



Summer 2026

Dear Families,

Raising children in the faith doesn't happen just at church, but at home and in everyday life. As parents, you have the unique role to walk alongside your children every day and teach them about Jesus. In order to help promote and encourage faith development at home, I have included several resources for you to use in your homes:

- Family Devotions
  - Jesus Calling Daily Devotions
  - Silly Scriptures
- Talking to Your Children
  - Apologetics
- Family Traditions
  - Bedtime
- Heart Habit
  - 100 Key Verses to Memorize
- 16 Table Talk questions to use at the dinner table
- Summertime Activities
- 7 Ways to Manage Screen Time in the Summer

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jen Roettjer".

Jen Roettjer, DCE

Director of Youth and Discipleship



# [ FAMILY DEVOTIONS ]

## SHARE

What are your highs and lows from the day?

What are you thankful for today?

## LEARN

**Jesus Calling: Family Devotional**

**Jesus Listens: 365 Prayers for Kids**

Sign up for daily emails at:  
<https://www.jesuscalling.com/daily-email/>

## MUSIC

**Silly Scriptures**

[Spotify or Amazon](#)

Search for Artist: Doorpost Songs

[YouTube](#)

@sillyscriptures1991

## PRAY

Confess  
Honor  
Ask  
Thanks



# [ TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ]

## APOLOGETICS

### Thoughts to Consider

Apologetics is the discipline of being able to stand up and defend your faith. In a world that is ever increasingly non-Christians, we need to give our children the tools they need to stand up for their faith, even from a young age.

Below are several resources to help provide you with logical, well thought-out evidence for the Christian faith. Many of these resources were originally written for adults but brought down to a children's level for them to understand.

### Videos

- Patterns of Evidence Young Explorers  
<https://www.patternsofevidence.com/young-explorers/>

### Books

- "Case for Faith for Kids" by Lee Strobel
- "Case for a Creator for Kids" by Lee Strobel
- "Cold Case Christianity for Kids: Investigate Jesus with a Real Detective" by J. Warner Wallace and Susie Wallace
- "The Awesome Book of Bible Answers for Kids" by Josh McDowell and Kevin Johnson
- "The 21 Toughest Questions Your Kids Will Ask About Christianity and How to Answer Them Confidently" by Alex McFarland and Focus on the Family

### Websites

- Apologetics Made Easy Series by TruthMadeEasy.com  
<http://truthmadeeasy.com/ame-f-81613/>
- Kids Answers Videos by Answers in Genesis  
<https://answersingenesis.org/kids/videos/>



# [ FAMILY TRADITIONS ]

## BEDTIME

### Thoughts to Consider

Bedtime is the special time of day to connect with your child before drifting off into sleep for the night. While some traditions and activities are essential, like brushing your teeth and putting on your pajamas, others can help set the mood for a restful evening or even create a space to connect with God and each other.

### Bedtime Activities

- Storytime – Read a book, read the Bible, or make up your own story
- Highs and Lows for the day
- Pray for a different family member or friend each day
- Blessings – Lay your hands on your child and speak a blessing
- Marking the Day – Each day put a star on the calendar and thank God for the day
- Set out clothes and items for the next day/week
- Share future excitements and concerns
- Give thanks for the good things that happened that day
- Singing – Ask your smart device to play a song to sing along to
- Prayer Journal – Write down what you pray about and record how God answers
- Memorize Bible Verses
- Create an atmosphere with low lights and soft sounds
- Cup of milk or tea
- Use Belly Breathing techniques – put a stuffed animal on their tummy. Take deep breaths to move the stuffed animal up and down



# [ HEART HABITS ]

## 100 Key Bible Verses to Memorize

### Creation

- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 1:26
- Genesis 1:28
- Genesis 2:18, 23
- Psalm 139:13-14
- Job 38:4-5
- Jeremiah 1:4-5
- John 1:3-5

### Names of God

- Exodus 3:13-14
- Deuteronomy 6:4-5
- Isaiah 9:6

### Salvation and Forgiveness

- Genesis 3:15
- Psalm 51:10-11
- Psalm 103:8-12
- Isaiah 53:5-6
- Matthew 26:28
- John 3:16-17
- Acts 2:38
- Romans 3:23
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- 1 John 1:8-9

### Holy Spirit

- Genesis 1:2
- Isaiah 11:1-2
- John 14:26
- Acts 2:2-4
- Galatians 5:22-24
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

### Bible

- Matthew 7:24
- John 1:1, 14
- 1 Corinthians 2:13
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

### Faith

- Joshua 24:15
- Ruth 1:16-17
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Jeremiah 17:7-8
- Romans 4:2-3
- Hebrews 11:1, 3

### Old Testament Teachings

- Genesis 9:16
- Genesis 15:5-6
- Genesis 50:19-20
- Exodus 20:1-17
- 2 Samuel 7:16
- Proverbs 31:10-12
- Isaiah 6:1-3

### Jesus' Life and Ministry

- Matthew 1:22-23
- Matthew 3:1-3
- Matthew 11:4-5
- Matthew 20:26b-28
- Matthew 21:9
- Matthew 26:26-27
- Matthew 27:50-51
- Matthew 28:5-6
- Mark 1:10-11
- Luke 2:6-7
- John 1:28-29
- Colossians 1:15-20
- Philippians 2:5-11

### Jesus' "I AM" Statements

- John 6:35
- John 8:12
- John 10:9-10
- John 10:14-15
- John 11:25-26
- John 14:6-7
- John 15:5
- Revelation 1:8

### Teachings of Jesus

- Matthew 5:3-12
- Matthew 5:38-39
- Matthew 5:43-44
- Matthew 6:6
- Matthew 6:24
- Matthew 7:7-8
- Matthew 28:19-20
- Mark 9:37
- Mark 12:16-17

### New Testament Teachings

- Mark 10:7-9
- Romans 12:2
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-6
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
- Galatians 3:27-29
- Philippians 4:8
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- James 1:2-4
- James 5:17

### Encouragement

- Numbers 6:24-26
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Psalm 23:1-6
- Psalm 121:1-2
- Isaiah 40:30-31
- Isaiah 41:10
- Jeremiah 29:11
- John 14:1-2
- John 14:27
- Romans 8:28-29
- Romans 8:38-39
- Romans 10:9
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

### Revelation

- Revelation 5:12-13
- Revelation 21:1-2
- Revelation 21:4-5



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



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[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN  
DO TO HELP A FRIEND IN THE  
NEAR FUTURE?

SET 8

WOULD YOU KEEP A SECRET IF  
YOU KNEW SOMEONE WOULD  
GET HURT IF YOU DID?

SET 8

WHEN PEOPLE GROW UP THEY  
ARE ALMOST ALWAYS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR SOMETHING.  
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE  
RESPONSIBLE FOR?

SET 8

THINK OF A FAMOUS FIGURE  
THAT YOU DO NOT ADMIRE.  
WHAT IS IT ABOUT HIM OR HER  
THAT YOU DON'T ADMIRE. WHY?

SET 8

WHAT IS THE BEST BOOK YOU  
HAVE READ IN SCHOOL THIS  
YEAR?

SET 8

IF YOU WERE SHOWING A  
FOREIGNER AROUND YOUR  
TOWN, WHERE WOULD YOU TAKE  
THEM?

SET 8

WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT IN THE  
YEAR 2050? WHAT WILL BE THE  
SAME?

SET 8

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE  
ACTIVITY IN SCHOOL? WHAT DID  
YOU LEARN FROM THIS ACTIVITY?

SET 8



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FAMILY  
TRADITION?

SET 8

WHAT FEAR WOULD YOU LIKE TO  
OVERCOME?

SET 8

WHAT IS THE EARLIEST STORY  
YOU KNOW ABOUT AN  
ANCESTOR?

SET 8

WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN  
SOMEONE GIVES YOU A GIFT YOU  
ALREADY HAVE?

SET 8

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU WILL  
LIVE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

SET 8

DO YOU KNOW SOME OF THE  
JOBS THAT YOUR PARENTS HAD  
WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG?

SET 8

HOW DOES A PERSON BECOME  
COURAGEOUS?

SET 8

WHAT NEW SKILL DO YOU WISH  
YOU COULD LEARN?

SET 8

## Summer Bucket List Ideas

*Here is a list of ideas on how to make the best of your summer this year. Use the included Summer Bucket List Sheet to create your own list.*

### Backyard Activities

- Roll Down a Hill
- Fly a Kite
- Host an Outdoor Family Movie Night
- Run through the sprinklers
- Have a Water Balloon Fight
- Find the Summer Star Constellations
- Find Pictures in the Clouds
- Have a Picnic
- Make Tie-Dye Shirts
- Watch a Sunset
- Catch Fireflies
- Blow Bubbles
- Make Snow Cones
- Take a Mud Bath in a Kiddie Pool
- Feed the Ducks at a Park
- Dance in the Rain
- Drive through Town on a Picture Scavenger Hunt
- Play Capture the Flag
- Late Night Flashlight Tag
- Nature Journaling
- Roast Marshmallows/Make S'mores
- No Electronics Day
- Hold a Pool Noodle Olympics
- Make a Frisbee Golf Course in Your Backyard
- Pick Wildflowers
- Paint Rocks
- Hike in the Dark with No Flashlights

- Make Sponge Water Bombs or Water Balloon Fight
- Camp in the Backyard with Tent
- Color with Sidewalk Chalk
- Find a New Trail to Hike

### Indoor Activities

- Attend VBS
- Make Homemade Ice Cream
- Make Your Own Comic Books
- Make Homemade Playdough or Slime
- Finger Paint
- Create a Paper Bag Puppet Show
- Pick a New Hobby to Learn
- Have a Pajama Day
- Make a Movie or Music Video
- Explore YouTube for a New Science Experiment
- Make Jewelry
- Host a Family Game Tournament
- Create the Ultimate Fort
- Pillow Fight
- Dance Party
- Fly Paper Airplanes
- Fruit and Veggie Canning
- Make a Summer Scrapbook
- Host a Dinner Party with Friends or Someone Who Lives Alone
- Photo Shoot
- Pinterest Day – Find and Create Your Favorite Find
- Bake Cookies

- DIY Spa Say
- Lego Stop Motion Video
- Plant a Fairy Garden
- Minute to Win It Games
- Make a Blessings Jar of All Blessings from the Summer
- Hold an All-Day Movie Marathon
- Make Your Own Board Game
- Complete a Book Reading List

### **Themed Meal Ideas**

- Fancy Meal
- Taco Tuesday
- Baseball Park Night
- Fondue Night
- Throwback Thursday (Favorite Meals from Long Ago)
- Princess Tea Party
- Finger Foods
- Luau
- Farmer's Market Only
- Breakfast in Bed
- Disney Night
- Rainforest Cafe
- Carnival Foods
- Find the Best Pizza (or other food) in Town

### **Service Projects**

- Bake a Treat for Your Neighbor
- Wash the Car
- Write a Letter or Card to a Friend or Relative (Become Summer Pen Pals)
- Do an Act of Random Kindness

### **Staycation Activities**

- Water Park
- Library
- Farmer's Market
- Zoo or Animal Farm
- Fishing
- Flower picking
- Beach
- Movies
- Ziplining
- Pick your own Fruit
- Waterfall chasing
- Fairgrounds
- Boat Ride
- Mini Golf
- Hiking
- Aquarium
- Geocaching
- Nature Scavenger Hunt
- Laser Tag
- Swimming
- Roller Skating
- Botanical Gardens
- Painting
- Outdoor concert
- State Parks
- Selfie Museum
- Ride on a train
- Baseball game
- Rock Climbing
- Arcade
- Find a new playground
- Bowling
- Rock Hunting
- Children's Museum

## 7 WAYS TO MANAGE SCREEN TIME THIS SUMMER

*Written by Tony Bianco*

Summer is coming which means families' schedules and activities look very different with camps, vacations, and more free time.

During the school year, parents set expectations for students regarding screen time, and summer is no different. With the upcoming change closing in, we want to give you seven ways your family can manage screen time this summer.

### 1. DON'T TREAT IT LIKE THE SCHOOL YEAR.

If you want to be successful this summer with your student, go in acknowledging the difference in schedules. Even if the days are jam-packed with activities assume your student will have full days at home.

Set expectations with them whether you are home or not. Yes, this may mean more screen time than usual - that is okay! It's summer! They have worked and done their best throughout the year, and now they have downtime- lots of it.

Many families start by adding one hour of additional screen time per day. This progression helps gauge their dependency and responsibility with it. The beginning of summer will be the heaviest of use. The first few weeks are full of junk and later balance out.

### 2. HAVE A SYSTEM TO MONITOR.

Depending on parents' work hours, students may find themselves home alone for several hours of the day. Use a program that assists in time limits and web filtering to manage screen time over the summer.

They are a great benefit to the whole family. If you are interested in more information, check out our blog post where we reviewed programs (<https://ministrytoparents.com/how-do-i-select-a-technology-monitoring-service/>).

### 3. ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY.

Screen time can be a solo activity, but it doesn't have to be. Encourage your student to use screen time to connect with others, not just binge watch on the sofa.

Part of the summer experience is navigating your student and their friendships! Summer can put time and space between friends, but parents can cultivate friendships and community for their kids if they find unique ways to bring them together.

#### **4. INVEST IN EDUCATION.**

Another creative idea is to require a set amount of educational screen time. Whether it's reading on a Kindle or Nook or working on essays - not all time has to be "wasted."

When you reward *informative* with *play* screen time you guide what they view first. This decision leads to a win-win for both parties.

#### **5. SET SCREEN DAYS.**

If your family travels a good bit on vacations or camps, perhaps set a schedule such as Monday/Wednesday/Friday are screen days and Tuesday/Thursday are screen-free. They can use those days to do something with someone or themselves.

This idea may not work for all families but putting away devices on purpose for an extended time will help during the school year. Setting a schedule also offers your student structure.

#### **6. OUTDOORS = SCREEN TIME**

If your student struggles to go outdoors or is turning into a couch potato, create incentives. Require that your student "earn" screen time by being active outdoors and away from screens.

One example is to spend two hours outside playing basketball to earn one hour of screen time. This option gives your student motivation to be active and fill their schedule with variety as well as time off screens.

#### **7. HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT EXPECTATIONS.**

As parents, we can jump in and do things for our family without fully explaining or considering all members. When we do, we invite division and resentment rather than order and structure.

When it comes to screens and the hours of time students use them, communication is essential! In my experience, the more you talk and discuss thoughts and feelings for *why* you do something the better they go along with it.

You may not verbally share screen time expectations with your student as of now but today would be a good time to start. Use summer and the new schedule as an excuse to have these conversations and set boundaries.

Communication is one of the most paramount tools you have as a parent!

Summertime brings a break in the school schedule granting students a considerable amount of screen time. Parents can find these moments challenging to manage. However, adopt a few of the concepts mentioned above, lean into these coming months with positivity, and you will exchange a burden for an opportunity.

If you already have set boundaries with your student then tweak them as needed. For those moving into the summer with a blank slate, this occasion could be the start of a new normal and a new way for the use of screens in the home.

As always, pray about these decisions before you make them and don't be afraid to be transparent with your student before you introduce the guidelines.