bible* (Mack Thomas). Helps kids bridge the gap between a child’s first Bible and an adult Bible. It takes select Bible stories from the Bible, reduces the number of words so the story holds the child’s attention. I love the illustrations. The Bible is very engaging
* *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (Sally Lloyd-Jones). Another must have for those with

young children. Beautiful pictures and writing. Like Big Picture, the author connects each

Bible story to the Bible’s central character and central message, Christ and His saving

work.

* *God’s Very Good Idea* (Trillia Newbell). A wonderful explanation of the gospel! This

book will help children see how people from all ethnic and social backgrounds are

valuable to God, and how Jesus came to rescue all kinds of people.

* *Mighty Acts of God* (Starr Meade). Much like the previous, except that it gives more

detail and tells more stories. It’s a good Bible to let your reading-age son/daughter take to

bed and begin his/her personal times of reading Scripture.

* *Thoughts to Make Your Heart Sing* (Sally Lloyd-Jones). Sometimes a great sign

of maturity in faith is seen through one’s increasing ability to connect the gospel to

everything in life. This book is a primer on seeing how the gospel relates to everyday life.

* *The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New* (Marty Machowski). An excellent book to help

kids of all ages understand who God is and how we, as his children, relate to him. While

this book is very helpful for kids, parents will gain a lot from it as well.

* *The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden* (Kevin

DeYoung). an exciting journey through the Bible, connecting the dots from the garden of

Eden to Christ’s death on the cross to the new heaven and new earth. This book has great

illustrations and is best for elementary age children.

* *Long Story Short: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God* (Marty

Machowski). A one-stop-shop resource. Gives brief Bible reading, brief devotional

thought, asks good questions for family discussion. Offers helps for family prayer.

Gospel-centered.

* *The Big Book of Questions and Answers: A Family Devotional Guide to the*

*Christian Faith* (Sinclair Ferguson). Ferguson does a good job making big truths

accessible to little children.

* *The Real Story books* by Paul Maier: The Real Story of the Creation; The Real Story

of the Flood; The Real Story of the Exodus; The Very First Christmas; The Real

Story of Easter; These are great books to use during family worship, particularly as you

approach a holiday (Christmas/Easter).

* *Grandpa’s Box: Retelling the Biblical Story of Redemption* (Starr Meade). Meade

uses a story of children visiting their grandpa as the backdrop for teaching the one big

story of the Bible. Readings can take (if memory serves) 10+ minutes, so it’s probably

better for older kids (maybe 8 and up).

* *Big Truths for Young Hearts* (Bruce Ware). Devotional chapters written to unpack

major doctrines (God as Creator, etc.). Can be doctrinally heavy (in a good way). For older

kids. Readings take about 15 minutes.

**Some resources for bedtime reading, road trips, etc….**

* *Dangerous Journey* (Hunkin/Bunyan). An easy to read (and with pictures!) version of

Bunyan’s classic, Pilgrim’s Progress. Younger ones will have a hard time comprehending

it all and (warning) some pictures are a little gruesome.

* *Keeping Holiday* (Starr Meade). A Christian allegory akin to Pilgrim’s Progress.

Excellent portrayals of how temptation works and many other biblical motifs. Great

refrains about “the Finder.” Older kids (maybe from 8+) will get the most out of it.

* *The Priest with Dirty Clothes* (R.C. Sproul). Great story and beautiful pictures. Helpful

teaching and conversation starter toward understanding the vital doctrine of imputation/

justification.

* *The Lightlings* (R.C. Sproul). Great story and beautiful pictures. A retelling of the big

story – creation, sin, salvation.

* *The Prince’s Poison Cup* (R.C. Sproul). Great story and beautiful pictures. Helps teach

the truth that Christ took our curse for our salvation.

* *The Barber Who Wanted to Pray* (R.C. Sproul). For centuries the main go to’s for

family worship were the Lord’s Prayer, the 10 commandments, the Apostle’s Creed (see

Westminster for some help here as well). So when Martin Luther’s barber asked him

how to pray Luther went to those three. This is a storied and kid-friendly version of what

Luther wrote to his friend the barber.

* *The King Without a Shadow* (R.C. Sproul). Like the other Sproul books, the content is

very good. The concept of God’s holiness/otherness is a bit more difficult to capture in

story form. So this is abstract at times and may be more difficult for young children to

grasp.