

Use this devotion guide each night — as a parent with your young child. Follow the five FAITH5 steps: **Share**, **Read**, **Talk**, **Pray**, and **Bless**.

PS — Adopt a “grandparent” type and some young adults into your child’s world every week at church. Add them to your prayers every night. You and your child will be richer for it!

DEVOTION ONE

Into the Wilderness

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

“And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.”

— Mark 1:12

3 TALK

As you begin, gather two flashlights, a blanket, and some cookies. Turn off the TV, radio, lights, and all other electrical appliances in the house. Escape into the closet for a “whisper party” with your child. As you enjoy the silence, talk about the importance of turning off all distractions and spending quality time together.

Jesus had to get away from the noisy world once in a while. When he first started telling people about God, he went off into the desert alone. When the crowds were following him to heal them, he would often go out in a boat or off to a deserted place to collect his thoughts and pray.

It is good to get away from time to time. It helps people think. Let’s sneak off and spend time with each other and with God more often!

Questions:

1. Where is your favorite hiding place?
2. What can our family do to take more time with each other?
3. Tell your child what you hear God’s voice saying to you in the verse and the quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for quiet places.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for time you can spend with your family. Bring him your child's highs.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you schedule silence. Bring your child's lows to God.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful—you'll discover yourself."

— Alan Alda

DEVOTION TWO

Forty Days

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him."

— Mark 1:13

3 TALK

As you begin, look through magazines for wilderness scenes. Tear out photos of five or six different types of wild places and tape them to your child's wall.

Could you imagine being in a wild place for a night all alone? Could you imagine being in a wild place for 40 nights alone? How would you keep from being afraid? What would you eat? Who would help you?

When Jesus was a grown man, he spent 40 days in the wild desert. Forty days! The Bible says there were wild beasts there. It also says Jesus was tempted to use his powers to take care of himself, but instead of zapping the stones and turning them into bread or doing miracles to fly away from his troubles, Jesus trusted in God. When his 40 days were over, the angels came and took care of him.

If you are ever in a lonely place, frightened, or tempted, remember this: Jesus will always be with you. You are never alone.

Questions:

1. Tell about a time when you felt like you were in the "wilderness" recently.
2. Who are some of your angels? Who are messengers from God who help you when you face the wilderness?
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise God for promising to go with you through the wilderness of life.

Thank:

Thank Jesus specifically for the "angels" you mentioned in #2 above. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you be an “angel” (messenger) of God for someone in the wilderness tomorrow. Bring your child’s lows to God and close in Jesus’ name.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

“May you follow the path of Jesus.”

“Alone, all alone. Nobody, but nobody can make it out here alone.”

— Maya Angelou

DEVOTION THREE

God's Spell

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God..."

— Mark 1:14

3 TALK

Prior to this time, mark a quarter with a black magic marker and place it in your child's pocket without him seeing it. As you begin, tell your child you are going to do a magic trick. Take a second quarter and mark it with him watching. Now tell him you are about to make the quarter disappear. Place the quarter out of sight in a bag with a false bottom. Scrunch the bag up and say some magic words. Then tell him you'll make that same quarter appear in his pocket. Call out your words again, then ask him to reach in his pocket. After he is amazed, tell him how you did the magic trick.

Magic is fun to see, but it isn't real. Things don't really disappear and reappear. (Except for Mommy's car keys!) It is all a trick that a magician is able to pull off.

There is a difference between tricks and real power. Magicians might do tricks, but only Jesus has real power. God's special power is more than magic. The Good News—the Gospel—is better than any magic trick. When Jesus appeared on earth, he made sick people well. He made mean people change their ways and be nice. He even made dead people come alive. That wasn't magic. That was God's power.

When you believe in Jesus, you are connected to God's power. No magician can top that!

Questions:

1. Young children are still learning to tell the difference between reality and make-believe. Showing them how you did the trick can help make that clear.
2. Tell about a time when you needed some power and God gave it to you.
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for the magic that sets the world free.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for healing the sick, loving the unlovable, and raising the dead. Thank him for loving your child. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus for power to share his love with your friends. Bring your child's lows to God in prayer. Mark your child with a cross and invite him to mark you.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"The medium is the message."

— Marshall McLuhan

DEVOTION FOUR

The Kingdom Is Near

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near..."

— Mark 1:15

3 TALK

As you begin, take (or make) a picture of Jesus and hide it somewhere in the house. Play a game of "hot and cold" with your child as she attempts to find it. If she moves toward the picture, say "hot." If she moves away from it, say "cold." When she finds it, invite her to hide it for you. Repeat the game with her calling the "hots."

Some people didn't see Jesus when he came the first time. They were looking for a powerful king. He was a powerful teacher. They were looking for someone to beat up the Roman soldiers and send them home. Jesus talked about peace. They were looking for someone to build a great nation. Jesus talked about building great hearts and spirits.

Some people don't see Jesus today. They go to church, sit in the pews, sing the hymns, and go home as if God wasn't really there.

Let's not miss Jesus. He is here!

Questions:

1. Ask your child where she thinks Jesus is right now.
2. Tell your child how you know Jesus is with you.
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for being such a wonderful surprise.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for always being with you. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you see him. Bring your child's lows to God in prayer. Mark each other with the sign of the cross and close in Jesus' name.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"We need never shout across the spaces to an absent God. God is nearer than our own soul, closer than our most secret thoughts."

— A. W. Tozer

DEVOTION FIVE

Repent and Believe

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"...repent, and believe in the good news."

— Mark 1:15b

3 TALK

As you begin, take a breakable family heirloom from off the shelf and set it on the floor. Talk about what you would do if you broke it. Who would you tell? How would you feel?

One day a girl named Ginny broke her mother's favorite old vase. She ran to get a bottle of glue, but her mother walked in the door before she could fix it. "I'm sorry," said Ginny as she swept up the pieces of her mom's antique vase into the dust pan. "I shouldn't have been throwing the football in the living room." She wasn't really sorry that it was broken. She was mostly sorry that she hadn't glued it back together and replaced it on the shelf before her mother came home.

When you do something wrong, the best thing to do is say you are sorry. If you lie about it, it only gets worse. If you pretend it didn't happen, it won't go away. Even if no one sees you do the bad thing, Jesus sees you. Jesus knows. Your heart knows.

Jesus said people should say they are sorry to God when they do bad things too. That word is repent. When you say you are sorry, people forgive you and life gets back to normal. When you tell Jesus you are sorry, God forgives you and you can go on from there.

Questions:

1. Tell your child what you want him to do when he breaks something.
2. Tell about a time when you were truly sorry for hurting someone or breaking something. How did your words and actions show your sorrow?
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for always being willing to forgive.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for dying to give you life. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you repent when you do something wrong. Bring your child's lows to God in prayer. Bless each other with the sign of the cross and close in Jesus' name.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"True repentance has a double aspect. It looks upon things past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watchful eye."

— Unknown

DEVOTION SIX

Hearing the Hard Truth

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all these things openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him."

— Mark 8:31-32

3 TALK

As you begin, place your hands over your ears, and sing out loud. Tell your child to try to tell you something. After drowning her out, invite her to cover their ears and sing at the top of her lungs as you try to tell her something. When you have finished, talk about the importance of listening to each other.

Some people don't listen to others very well. Some people don't want to hear what anyone else says.

Once when Jesus was telling his friends that he was going to have to die for the sin of the world, his friend Peter scolded him. "That will never happen to you!" said Peter. He loved Jesus and didn't want anything bad to happen to him.

Jesus knew he had to die on a cross. He knew it was the only way to save the world from sin. Even though Jesus didn't want to go through the pain, he knew he had to listen to God. Sometimes it is hard to listen to God.

Questions:

1. Talk about a time when someone didn't want to hear what you had to say.
2. Talk about a time when you didn't want to hear a hard truth. What happened?
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for always listening to your prayers.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for going to the cross to free you from sin. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus for ears that always listen to God's truth. Bring your child's lows to God.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"I don't want to know the truth. I've already made up my mind!"

— Unknown

DEVOTION SEVEN

Get Behind Me, Satan!

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'"

— Mark 8:33

3 TALK

As you begin, talk about scolding. Tell your child how you feel when someone scolds you. Ask him how he feels when he is scolded. Make a list of five kind names/phrases you use for each other and five unkind names/phrases you don't want people to call each other around your house. Read the list together and post it on the refrigerator. Make a promise to say the good words and refrain from the bad words for the next month.

Peter was one of Jesus' best friends. One day Jesus told Peter he would have to die on the cross to save the world from sin. Peter scolded Jesus. "No way! That will never happen to you!" said Peter.

Jesus scolded Peter right back. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. (Yes, Jesus called Peter Satan!) He told Peter he wasn't on God's side unless he did God's will.

Scolding and name-calling are not something Jesus did very often. He must have been very serious to tell Peter off like that. It must be very important to Jesus that we all do God's will!

Jesus loved Peter and forgave him after this happened, but he made it very clear. People are to do God's will, not their own.

Questions:

1. Talk about the last time someone scolded you. What were the circumstances?
2. Talk about appropriate and inappropriate names you want your child to use around the house.
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for following God's will at all times.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for loving you, even when you mess up. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you do God's will. Ask for help in cleaning up your language around the house. Bring your child's lows to Jesus. Close in Jesus' precious name and mark your child with a cross.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"Aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither."

— C. S. Lewis

DEVOTION EIGHT

Gaining and Losing the World

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.'"

— Mark 8:34-35

3 TALK

As you begin, make a cross out of two sticks and lash them together with a string, piece of colored twine, or leather. Place this cross above your child's bed for the next two weeks. Talk about the cross as a sad but happy reminder of Jesus' love.

Some people wear a cross around their necks as jewelry. Some have crosses in their rings and earrings. Some have crosses on their walls. Many churches have crosses in the front of the worship area and on their steeples. Crosses didn't start out to be pretty things. They were places where bad people were killed. Criminals would be nailed to them and left to die in the sun. Crosses were signs of sadness and shame.

Today people all over the world look to the cross and think of Jesus' love. Whenever you look at a cross, remember how much Jesus loves you! He loved you enough to die so that you could be with him forever in heaven.

Questions:

1. Talk about things that frighten your child in the night. Remind her to look at the cross if she is ever afraid and remember that Jesus is there to protect her.
2. Tell your child what the cross means to you.
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for the love of the cross and the promise of heaven.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for facing the cross for you. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you follow him in all you say and do. Bring your child's hands to Jesus. Close by kissing your fingertip and marking each other with the sign of the cross.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"When our Lord Jesus bids us to come and follow Him, He bids us to come and die."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

DEVOTION NINE

Forfeiting Life

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?"

— Mark 8:36-37

3 TALK

Before you begin, collect items from the kitchen to create an "emergency kit." Include bottled water, non-perishable food items, a flashlight with extra batteries. Place these all together with some blankets, a Bible, and a choice stuffed animal or toy in a safe corner of the house. Talk about how these and other items can help you if you are in an emergency. Discuss where you want your child to go and what you want her to do in case of a weather emergency. Practice this as a drill, and make a note on your calendar to practice it again each month for the next three months.

If you were making an "emergency kit" to help someone through a storm or power outage, what items would you choose first? Candy? A tablet? Fancy clothing? Magazines? No. The first things you would choose would be things that could keep you alive. Until you have good food, warmth, and a safe place to stay, the other things don't matter. "First things first" is the rule when you are preparing for an emergency.

Jesus told his friends it didn't matter how many "things" they had if they lost their life. He said people should think of "first things first" too.

The very first, most important thing to take into an emergency is Jesus. He can protect us through any storms life throws our way.

Questions:

1. Assure your child that your home is safe, but you want to have plans so family members can be even safer if something bad happens.
2. If someone was to look at your lifestyle would that person say you are storing up the "right stuff" for the challenges of life? If not, what changes can you begin to make in your home? Your lifestyle? Your schedule?
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise Jesus for watching over you.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for promising to protect you. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you organize your home, your lifestyle, and your schedule to reflect godly priorities. Bring your lows to God in prayer and close in Jesus' name. Bless each other with the sign of the cross.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"You can't have it all. Where would you put it?"

— Anonymous

DEVOTION TEN

Shame and Acknowledgment

1 SHARE

Your highs & lows for the day with one another.

2 READ

Scripture Verse and Highlight it in your Bible:

"Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

— Mark 8:38

3 TALK

As you begin, look through a picture book of your child as a baby. Tell him how you waited for him to be born, how precious it was to hold him the first time and how loved he is. Assure him that you are proud of him and that you'll always love him no matter what!

There was a day before you were born that your parents couldn't even imagine how beautiful you would be. They had hopes and dreams for you, but they didn't know who this little person God was giving them would be. Would you be a boy? Would you be a girl? Would you have long, straight hair? Would you have short, curly hair? Would you grow to be taller than your mother? Would you grow to be balder than your grandpa? No one but God knew. The one thing your parents did know is that they would love you and be very proud of you. Even if you did bad things, they wouldn't be ashamed of you. A parent doesn't love a child because he or she is good. They love because the child is theirs.

Jesus loves your family like that. Jesus is very proud of you, too. Jesus doesn't love you because you are good. He loves you because you are His. Don't be afraid or ashamed to tell other people about Jesus' love. It is a wonderful kind of love.

Questions:

1. Tell your child about a time when you were proud of him.
2. Assure your child that Jesus will always love him, no matter what!
3. Tell your child what you hear God's voice saying to you in the verse and the quotation.

4 PRAY

Use a *Praise / Thank / Ask* prayer:

Praise:

Praise God for loving you and your child, even when you don't deserve it.

Thank:

Thank Jesus for the joy your child brings to your life. Bring your child's highs to him.

Ask:

Ask Jesus to help you tell others about his wonderful love. Bring your lows to God.

5 BLESS

Bless one another with the sign of the cross and say:

"May you follow the path of Jesus."

"The Gospel is not presented to mankind as an argument about religious principles. Nor is it offered as a philosophy of life. Christianity is a witness to certain facts—to events that have happened, to hopes that have been fulfilled, to realities that have been experienced, to a Person who has lived and died and been raised from the dead to reign for ever."

— Massey H. Shepherd, Jr.