

**FAMILY**

**WORSHIP**

**GUIDE**



*Let's  
Worship  
as a Family!*

**RIDGEkids** ● ● ●

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commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you **walk along the road**, when you **lie down** and when you **get up**. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.

The call to training our children in godliness is comprehensive. Maureen Bradley summarizes the Deuteronomy 6 passage by saying we have responsibility to teach our children during mealtime, drive time, bedtime and in the morning.

ARBC's leadership recognizes that we have a responsibility as a church to walk alongside parents as they train their children in godliness. We want to equip parents to pray and plan for the spiritual development of their kids. One goal of this booklet is to introduce you to some of the best resources available for teaching your kids about Jesus. The final goal is to encourage you to engage your children in a family worship experience. Read on to find out what it's all about and how you can be the spiritual leader that God has called you to be...

...  
Every Christian parent wants to raise children who will grow up to love and trust Jesus. Parents deliberately search for the church that provides the most opportunities for their kids to grow up in the Lord. We want ARBC to be that church! Yet, as we continue to build our children's ministry, we must not neglect our homes—where children see our faith on real-time display every day.

According to the Bible, we parents have the primary responsibility for teaching our children about God. His word must be prominent in our conversation and daily life with our kids. Training our children in godliness is not something that we can put off until they're older. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, we read:

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These*

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## FROM THE CHILDREN'S PASTOR

We hope and pray that you find this to be a valuable resource as you lead your families to worship our God and Creator. We truly believe that the home is the God-ordained institution for the spiritual development of children. At ARBC, we want to resource you, as the spiritual leaders of your family, by providing materials, resources and ideas as you travel the road of parenting. Please contact us if we can assist you in any way!

John Sorrell

## RIDGE KIDS PHILOSOPHY

Our desire is to help kids face the temptations and challenges of the world and equip parents with tools to build faith and character in their kids, because what happens at home is far more important than what happens at church. After all, we only have 940 Sundays from birth until kids graduate high school to teach them at church—you have over 6,500 days at home!

## STAFF

- **Amy Smith** - Ministry Assistant
- **Amy Taylor** - Director of Nursery and Preschool Ministries
- **Bobby Shaw** - Creative Director
- **Emily Lundquist** - Director of Elementary Ministries
- **John Sorrell** - Children's Pastor

# AustinRidge

BIBLE CHURCH

[www.austinridge.org](http://www.austinridge.org)

Sunday Services 9 am and 10:45 am

**Love God**

**Love People**

# What is Family Worship?

...

*But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15*

Christian writer Patrick Kavanaugh compares family worship to a family meal. Just as a “family meal” is the time when all family members come together to eat, so “family worship” is the time when all family members come together for spiritual encouragement. A good family meal requires intentional planning and preparation. Family worship requires planning as well, and this little booklet is intended as a catalyst for planning. It contains a list of age-appropriate resources to train your child to know God’s Word: a felt board resource, children’s Bibles, a catechism (simple questions and answers for teaching Bible doctrine), audio CDs, and more. The guide also contains some ideas about how you can use these tools with your family, and we even suggest specific learning goals for you and your children. The concept of family worship is not new with us. This booklet is modeled after two very similar resources.

Like a great meal, family worship should also have color and variety. We hope this guide will be a great starting point, but be creative. Don’t get stuck in the rut of simply reading stories. Act them out. Draw and paint. Let a sock puppet tell the story. Adding variety to our times of family worship helps them become times of discovery, and it helps keep our kids’ interest as well.

Moreover, we encourage you to ask other parents to share what they are doing to teach the Bible to their kids. Consider asking someone to pray for you and hold you accountable. Find another parent with whom you can share ideas. We can learn a lot from each other and be encouraged by one another’s faithfulness.

## When? Consistency is Key!

Some parents pray and teach the Scriptures to their kids each night before bedtime. Others supplement nighttime stories and prayers with more structured worship services that include singing. Some have family worship around the table—during the family meal. Family schedules are as different as the families that set them. But times for family worship should be planned regularly. Young children respond best to a planned routine—something they expect. Consistency is key. And regularity is more important than frequency. It would be better to gather the family once each week without fail than to exasperate one’s family with failed attempts to meet every day.

Know this as well: Creatively teaching the Bible to kids is not limited to an intentional time of family worship. As parents, we must make God’s word prominent throughout our lives and conversations. Children learn as much from what we do as from what we say. And kids have lots of questions that present us with opportunities to teach the truth. Rob tells the story of how he used his daughter Sarah Beth’s disappointment about a broken toy as an opportunity to teach about how Adam and Eve “broke the world.” Such “teachable moments” arise more often than we realize.

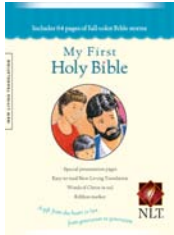
## God Speaks. We Respond.

Family worship, like all worship, has two key components: (1) God speaks, and (2) we answer him.

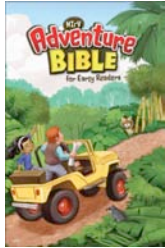
### • God Speaks through His Word

Being a good listener means paying careful attention. And when we are listening to God, we shouldn’t be more haphazard than when we are listening to a friend. Here are some ideas for how to listen to God’s word in a systematic way:

(1) **If you are just starting a time of family worship, you should begin by finding a good Bible.** Read a chapter from the Bible at each family worship time. Read through one of the Gospels or read one chapter from the Old Testament and one from the New. We suggest the following children’s Bibles because they use simple language and include resources that help to explain difficult concepts:



• “My First Holy Bible”, New Living Translation, (Tyndale, 2005). “My First Holy Bible” offers all the benefits of a Bible storybook and a text Bible rolled into one. Young children will take pleasure in the colorful illustrations and enjoy hearing the simple stories with a full-color, 64-page storybook built into their very own Bible. My First Holy Bible is the key to getting children accustomed to and comfortable with the Scriptures.



• “The Adventure Bible for Early Readers, New International Reader’s Version”, (Zonderkids, 2008). Ready for Adventure? “The Adventure Bible for Early Readers” takes you on a fun, exciting journey through God's Word. Along the way you'll meet all types of people, see all sorts of places, and learn all kinds of things about the Bible. Most importantly, you'll grow closer in your relationship with God.



• “ESV Children’s Bible, English Standard Version”, (Crossway, 2008). Each “ESV Children's Bible” contains aids that kids can use on how to pray and read God's Word, the plan of salvation, God's promises, and becoming more like Jesus. In addition, a Bible-reading plan just for them is included, as well as a dictionary.

An excellent guide for family Bible reading that focuses on the stories in the Bible can be found in “The Family Worship Resource Book,” edited by Terry L. Johnson (Christian Focus, 2003).

**(2) Find a good Bible storybook and read through it with your children.** Many Bible resources for young children accurately summarize the facts of a Bible story from Scripture, but then draw a lesson from the story that the biblical author did not intend. There is a tendency to draw moral lessons (“do this” or “don’t do that”) rather than seeing God’s actions in history to save humanity. We’re grateful to report that we’ve found a few resources that are more careful.

**(3) Use the “take home” devotionals that you will receive each week as a parent at ARBC.** Ridge Kids uses the “God’s Story” curriculum on Sunday in our preschool and elementary areas. Each week we will resource you with 5 family devotionals to lead at your home. This curriculum puts the message of the Gospel first in every lesson and these devotional materials are an excellent springboard for times of family worship and discussion.

**(4) Listen to an audio Bible.** Use this in the car, during rest time, while you’re prepping for dinner or as your family is working around the house. The repetition of the Bible stories are important in the spiritual development of a child. Our top pick in audio Bibles is:



• Inspired by the Bible Experience: Old and New Testament, Audio CDs, (Zondervan, 2006) - Dramatic reading of the entire New Testament in a modern version by a cast of actors and pastors. A free Bible Experience podcast is available as well for iTunes at Zondervan’s website.

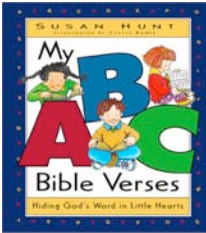
## • We Answer God by Learning the Truth

One of the ways that we respond to God is by meditating on the truths in his word – repeating these truths over and over in our minds so that we remember them. Of course, one danger of having children memorize is that they will learn what is taught in a mechanical, abstract manner, “by rote,” as if it were some sort of a drill. Teaching children should not be done in a negative, repressive, or manipulative manner. This violates both the child’s personality and God’s way of salvation. Rather the truths of God should be taught in an atmosphere of love, and special care should be taken to ensure that the child’s understanding of what he learns grows over time:

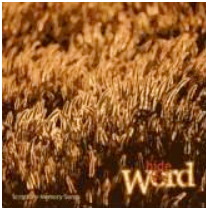
Discuss the material being memorized with your child. This should be done during the actual memorization as well as at other opportune times in the day. Daily experiences and observations provide a world of opportunities to illustrate and apply God’s Word. For example, the inevitable “night frights” which young children occasionally have, become wonderful occasions to comfortingly remind them that, though we cannot see God, He always sees us. Take time to define difficult terms. Question your child in order to discover the level of his [or her] understanding. When you feel that understanding is being achieved, pray with and for the child, including in your prayer some of the concepts just discussed. Expect your child to learn, and rejoice with him [or her] over his growth in knowledge and understanding of God’s Word.

Here are some ideas for how to learn Bible truth in a systematic way:

### **(1) Memorize Bible verses and passages.** Two good resources are:



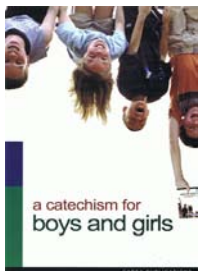
- “My ABC Bible Verses: Hiding God’s Word in Little Hearts” by Susan Hunt. (Crossway, 1998) - Bible verses for each letter of the alphabet. Each verse is related to life situations with an easy-to-read children’s story.



- “Hide the Word: Scripture Memory Songs”, Volumes 1-8, by Mark Altrogge (Forever Grateful Music) - This set of CDs puts scripture to rock tunes. This isn’t necessarily just for kids, adults will enjoy it as well.

- Memory verses can be found each week in our curriculum through the “Sword Bible Memory” program. We encourage you to work with your children as they attempt to “hide God’s Word” in their heart.

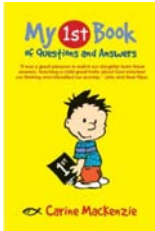
### **(2) Learn Bible doctrines and themes with your children by memorizing a catechism (simple questions and answers that teach Bible truth).** The catechisms listed below are simple enough to begin with a toddler, but the depth of the questions will grow with the child:



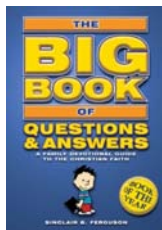
- “A Catechism for Boys and Girls” (Reformation Today Trust, 2005) - A series of questions and answers to develop a child’s understanding of the fundamentals about God, sin, salvation, the Bible, the church, prayer, heaven, and much more. This is the best-arranged children’s catechism (for 10 and under) that we have seen in years!



- “Big Truths for Little Kids: Teaching Your Children to Live for God” by Susan and Richie Hunt (Crossway, 1999) - Devotional stories and application questions based on a Presbyterian version of the “Catechism for Boys and Girls.”



- “My 1st Book of Questions and Answers” by Carine MacKenzie (Christian Focus, 2001). If you have ever wanted to know how to explain the Christian faith to young children in bite-sized chunks then the 114 profound questions and answers, backed by scripture proofs provide an invaluable tool to get you started.



- “The Big Book of Questions and Answers: A Family Devotional Guide to the Christian Faith” by Sinclair Ferguson (Christian Focus, 1997). Questions! Questions! Questions! Children are full of them. Where did I come from? What is God like? Is there only one God? The Big Book of Questions and Answers is a family guide to the Christian Faith. It contains a wealth of activities, prayers and Bible references. This interactive resources material will bring families closer together as they learn about the Christian faith.

## • We Answer God in Prayer

Another way that we respond to God’s Word is by answering him in prayer:

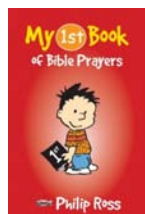
**(1) Pray for your children.** We can teach and model the Christian faith all day long, but only God can convict our children of their sins and give them new life in Christ. It is imperative that we pray for our children – not only that God would convict them of their sins and enable them to trust in Christ, but that they would be guarded from evil influences and the devastating effects of sin.

Pray with your children. By modeling prayers for our kids, we model for them our spiritual priorities and values, and we teach them to pray. In prayer, we show our children that we depend upon God, His mercy and His protection. Pray that your children will grow up to love Jesus and trust in Jesus. Pray that they will have godly friends and godly spouses one day. Pray that they will be protected from Satan and his schemes. Teach them to adore God in prayer. Teach them to confess their sins. Teach them to ask God to meet their needs.

We’ve found the following prayer guides to help us to pray in ways that are modeled after prayers in the Bible:



- “I Can Say to God, I Love You” by Carine MacKenzie, Prayer Board Books series (Christian Focus, 2001)—A prayer book with prayer responses for young children that teaches them to praise God for his love and care. Other titles in this series include: I Can Say to God, Thank You; I Can Say to God, Please; I Can Say to God, I’m Sorry.



- “My 1st Book of Bible Prayers” by Philip Ross (Christian Focus, 2004)— Model prayers for children based on Bible verses. I Can Say to God, I Love You” by Carine MacKenzie, Prayer Board Books series (Christian Focus, 2001)—A prayer book with prayer responses for young children that teaches them to praise God for his love and care. Other titles in this series include: I Can Say to God, Thank You; I Can Say to God, Please; I Can Say to God, I’m Sorry.

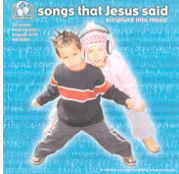
## • We Answer God in Song

Music is the language of children. It is often what a person sings about God that he or she really believes and takes to heart. When choosing music for our SojournKids worship service, both biblical accuracy and God-honoring musical excellence are pursued. Here are a few ideas for making God's truth a primary musical influence for your family:

**(1) Sing your favorite hymns or songs about Jesus to your children when you rock them to sleep at night. Sing and dance to Christian songs with your children.**

**(2) Incorporate a time of structured singing into your regular family worship.**

Suggested Music for Toddlers (age 2-3):

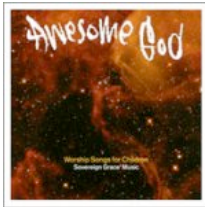


- “Songs that Jesus Said: Scripture Into Music”, by Keith and Kristyn Getty (Getty Music, 2005). Based on the words and teachings of Jesus, this fun collection of new music will inspire, entertain, and educate your children.



- “Teach Me While My Heart is Tender”, by Judy Rogers (Judy Rogers, 1995)—A fun CD with songs written to help young children memorize basic biblical truths.

Suggested Music for Preschoolers (age 4-5):



- “Awesome God”, by Sovereign Grace Kids (Sovereign Grace Music, 2004) — A biblically faithful CD of worship music for kids.



- “God and Me: God Helps Me”, (Provident Music Distribution, 2009) — God & Me is a wonderful collection of fun songs that tell the eternal story of God's great love for children. Each song speaks of our relationship with God and how He is always there for us. God Helps Me reinforces simple truths to help little ones know God made them.

Suggested Music for Elementary (K-5th Grade):



- “Everyday”, (Provident Music Distribution, 2007) — Everyday is a 12 song collection of smash worship hits in an upbeat top 40 style. Includes popular songs that kids and parents will love, perfect for 6-12 years olds looking for music relevant to today's culture.



- “Shout Praises Kids: I Am Free”, (Provident Music Distribution, 2007) — “Shout Praises: Kids” series matches exuberant children's choirs and singing groups with today's top hymns and songs of worship. “I Am Free” includes fun versions of "All To You," "Everlasting God," "Mighty To Save," and more.<sup>67</sup>