

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL: THE HEART OF A LEARNER

Objective: Teach children that letting someone teach you, listening, and asking questions are essential to having the heart of a learner.

Learning is necessary because we don't know everything: Think of 3 age-appropriate questions your children don't know the answers to and ask them the questions.

Examples: What's 37 x 168? Who invented popcorn? How do you spell 'bureaucratic'?

Q: Why don't you know? *Haven't been taught, forgot, etc.*

** At random times throughout the devotional, sprinkle in the answers to your 3 questions to see if they're listening. **

Q: Why would we want to be good learners? Can you think of 3 things it takes to be a good learner?

Read Lk 2:41-52 Was Jesus a good learner? How do you know? *People were amazed at his answers*

Q: What 3 things did Jesus do to be a good learner (vs. 46)?

1. He had teachers

- Who teaches you? (*parents, school teachers, children's ministry teachers, etc.*)
- Do you like your teachers?

2. He listened

- Is it hard or easy for you to listen to your teachers? Why?
- Can you listen when you're talking?
- How can you be a better listener?

3. He asked questions (*most kids don't have a problem here!*)

- Why is it important to ask questions?
- Do you ask questions when someone is teaching you, or do you already 'know it all'?

Jesus' desire to surround himself with teachers, his decision to listen, and his curiosity led him to amazing understanding, amazing answers, and wisdom.

Ask your 3 questions again and see if they know the answers...

Q: What can you do this week to have a learner's heart?

Pray! 😊

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL: EYE ON OBEDIENCE!

Start off with Role-playing Skits:

1. Remember to make the skits simple and fun, yet make the point about obedience obvious.
2. The first skit should demonstrate a child who doesn't want to obey while the second skit should demonstrate a heart motivated to obey.
3. Topics for the skit should be age appropriate. Here are some examples:
 - a. For preschool children – Pick up your toys before going to bed. (That means they're placed in the toy bin, not thrown under the bed!)
 - b. For elementary children – Do your homework first before you play or watch TV.
 - c. For secondary school children – Complete your chores without having to be asked twice.

Open up the Scriptures:

1. Read Genesis 4:2b-8. Have your family act out the parts of God, Abel and Cain while you narrate. [You can use props like apples or oranges for Cain's offering and a stuffed animal for Abel's offering. If you have a small family, then simply double up on some of the acting parts.]
2. Point out the fact that Cain did not listen to the directions. [Focus of the fact that Cain apparently did not follow God's directions for the offering and don't get side-tracked on what was wrong with offering fruit. That discussion should be reserved for more mature preteens and teens – e.g., discussing the "motivation" behind what was offered.] Here are some more detailed questions:
 - a. For preschool children – Why is it important to listen to warnings about how to cross the street or where not to ride your tricycle?
 - b. For elementary school children – What happens when you don't listen to directions at school when it comes time to take your test?
 - c. For secondary school children – Do you think Cain even considered asking his brother if he was willing to trade some fruit for one of his animals so that he could also provide a "fat portion" offering?
 - d. For parents – This is a good time to share how it makes your spouse feel when you fail to do something they requested because you weren't listening.
3. Another important point to make is that Cain did not want to listen to the correction. [Look at how many questions God plied Cain with to get him to talk about his feelings and his actions.] This is a good opportunity to "chat" about the looks we all give others when we're angry, for example:
 - a. For preschool children – What does a pouty-face look like? Do you think that kind of face makes mommy and daddy happy? Is that a face that pleases God?
 - b. For elementary school children – What does yelling back or slamming doors accomplish? Does that kind of behavior encourage "conversation" with your parents?
 - c. For secondary school children – What does "rolling the eyes" communicate? What is a better way to express how you are really feeling during "conversation" with your parents?
 - d. For parents – This is the time to apologize to your children for any ungodly ways you respond to one another at home.
4. A final comment should be made about what happens when we do not want to be educated about "right" and "wrong." [At the very least, make mention of how we'll (intentionally or unintentionally) hurt others if we do not learn from God how to obey.] This may also be a good time to discuss rivalry (bossiness, selfishness, teasing, envy, jealousy, etc.) at school or in the home.

Conclusion & Closing: Obedience makes your parents and God happy! It also teaches you to respect others. You may wish to close with a group prayer and/or song while hugging.

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL: THE LIVING LESSON

Goal of the Devotional:

To teach our kids that Christianity is all about following not just the teachings of Jesus, but his example as well.

Start off with Role-playing Skits:

4. Remember to make the skits simple and fun, yet make the point about following Jesus obvious.
5. A simple idea is a game of mirror. Have one person act out something using no words (slow motion dancing, act like a penguin, fishing, an ape, etc) and the other person has to mimic their every move. Play a couple of rounds until everyone gets a few turns and laughs.

Open up the Scriptures:

5. Read Luke 5:1-11 & Mark 1:16-18. Have your family act out the parts of Jesus, Simon and Andrew while you narrate (combine Jesus' words from Luke 5:10 and Mark 1:18). [You can use props like blankets for nets, a couch for the boat. If you have a small family, then simply double up on some of the acting parts.]
6. Point out the fact that Jesus was calling them to be his followers, i.e. students. This means that they would learn from both his teachings and his example.
7. Being a follower of Jesus produced something in their life: they would become fishers of men. Reference the game that you played earlier. When you followed the movements of the person fishing you were fishing, etc. This is a good opportunity to "chat" about practicals of following Jesus by age group:
 - a. For preschool children – Jesus example of sharing – Luke 5:13
 - b. For elementary children – Jesus example of obeying his parents – Luke 2:51
 - c. For secondary school children – Jesus' example of seeking God – Luke 2:49
 - d. As a family – Jesus' example of serving people – John 13:2-5
8. They followed Jesus because they trusted he was the Son of God. This is a great time to address being careful who we "follow." Just because someone is a sports star or a musician doesn't mean we should follow them. Ask questions by age group:
 - a. For preschool children – Should you follow someone who is disobeying Daddy & Mommy?
 - b. For elementary school children – Who are some people in your school that you are tempted to "follow" to do the wrong things?
 - c. For secondary school - What did Jesus do to win their trust? What should we look for in people who are going to influence us?
9. At this point it is great for the parents to share briefly an area where they are striving to become more like Jesus.
10. Close by having each member of the family choose an area in their life where they are going to follow Jesus' example more closely. Choose one area as a family that you can corporately follow Jesus' example more closely (hospitality, serving our neighbors, encouraging, evangelism). [This will vary with the age of your kids. You may just choose one to do as a family]

Conclusion & Closing: God desires that we learn from both Jesus' teachings and example. Close with a group prayer and/or song while hugging.

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL: FAMILY EVANGELISM

Goal of the Devotional:

To teach our kids that our family can be used by God to help people become Christians.

Start off with a game:

6. Play a game of telephone. A funny message begins at one side of the family and is whispered until it gets back to the originator. Then say what the message has become.

Open up the Scriptures:

11. What is the most important message that we can tell someone? Answer by age group:
 - a. Preschool – God loves you!
 - b. Elementary – God wants to know you!
 - c. Secondary – Salvation is found in Jesus Christ!
12. Read the following passages:
 - a. Acts 11:13-14
 - b. Acts 16:14-15
 - c. Acts 16:25-34
13. What is the common theme throughout these passages?
 - a. Whole households becoming Christians.
14. How could God use our family to reach out to other families?
15. Act out several scenarios where the family cooperates to reach out to people (Let the kids be the ones who invite people or make steps to reach out. This is especially helpful if your child is shy and not likely to do this naturally. This is a great opportunity to practice):
 - a. Inviting a waitress when the family is out to dinner
 - b. Inviting a friend to stay the night and come to church on Sunday
 - c. Inviting a family over to dinner
 - d. Playing with the kids while the parents study the Bible
16. Another aspect of this is prayer for people that you want to reach out to as a family. Make a list of people who you can begin to pray for and work together to.
 - a. Neighbors
 - b. The families of their friends
 - c. School teachers and faculty
 - d. Sports coaches and teammates
 - e. Your co-worker's families
17. Set up a plan for next weeks family devotional time to be some sort of family evangelism – having a family over for dinner, serving someone in need, going and sharing your faith together, etc. [Don't wait until next Monday night to try to call someone for dinner. Come up with a great plan and execute it. This will communicate to your kids how important this is to God and, therefore, you!]

Conclusion & Closing: Close by praying together to be used by God to help a household come to Christ. Pray for the specific people that you are going to reach out to.

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL: GO FOR IT!

Goal of the Devotional:

Tonight (or last night) you worked together as a family to be involved in family evangelism. The goal was to give your family a tangible example of working together that you can continue to build on. Now it is a great idea to have a follow-up discussion in the days to follow. It doesn't have to be long, but the sooner you can do this the better it will be.

Follow-Up Idea:

1. Start by drawing out how they felt about the time. Sample Questions:
 - a. How did it feel to do this?
 - b. What part went well?
 - c. What part didn't go well?
 - d. How can we continue to reach out as a family in the future?
2. This is a great time to discuss topics like rejection, fear, courage, laziness, etc.
3. Read I Corinthians 3:6-9
 - a. We planted – How?
 - b. We watered – How?
 - c. God makes it grow!

Conclusion & Closing: God is pleased that we did our part. Let's pray that God will make the seeds we planted grow!