

GROW IN GOD.



Reading the Bible as a Family

If you've ever tried to start a **family Bible reading routine** only to shelve it for another year — **until your children "are older"** — you're not alone. Although there is no perfect "formula" for establishing a Bible-reading time, **the following suggestions** might be helpful as you make time to read the Bible with your family:

1

SET EXPECTATIONS Require every family member to treat other members with respect and courtesy, and pay attention. Paying attention and respecting authority are disciplines children need to learn. Part of loving one another means that we are respectful of others' responses and exercise self-discipline during Bible time so everyone feels comfortable sharing and exploring the Scriptures.

2

READ RIGHT FROM THE BIBLE It's important to read directly from God's Word. To begin, especially with young children, work through one book of the Bible, and start with just a few verses a day. Since young children like repetition, you can repeat the selected verses many times during a single day. If it's a short selection, your children may be able to repeat it with you.

3

LET THEM PLAY "Bible-time" toys or picture books for smaller ones can be helpful when you have a mix of younger and older children. Allowing children to quietly examine toys or look through Bible-story illustrations can help them participate in a way that is suitable for them when you are reading a longer Bible passage. Pick out a short verse that they can act out or repeat after you. In other words, set aside time to engage them, even as they play alongside.

4

ASK QUESTIONS Questions allow the family to interact with one another and the Word. For older children, ask a question about a passage you've read, and listen carefully to their answers. Give your children a space to ask questions, too. Even if the question is simplistic, respond thoughtfully, without a lecture. A short answer will encourage them to ask more questions later. If you don't have a clear answer, research the topic together and pray for God to reveal the answer.

5

EXPLORE DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES Instead of always reading the Bible while your children listen, consider having older kids dramatically read the words of those who speak while you narrate the passage. Or pass the book around and have each person read one verse or one line or even one word, if your children are able to connect to the Word in that way.