

STUDY THEME

God's Plan for Families

How would you describe your family? Is your family close in the sense of each member being loving and concerned about the other family members? Are all members of your family Christians? Is your family active in church?

This month's Bible studies focus on God's plan for families in four specific ways. First, passages in Deuteronomy highlight the role of the family in biblical instruction. Parents have a responsibility to teach their children biblical truths.

Second, a study of the young pastor Timothy stresses how the Bible should be the family's primary source for spiritual and moral guidance. Third, key passages in Paul's letter to the young minister Titus help us see how the local church and the family can be partners in Christian instruction and service. Finally, the story of Peter and Cornelius reminds us of the key elements of the good news of salvation in Christ. Churches, families, and individuals need to tell others this good news.



Jon LeMay

DATE	LESSON TITLE	LIFE QUESTION
October 7	The Home: The Center of Biblical Guidance	Why should I make my home the primary center of biblical instruction for my family?
October 14	The Bible: The Family's Source of Instruction	What role does the Bible play in my family?
October 21	The Church: The Family's Partner	Why should my family be involved actively in the church?
October 28	The Good News: The Family's Message	How can my family impact others for Christ?

By Omar C. Garcia

DEVELOPING

our *Family Bible Time*

Did you know that God thinks about us all the time (Ps. 139:17-18) and wants us to spend time with Him (John 4:23)? Imagine that—the God of the universe desires to have an intimate relationship with us. Because I'm a Christian, cultivating intimacy with God is one of the things that matters most to me. Because I'm a Christian parent, guiding my children to know and love God is also a top priority. Is a vital and growing relationship important to you? Do you want to guide your children into a closer walk with God? The letters in the word "devotion" can help us develop a guide for developing a **Family Bible Time** with God.

D is for Decision

Decide to have a devotional time.

We cannot grow in our relationship with God apart from spending personal time with Him. Intentionally schedule your **Family Bible Time**. Set aside a specific day and time and a specific meeting place. And, be prepared to say no to some of things that matter least in order to keep your family appointment with God.

E is for Explore

Explore available devotional resources.

Once you decide to have a **Family Bible Time**, explore and find the best resources for your family to use. Check your local Christian bookstore for a daily devotional guide with suggested Scripture readings and challenging devotional thoughts. And, do not overlook the wonderful devotional resource you are holding in your hands at this moment. Because your adult Sunday School lesson is either scripturally or conceptually linked

with what your children study, use the **Family Bible Time** suggestions in your Learner Guide. These devotional suggestions can make your **Family Bible Times** enjoyable, generate meaningful discussion, and challenge you to live lives pleasing to God.

V is for Variety

Use variety to maintain interest.

Adding variety is one way to maintain interest in your **Family Bible Time**. Consider meeting in a variety of settings. Meet around the dinner table either before or after a meal, or on the living room floor with praise music quietly playing in the background, or perhaps on the lawn on summer evenings. Use a variety of ways to share with your family. Capture the interest of young children by reading your Scripture and devotional selection with appropriate verbal expression. Ask questions to stimulate interest. Use an object lesson to illustrate a devotional thought. A little variety can help make your times together interesting and enjoyable.

O is for Obstacles

Identify and overcome obstacles.

Identify and overcome the obstacles that are keeping you from having a successful and consistent **Family Bible Time**. Overcommitment is one of the biggest obstacles we face. Taking on too many activities and involvements can extend our day beyond work and school hours, leaving us too tired to have a **Family Bible Time**. Are you and your children dazed and out of breath at the end of the day? Perhaps you need to say no to some

activities so that you can say yes to your **Family Bible Time**.

Television is a major obstacle to having a devotional time. People we call “couch potatoes” spend entire evenings mindlessly watching one television program after another. Couch potatoes are in danger of becoming physically and spiritually unfit. Do you allow television to keep you at arm’s length from God? Be prepared to turn off your television in order to tune in to God.

T is for Time

Set aside enough time.

Be sure to set aside enough time for your **Family Bible Time**. How much is enough time? You must decide. Some people would not think twice about watching a half-hour sitcom but complain about spending fifteen minutes with God. Try not to rush through your **Family Bible Time** like a bird in a hurricane. God is worthy of our time, attention, and devotion.

Set aside time free of distractions. Let your answering machine answer your phone during devotionals. Regardless of how much time you set aside for your **Family Bible Time**, make sure that your time together is meaningful and helps you and the members of your family to cultivate a deeper love for God.

I is for Inspiration

Inspire hope and trust in God.

Your **Family Bible Times** can be a wonderful source of inspiration. These quiet moments can help you and your children reflect on the majesty and wonder of God. If you are experiencing difficulties, your **Family Bible Times** can help you maintain your faith in God. Together you can commit your concerns to God in prayer and trust Him to care for you.

Ask God to bring to remembrance the things you learn during your **Family Bible Time**. Pray for your children and ask God to help them apply a particular verse or truth you discussed in your

Family Bible Time. Do not underestimate how God can turn the inspiration of quiet moments into the perspiration of meaningful service. Look for ways to affirm family members and inspire hope and trust in God.

O is for Ownership

Help your children take ownership.

Encourage participation of your children by helping them take ownership. Involve your children in **Family Bible Times**, rather than asking them to sit by as passive spectators. Encourage younger children to use their own Bible during **Family Bible Times**. Use your finger to help them follow along as you read a Scripture passage. Thank them for allowing the family to use their Bible during your time together. Sing a favorite children’s song that they know and enjoy. And be sure to thank your children for their assistance. By doing so you will help your children develop good devotional habits that can serve them for a lifetime.

N is for Nurture

Nurture your relationship with God and your family.

Life is hectic and demanding, but we can find encouragement and the strength to face each new day in our **Family Bible Times**. Let your children hear you express thanks to God for them in prayer. Verbally affirm their worth and value in God’s eyes and yours. Slip an encouraging note into your child’s lunch box or school book, a reminder of a key thought you discussed in your **Family Bible Time** and that you are praying for them throughout the day.

If you are having a **Family Bible Time**, keep it up. If you do not have a **Family Bible Time**, start today. One thing is certain, you and your children will reap a lifetime of benefits from every moment you spend together with God.

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