

## 101 Ideas for Family Worship

*Gathering together each day to celebrate our faith and renew our covenant with God can forge strong bonds between us and build a precious religious heritage within our families.*

### Preschoolers

- Using a soft toy lamb and making the sound effects of an approaching storm with thunder and wind, illustrate the story of the lost sheep. Hide the lamb and have the small child find it. Tell the child, "That's what the shepherd does. When the lamb is lost, he finds it. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who wants His lambs safe from harm." Sing, "I am Jesus' Little Lamb." Read from the Bible the story of the lost lamb.
- Have the small child stand behind a closed door while the family sings, "I'll Meet You in Heaven." When the family sings, "Let's open the door and look inside," open the door. Then sing, "Why Mary will be there!"
- On Friday evening, light a Sabbath candle to indicate the Sabbath hours have begun. On Sabbath evening, blow it out to indicate the Sabbath hours are over.
- Find books on the appropriate level and read to the child while holding him. Let him point to pictures he recognizes or fill in words as you pause.
- As soon as they're able, have the little ones memorize short phrases of Scripture.
- Older children may make a book entitled, "My Daddy, My Mommy, My Brother, My Sister." The family can help with what is put into the book.
- Tell short stories on character topics and then ask the child questions relating to them. Good topics can be: "peacemaker," "you are special," "love," "Jesus loves you."
- Rewrite the Bible stories into a simple vocabulary. Reread frequently until the child can tell the story alone.
- Outline the hands of the child and talk about helping hands.
- Outline the child's foot and discuss using little feet for Jesus.
- Tell a story to the child about a miracle. Then act out a Bible miracle with the child taking part.
- Put a Bible puzzle together. Tell the story of the picture of the puzzle.
- Show big pictures of Jesus and Bible characters and tell the story while identifying the picture items.
- Have pictures of animals. Point to each animal and say, "Jesus made the animal." Point to another one and repeat. Then, after all the animals have been identified, let the child say their names. Tell the child, "Jesus loves the animals. He loves us too, and knows our names."
- Play Sabbath School. Sing Sabbath School songs and tell Sabbath stories.
- Teach the child to pray. Have the child say simple phrases of prayer, repeating after you. Be sure to ask God to bless each family member in the prayer.

### Primaries

- On Friday evening ask questions about the Sabbath School lesson and help the child to learn the memory verse.
- Read about the fruits of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23. Have children make a notebook with a page for each fruit, one each day. Make a checklist for each and check when during the day there is evidence of one of the fruits in his or her life.
- Have children prepare a Bible quiz for their parents.
- Go for a nature walk. Pick up nature objects. Then look up what the Bible says about each one. If no reference can be found, work as a family to make up an object lesson about the nature items.
- Read a spiritual story and ask children to identify the lessons values presented. Decide if they are good ones or bad ones.
- Record several life situations on cards so that each person can have one. Ask each to read their situation and tell how the situation might be handled, such as, "Mother asked Sue to get her room cleaned for Sabbath. Mother just couldn't help her. Sue however, wanted to read the book that Jane gave her at school that day. What should Sue do?"
- Find a word that describes God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit for every letter of the alphabet.

- Look up the meaning of each child's name. Talk about the meanings of the names of Bible characters such as Abraham, Elijah, and Jacob.
- Read a Bible story and leave out the name of the main characters. Say "blank" when the name is given. See who can be the first to guess the name of the person in the story.
- Show slides or pictures of the family and discuss how God helped in a special way at that time. Recount family blessings.
- Talk about your family history and how other lives have affected your lives. Emphasize your family's spiritual history.
- Make a "Thankful" booklet in which the child can continue to add new pages on answered prayers and on special events that enrich their lives.
- Assign stories of Bible characters to the children. Have them do their own research on these characters and when finished have them tell the story of the person's life to the family at worship.
- Make a family motto. Decorate and hang in the worship room. Each month make a new one.
- Choose a family ministry and in worship decide how it will be done. It could be that the family might choose to hold a Sabbath story hour, or present special music at church or Sabbath School, or give friendship cards to patients at a nursing home. If so, part of worship time could be used for preparation.
- Plan a special service when the children are asked to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Tell them the plan of salvation and discuss how Lucifer wants to dominate the world and their lives, but that Christ is stronger because of the victory won on the cross. Help them to realize the power in the shed blood of Jesus and to invite Him to be Lord of their lives.
- Read in The Desire of Ages the chapter on Christ as a child. Search within the chapter for character traits of Christ. Have a time of family evaluation and ask if these are character traits of the family. If not, what steps should be taken to be more Christlike?
- Draw a story from the Bible and put a new frame for each change in the story. Tell the story using the picture as an aid.
- Establish a tradition of having children prepare a part or all of Friday and Sabbath evening worship. Suggest that they pantomime a story or a Bible character. Use props or homemade costumes and have the family guess the story.
- Make an A-Z Bible Book by making one page a week. Choose a letter and let each family member make a page emphasizing that letter. For the letter "A", "angel" pictures or stories can be drawn or pasted in, "angel" quotes or texts can be printed. Some other family member might specialize on "animals" of the Bible or "Abraham." When finished, have each one share their page and tell what he learned about the topic as he prepared it.
- Read the Golden Rule text. Make "loving coupons" for each member of the family, listing something that will be done for them. When all have finished, distribute the coupons. Example:

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_  
 This coupon is presented to \_\_\_\_\_  
 It entitles him/her to (e.g. a free shoe polishing). \_\_\_\_\_

- Give clues to a Bible character. The first person who knows who it is stands up and identifies him. If correct, the identifier will then give clues to another Bible character.

### **Juniors and Teens**

- Identify the trials of a Bible character. Discuss how these trials turned out for good in the end. Make a list of personal trials and ask for family input as to what can be done about them.
- Have a worship on the topic of "hostilities." Discuss what causes hostilities, and pray that God will help each family member to deal appropriately with them. Pray that God will help each one to communicate and listen to each other's problems.
- Order from the Voice of Prophecy the Bible course for youth and study it as a family.
- Find books on Christian living and read them together. Don't preach, but let the book give the message.
- Listen to tapes or records of music that is uplifting and pleasing to God.
- Evaluate movies and TV viewing. Think of questions which should be asked to help determine

whether or not a program is appropriate to watch. Think about how to evaluate the content of programs which have been watched. How can we deal with peer pressure to watch TV or to engage in behaviors presented on TV which we deem inappropriate?

- Spend time on the topic of friendships. Read the story of David and Jonathan and make a list of the characteristics of a good friend. Determine if friends can be used by Satan to lead others astray.
- Have a goal-setting time. Have each one write five goals for life, and how they plan to accomplish them. How will they relate to goals they could not accomplish?
- Discuss topics of justice, prejudice, equality, environment, war, abortion. Find Bible stories and texts that deal with these topics. How does the Scripture speak to the issues of today?
- Assign topics like the following to study: patience, forgiveness, dependability, gratitude, responsibility, purity, peace, efficiency, and unconditional love. Have each one choose one and share it on an assigned night for worship.
- Discuss individual devotional time. Read books on how to read the Bible and how to pray. Take steps to organize family routines so that all can have their private devotions.
- Decide who you would put into a Heavenly Hall of Fame. Limit it to ten people. Tell why you would induct them.
- Discuss God's plan for marriage. List characteristics of a good husband/wife. Use Bible to help in making out the list. Discuss the types of friends suitable for Christians and the age at which serious boy-girl friendships can begin. Work together as a family to establish the guidelines and rules for such friendships.

### **Older Teens and Young Adults**

- Study the following doctrines and share with the family: Sabbath, Baptism, Second Coming, and State of the Dead.
- Read one chapter of Proverbs each day. Discuss what Solomon is saying to teens and young adults.
- Paul writes a letter to Timothy, a young man. Read 1 Tim. 4:12. Discuss what this verse is saying to the modern young person.
- Find in a concordance texts that deal with "strength" such as 2 Cor. 12:9. Discuss how God can give us His strength for our personal problems.
- Look up the word "trials" in the *Index to the Writings of E.G. White* and have each person locate information on trials and share with the family. If a very good quotation is located, consider committing it to memory.

### **Singles**

- Invite one or more families to join you for your worship.
- Travel to an invalid's home or to the elderly in a nursing home and have worship with them.
- Invite children in the neighborhood to your home for stories, Bible reading, and songs once a week.
- Visit your parents once a week, if nearby, and worship with them.
- Find a prayer partner for a daily prayer and Bible study.
- Go to special places to worship God, such as an orange grove, a riverside, a garden, or a safe woods.
- Read books on personal devotions and experiment with new spiritual skills. Then share with others.

### **Marrieds**

- Make a prayer request book listing requests, recording a promise to go with each request, recording the date when made, and the date when answered.
- Read a devotional book through together. Use two books and alternate reading of paragraphs.
- Start worship by stating what good thing happened to you during the day or what your blessings were.
- Read a chapter of the Bible together, using different versions if available. Compare as you alternate reading verses. Privately write your feelings about some portion of the chapter.

Visualize yourself doing what God commands, and make plans for the day to act upon God's instruction. For evening worship, discuss with your spouse how you implemented God's command.

- Search a concordance for all texts relating to wives and husbands. Categorize these and evaluate whether you are following God's plan.
- Individually write a letter to God as though writing to a friend. Share your letter with your spouse.
- Paraphrase a chapter, such as 1 Cor. 13, and include your own experiences as examples. Other good portions of the Scripture for personalizing are Rom. 5:1-11 and Ps. 121. These can be memorized and made even more meaningful by reciting them while traveling.
- Underline doctrinal texts and promises in the Bible by using red for doctrines and blue for promises. Take time to memorize where these are found. Sort them by Bible books, starting with Matthew. Learn all promises and doctrinal texts in this book and then proceed to texts in Mark.
- Invite another couple to have worship with you every week on a certain day.
- Have a special room in the house called the prayer room, with special lighting, music, and books for worship.
- Do "10 and 10" on a specific text. Have 10 minutes of writing about a text by each spouse and then 10 minutes of dialoging on it.
- Have an Agape Feast. Invite some couples or friends to such a meal and thank God for His blessings. Have white candles for atmosphere and an Eden diet menu of fresh fruits, nuts, and bread. Avoid general conversation. Spend time talking of God's goodness, sharing texts and giving testimonies of faith, hope, and love.
- Make a book of promises. Each time a promise is found when reading, record it in the Promise Book. Memorize some of these to be claimed on a difficult day.
- Write appreciation notes to each other. Read what the Bible says on the topic of "love."
- Have conversational prayer—one praying on a topic and then the other praying, alternating throughout the prayer.
- Keep a record of answered prayers in a Miracle Book.
- Pray out loud for each other after each identifies his/her needs.
- Go out in nature for worship by a stream, by the ocean, or on a mountaintop.
- Try candlelight or fireside worship on Friday evening.
- Make a personal devotional book of favorite texts, doctrinal texts, and their interpretation, promises, and memorized portions of Scripture.
- Have a telephone worship when apart from each other.
- Dedicate a new home by having prayer for activities in each room of house.
- Alternate evening worships. One night the husband prepares, the wife the next night.
- Decide to have a set day when one of the children now living away from home will be prayed for in a special in-depth way. Monday—Mary, Tuesday—David, Wednesday—Judy, etc.
- Invite friends over for a Passover Feast. Read Patriarchs and Prophets where it speaks of the Exodus, and eat typical Passover food eaten by Jewish people at the Passover time.
- Turn Scripture into prayers and record them. Insert names into the prayers, including yours or those of the children away from home.
- Read about the Holy Spirit for two weeks and pray for change in the life.

### **Additional Worship Ideas Using Scripture**

- On Friday evening read Bible texts about Sabbath and discuss how to keep the Sabbath holy. Record ideas for happy Sabbath observance in a "Family Worship Book." Add to this list frequently and reread in preparation for Sabbath worships.
- Study from the Bible the character of Christ. In a series of worships discover what Christ is like and pray for the Holy Spirit to more fully develop these character qualities in family members.
- Read a chapter of the Bible together. Then privately write feelings about some portion of it. Each is to visualize himself/herself doing what God commands and then make plans for the day to act upon God's instruction.
- Personalize some words of Jesus as though He were speaking to you. Have each write how he/she feels about Jesus saying this to him/her. After writing feelings, share with the family.
- Paraphrase or personalize a chapter such as 1 Cor. 13 or Rom. 5:1-11. Record your experiences in a "Family Worship Book."

- Leave a Scripture text at the breakfast table for meditation by late risers (if time schedules can't synchronize). A continuous family prayer can also be written with each adding to it before leaving the house.
- Assign a text to the family on Friday evening. Sometime during the Sabbath each person writes about what the text is saying to him/her. Share with the family the written masterpiece at evening worship.
- Study a difficult book of the Bible, such as Revelation, outlining the chapters, drawing symbols of beasts and interpreting them, reading a commentary and making notes of findings in a devotional notebook.
- Read about the heavens in Ps. 8 on a bright clear night. Have family go outdoors and identify stars and constellations.
- Read and record Scripture, using one family member as a narrator and others assisting by searching for dramatic sound effects to add such as thunder, rain, beat of hoofs, fire crackling. Share the tape for guests at worship time and follow up with questions.
- Read Matthew 14:23-33 slowly and with feeling to the group. Allow each participant to reflect quietly for a few moments. Then those who wish to do so share with others their thoughts on the following: "The particular point in this story that catches my attention and feelings right now is. . . ." "My Christian experience tells me that Jesus continues to be the master of troubled waters in my life when. . . ."