



ST JAMES CROYDON

TAKE 10 MINS
TO SHAPE
YOUR FAMILY

A SERIES OF FAMILY
DEVOTIONALS

INTRODUCTION

The month of September is an opportunity for us to commit together as St James to engage with God personally through the Bible, and to respond through prayer. This year we have a booklet for families to read together each week, alongside the personal devotional daily booklet.

We are focussing our families' booklet around the program we are following in Sunday Kids each week. The program looks at what a relationship with Jesus looks like each and every day for children and families. Our hope is that this little booklet encourages you as a family in your daily lives as followers of Jesus.

Some tips for using your families booklet:

- Read each family devotion early in the week before reading with your family
- Set aside a regular time and place where you can read through the booklet as a family
- Talk about what your family has learned with another St James family, a Christian friend or me!

I've invited parents to write each of these devotions and I have been greatly encouraged by their love for God. I pray that you will be similarly encouraged by the devotions.

Each devotion includes a bible passage to read together, a reflection, some discussion questions, a fun family activity to enjoy together and some things for your family to pray for. Pick what you would like to use and what suits your family. Each devotion should take about 10 minutes. If your family is new to family devotions this is a great way to start a new habit and if you're a family with good devotional habits you may like to add this to your weekly family devotional routine as you read and engage with God's word together.

May God use this booklet to grow and strengthen you love and knowledge of God as your family grows in him together.

Ali Collins
Kids' Minister
#stjames10mins

WEEK 1

WHAT MIGHT YOU LEARN FROM A SNEAKY PEEK?

Passage: **Colossians 4:2-6, 18** (NIRV is recommended, which is accessible for free on-line if no hard copy is available). Please keep this passage open during the study.

Reflection:

Have you ever taken a sneaky peek at an email written by your mum to your teacher or looked over your dad's shoulder while he was texting someone on his phone? Well, what you just read with your family from the Bible was kind of like a sneaky peek at a letter written by a missionary and apostle named Paul. But actually...you have permission to read this letter! Paul was writing to a group of Christians in a small city called Colossae. (That's a strange name for a city! It no longer exists, but it was located in a country we know today as Turkey.)

Do you notice where Paul was writing from [review verses 3b and 18]?

So, Paul was in prison because he was preaching about the good news of Jesus in places where it was illegal to preach about Jesus. **Do you know what that good news is? [Look at Romans 6:23 and John 3:16 if you need help with that answer.]** It is pretty amazing that Paul was willing to go to prison for preaching this good news of Jesus BECAUSE many years earlier, before he became a Christian, he was the one who used to put Christians into prison! Now, he was in chains because of his faith and love for Jesus.

There are a lot of things you can learn from this snippet of Paul's letter, but take two minutes to look more closely at two points:

1. Prayer is super important, and God really does respond to your prayers! How many times do you see the word "prayer" in this passage? If you look at verse 2 in the NIRV, what does Paul say about prayer? Sometimes, it can feel like you are just talking to the air when you pray! But God promises that He will listen to you if you talk to Him (Jeremiah 29:12). When praying, you can give God thanks (v 2) and you can ask Him for needs. And God does answer prayers, which it seems from this letter, Paul believes strongly.
2. Did you know that God can use you to help people come to believe and follow Jesus? The way you speak and treat other kids at school, teachers, neighbors and family members can be an opportunity to show the love of Jesus [review verse 5-6]? And you may also have an

opportunity to tell people the good news of Jesus. Sometimes that can be a little scary, especially if you are not sure exactly what to say. Perhaps you can talk with your parents or Sunday school teachers about how to have these conversations. And don't forget to pray to God for wisdom and courage.

Prayer: Pray Colossians 4:3 for a missionary that you know personally and/or are linked to St James. Also pray for someone you know who is not a Christian, that they would see and hear the good news of Jesus.

Living Out What We Learned (Family Activity Options):

1. Watch one or both videos (see links below) about the power of prayer and the amazing way God can use his people to make difference in the lives of others. Also, consider how the act of giving helps people to see the love of Jesus.
2. Consider organizing a shoe box for a child through Samaritan Purse. Kids - be sure to help pick out items to put into the box and perhaps you can even use some of your own spending money for the purchase. As you prepare the box and after sending it, spend lots of time praying together for the receiving child and their family. Check the Samaritan Purse website for updates on the restrictions due to Covid-19 (<https://samaritanpurse.org.au/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/covid-19/>).
3. Make a family prayer book or poster. For the book: Have each family member take one or two sheets of blank paper and glue photos, write names and/or draw pictures of people in their life that you all can pray for (e.g. Christian and non-Christian friends and teachers, neighbors, extended family, work colleagues, etc.). Dedicate some pages of the book for missionaries, government leaders and hardships that are occurring all over the world (e.g. refugee crisis). An A4 display folder works well for this book. On a smaller scale, you can also use poster paper where each family member contributes names and faces of people in which to pray. At family prayer time, grab your book or look at the poster to "reconnect" with these individuals and be reminded of their needs.

Kwale's Answered Prayer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FwDHB2vAGc>

Dania's Story: The Power of Prayer <https://youtu.be/rVViBiO4Rm4>

We are reading the Bible today with Janson and Heather Condren and their kids (Ethan, Sophia and Jayden).



WEEK 2

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

Passage: John 15:1-8

Reflection:

Have you ever helped with the gardening? Maybe you have pulled up some weeds or watered the garden or even mowed the lawn. We have a fruit tree in our backyard. It won't make fruit unless we care for it. There are things we need to do to keep the plant healthy so that it can grow fruit that is good to eat. One important job in keeping a fruit tree healthy is pruning. Have you ever tried pruning a plant? Pruning is cutting off dead or overgrown branches or stems so that a plant can continue to grow. Without pruning, the branches won't grow much at all.

Jesus says that we are the branches, that He is the vine (that the branches are attached to) and that God is the gardener. When we follow Jesus, we are attached to Him like a branch is attached to a vine. God, the gardener, prunes us to help us to grow in our love for Him and for other people. He helps us to get rid of all the things that aren't good for us and helps us grow good fruit. When we remain connected to Jesus, we are able to grow good fruit, like love, patience and kindness.

Questions: What are the good things that help us stay connected to Jesus?

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. What fruit of the spirit do you need to ask God to help grow in you?

Prayer: We thank you God that you prune us, so that we can grow in our love for you and for others. Thank you for the many ways that you help us to grow in our love for you. Thank you for prayer, for your word, for our church and the people who teach and encourage us. Please help us to produce good fruit and to show our love for you to others. Amen.

Activity: Go and do some gardening! Maybe even have a go at pruning. As you do, thank God that he helps to grow good fruit in us.

We are reading the bible today with Bas, Jen, Sienna and Xavier McGrath

WEEK 3

TREASURED WORDS

Passage: Psalm 119:9-16

Reflection:

In our family we love books. We love escaping to worlds where magic is real; where goodies take on baddies; where dreams become reality; where we experience the hard things of life through the eyes of someone else. Words capture our hearts and our minds as we are drawn into a new world that shapes how we view our own world. The words make us feel, think, respond, laugh, cry, get angry, hope, fear, and imagine. We love books because through them we experience life.

With God's word this is even more true. As we read Psalm 119:9-16 we experience we see a relationship we have God's word. We rejoice in it, we meditate on it, we delight it and we seek not to neglect it. God's word is not merely information on a page. God's words are words of life and light to a world of death and darkness. They are word's of promise for those who feel hopeless. Promises that capture our hearts and draw us into a story (not a made up one) but a real one about our world and its saviour. God's words are to be treasured because in them we experience the story we need and the story the world needs. These are words are to be treasured.

Questions:

1. How could you rejoice, delight, and meditate on God's word?
2. Why is that sometimes hard?
3. How could you help each other treasure God's word?

Prayer: Pray would help us treasure God's word in our heart

Activity: Get a shoe box and decorate it like a treasure box. Read through some Psalms and write down some of God's words you would like to treasure. Put them in the box and then at different meal times pull out a piece to treasure God's word together

We are reading the bible today with Myles Elton and his daughters Norah and Lucy

WEEK 4

I WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME

Passage: Matthew 6:9-14

Reflection:

What we know as the Lord's Prayer was given to Jesus' disciples in response to their request "Lord teach us to pray" after they had watched Him, many times, go off by Himself to pray.

Let's take a closer look.

Our Father

Jesus was including Himself in this prayer - what an amazing thought that God is not only Jesus' Father but He is ours too and together with all of mankind, we can call Him 'ours'. Take some moments to think about what a unifying effect that one word can have.

In Heaven

Jesus' desire was for us to connect by relationship but also to fully worship God for all that He is. By reminding us that He is 'in Heaven' it helps us to get the perspective of His awesome wonder.

Hallowed be Your Name

Continue to use your own words in worship as you consider what it means to be Holy and maybe even write a list of words that come to mind as you think of the word 'Holy'. This is the God, the Loving Father that we can come to as children.

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven

A Kingdom is a place where a King reigns and rules. Like Jesus, our desire is to see the Kingdom coming, more and more but take time to start with yourself.

Give us today our daily bread

Jesus was reminding the disciples of their dependence on God for everything, not just literally the bread they ate. We are reminded that we must depend on God for everything.

Forgive us our sins

Confess in your own words, anything that you know is wrong in your life and then take time to thank God for his grace and mercy and cleansing love.

As we forgive those who sin against us

So here is a tough bit! Ask God if there is anyone that you have not forgiven, anyone you are holding a grudge against. Remember how much God has already forgiven you and determine that you will not withhold that from another. Ask God to help you release them from your judgement.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

Consider any areas of weakness that you know that you have. If you are not already aware, ask God to show you specific areas of weakness and temptation amongst people you are in contact with through Hope.

Questions:

1. How have you trusted God this week?
2. What has God provided for you this week?
3. What are some good choices you have made this week?

Prayer:

Dear God our Father, who lives in heaven there is power in your name. We trust your ways...from your kingdom in heaven all the way down to earth where we live. Please provide all we need today. Forgive our mistakes as we forgive those who make mistakes against us. Help us to make good choices and protect us from all that is evil. Everything we have and do is all for you so everyone we meet will see you in us. Forever and ever, Amen.

Activity:

Re-write the Lord's prayer as a family, that shows your understanding of it. Print it out, decorate it and hang it up at home where everyone will see it.

We are reading the Bible today with The Wong Family.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Top Tips for Reading the Bible with Children

1. It's never too early to begin reading the Bible to children. From a very young age establish the routine – bath, Bible, bed
2. Establish a regular time when you read the Bible with your child
3. Regular and short is better than irregular and drawn out
4. Use age appropriate Bibles
5. Repetition is needed – children often want to hear the same story again and again
6. As children grow older vary what you do – use bought material or read a passage then ask: What do you like about the story? What questions do you have about the story?
7. Be sure to read books like The Big Picture Bible Story that teach the Bible's big story to help children see that the Bible is not just a collection of little stories but one big story. And that Jesus isn't in just parts of the Bible, the whole Bible is about Jesus!

Top Children's Bibles

- The Beginner's Bible, illustrated by Kelly Pulley (a must have children aged 3 to 6 years)
- International Children's Bible, published by Nelson Word Bibles (a must have for children aged 7 to 11 years)
- The Big Picture Bible Story, by David Helm (teaches children the Bible's big story)
- The Jesus Story Book Bible, by Sally Lloyd Jones (helps children see that Old or New Testament the Bible is all about Jesus)
- The Action Bible, by Doug Mauss and Sergio Cariello (the best comic Bible, esp. helpful for boys aged 8 to 11) You can download a daily Bible reading and/or Prayer app:



Bible App for Kids

Guardians of Ancora



Superbook for Kids

Minno Kids

I AM THE VINE,
YOU ARE THE BRANCHES.
IF YOU REMAIN IN ME AND I IN YOU,
YOU WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT

This booklet belongs to:



ST JAMES CROYDON

— reach • disciple • grow —