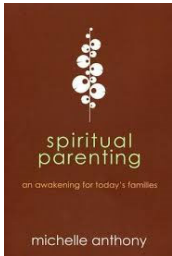


# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

## (1) SPIRITUAL PARENTING

By: Michelle Anthony



CVCKids highly recommends this wonderful resource. Michelle Anthony encourages parents to be the primary spiritual leaders of their children by creating ten environments in their homes. These environments are meant to maximize spiritual growth and allow for God to do the work of reaching their children by the power of the Holy Spirit. Michelle Anthony's writing style is very relatable and mixes practical tips, biblical truths, and strong narratives of personal, real-life examples. Her writing is both encouraging and convicting, leading parents to better align their child-rearing ideas with those found in the Bible.

## (2) THE BIGGEST STORY: HOW THE SNAKE CRUSHER BRINGS US BACK TO THE GARDEN

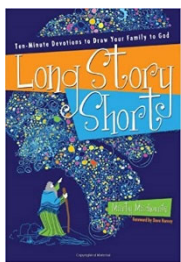
By: Kevin DeYoung, Illustrated By: Don Clark



This gem of a book takes you from Genesis to Revelation in ten, short chapters with vibrant, modern illustrations. It is a joy to read aloud because the words flow off the tongue and aren't cumbersome or laborious. Best of all, children will walk away seeing the Bible as one, wonderful story of God and His creation and plan for humanity, rather than a bunch of unrelated little stories. God is the hero in this book, as He should be, and over-arching biblical themes are written in a way for adults and children, alike, to absorb. Bonus: For your littlest family members, there is an alphabet board book called *The Biggest Story ABC*, based on illustrations and ideas taken from the ten-chapter book.

## (3) LONG STORY SHORT

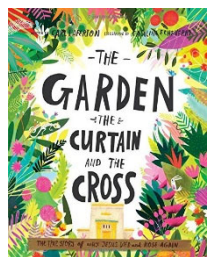
By: Marty Machowski



*Long Story Short* was an ECPA Christian Book Award Finalist for good reason. Designed to be used ten minutes a day, five days per week, this fantastic devotional takes your family through the Old Testament, while always pointing forward to God's grace through Jesus Christ. The gospel message is deeply ingrained in each day's focus. CVCKids loves how Machowski leads you straight into scripture, covering important things that can get skipped over in storybooks. There are also nicely done summaries of the scripture reading, meaningful questions, suggested activities, and prayer prompts. Another high point is that this devotional can be used with a wide range of ages, so your entire family can be involved. We couldn't agree more with a review by Justin Taylor, managing editor of the ESV Study Bible. He says, *Long Story Short* is the best material for family devotions I've ever seen. If you're looking for something careful, creative, and Christ-centered without being corny, confusing, or condescending look no further." Albert Mohler, Jr., President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, comments, "I have never seen a devotional book that is so well suited to family devotions and to children, even as it is faithful in relating biblical truth." Bonus: Machowski has also written a New Testament devotion in the same manner, called *Old Story New*.

#### **(4) TALES THAT TELL THE TRUTH: THE GARDEN, THE CURTAIN, AND THE CROSS**

By: Carl Laferton, Illustrated by: Catalina Echeverri



“Tales That Tell the Truth” is a series of picture books that tell Bible stories in engaging ways for children. The stories are easy to follow, and the illustrations beautifully convey the emotions and circumstances surrounding the chosen passage. Every story always goes a bit farther than strictly recounting the events. Instead, the stories open our eyes to an important meaning that lies just under the surface, touching on themes such as Jesus’ authority, God’s plan for salvation, trusting the Lord, and hope after death, to name a few. These titles release every few months, with varying authors but always the same illustrator, so keep your eyes opened for new additions to the series. There are also fun workbooks that you can purchase to go along with the Bible stories. Our giveaway from this series is *The Garden, The Curtain, and The Cross*, which begins in the Garden of Eden and travels all the way to Jesus’ death and resurrection, and then beyond to heaven. It’s a fabulous presentation of the gospel message, which we encourage you to consider adding to your home library. Other titles in the series include, *The Christmas Promise, The One O’ Clock Miracle, The Storm That Stopped, God’s Very Good Idea, The Friend Who Forgives, Goodbye To Goodbyes, Jesus and the Lions’ Den, and Jesus and the Very Big Surprise.*

#### **(5) TRIGGERS: EXCHANGING PARENTS’ ANGRY REACTIONS FOR GENTLE BIBLICAL RESPONSES**

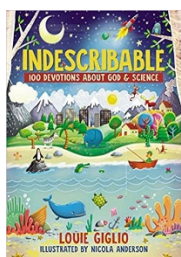
By: Amber Lia and Wendy Speake



This is a great book for any parent who has lost their temper or found that the conversation in their home isn’t what they hope for it to be. Lia and Speake remind us of God’s wonderful truths, giving convicting reasons why we should choose gentle responses. This book gets to the heart of the matter and to the results of the biblical responses. The format is great because it is 31 short chapters, which you could read through each month as a devotion. What an encouragement to start the day with a reminder of God’s heart and where He wants your heart to be as a parent!

#### **(6) INDESCRIBABLE: 100 DEVOTIONS ABOUT GOD AND SCIENCE**

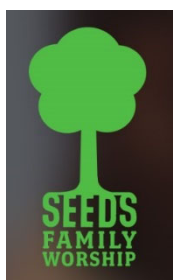
By: Louie Giglio, Illustrated by: Nicola Anderson



If you have a child who is curious about and interested in nature, science, and the way things work, this devotion book is for you! Brightly illustrated and filled with so many interesting and cool facts about the world God created, each of the 100 devotions includes a scripture passage, short prayer, and highlights something wonderful about God.

## (7) SEEDS FAMILY WORSHIP MUSIC

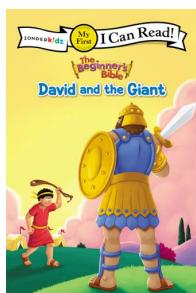
[www.seedsfamilyworship.com](http://www.seedsfamilyworship.com)



We know that music is very subjective and can even be divisive. These songs, however, are scripture...word-for-word. So, if you listen consistently, your family will be memorizing Bible verses before you know it. That's worth it to us! Not only that, but there are some really great tunes on these albums and the arrangements, with authentic instruments and a strong adult lead, interspersed with children's voices, don't make you feel as though you are listening to the Disney channel or a kids-only station. I have often listened to the music without my children with me just because I like it! Seeds Family Worship sells their music digitally or in CD form, so it fits any lifestyle.

## (8) I CAN READ COMPANION BOOKS TO THE BEGINNER'S BIBLE

By: Zondervan, Illustrated By: Kelly Pulley



We know there are a lot of beginning readers out there. We have just the thing for you! *The Beginner's Bible*, which is our recommended storybook Bible for preschoolers and early elementary-aged children, has companion *I Can Read* books that correspond to the stories from the Beginner's Bible. The *I Can Read* books are a little longer with more pictures and more pages, but the vocabulary and sentence structure is intended to be used in those early stages of learning to read. Now your schoolwork can also be a Bible lesson! We can't think of a better way for the beginning readers in your home to practice their reading.

## (9) PARENTING THROUGH THE PHASES

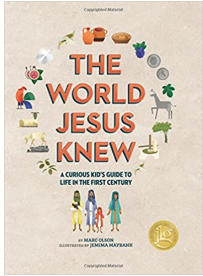
By: Kristen Ivy and Reggie Joiner



The new school year is beginning, and you have planned out school lunches and school supplies, bought new clothing and bookbags, taken pictures and filled out forms. Have you, however, considered how you will parent your child in this new phase of his or her life? *Parenting Through the Phases* may be just what you need to start that process. Rather than giving you all the answers of everything you need to do for your child, it has an interesting format that is part guide, part journal. It asks questions, gives ideas, and highlights important areas to consider in your child's life, and then gives you space to pray and plan and write down your thoughts, so that you will be an intentional parent this year, getting ready for things before they come rather than dealing with everything moment by moment as it gets thrown at you. Each phase guide informs you of how many more weeks you have left with your child until he or she is officially considered an adult, an overview of what's changing about your child over the next fifty-two weeks, six things your child needs most, and four conversations to have in this phase. There is a different parenting guide for every year from newborn to twelfth grade, eighteen in total. You can buy a copy at [orange.com](http://orange.com) or [christianbook.com](http://christianbook.com).

## **(10) THE WORLD JESUS KNEW: A CURIOUS KID’S GUIDE TO LIFE IN THE FIRST CENTURY**

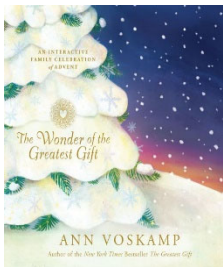
By: Marc Olson, Illustrated By: Jemima Maybank



In a stack of new-to-us Christian resources to explore, my two boys instantly selected this book. They couldn't stop looking through it and asked for it again and again. That's the kind of book I want in my home...a book that will be used and read and examined and loved...a book that will give insight to my children to help them understand the Bible more. *The World Jesus Knew* gives children a detailed look into what life was like in the Middle East when Jesus walked the earth. It is beautifully illustrated and very informative, covering topics such as the structure of society, vegetation and agriculture, transportation, the Roman army, fishing on the Sea of Galilee, the life of a woman, the Jewish calendar, death and burial, and much more! If you are interested in getting a copy for your home, both [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [christianbook.com](http://christianbook.com) carry it.

## **(11) THE WONDER OF THE GREATEST GIFT: AN INTERACTIVE FAMILY CELEBRATION OF ADVENT**

By: Ann Voskamp

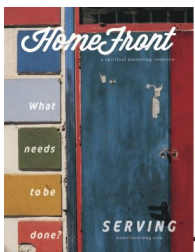


When December rolls around, it is always my goal to make the story of Jesus' birth the most amazing, celebrated, and wonderful part of the Christmas season. How is a parent to do that with all the competing, worldly "Christmas magic" that is constantly pulling at our children's attention? This resource is one way to bring the beauty and excitement of the arrival of the Messiah to your home. Ann Voskamp's book opens to reveal a three-dimensional tree. There are twenty-five little doors to open that have pretty, Jesse tree ornaments hidden inside. Hang an ornament on the tree each day and read the brief, yet heart-felt devotion that goes along with it. The book will take you all the way back to the Garden of Eden and travel through important Bible stories that tie into Jesus' genealogy and eventually end with His birth.

\*Please note that Ann Voskamp has also written another family Jesse tree devotional called *Unwrapping the Greatest Gift: A Family Celebration of Christmas* that I do not recommend as heartily. The readings were a bit too long and wordy for my children to enjoy. *The Wonder of the Greatest Gift: An Interactive Family Celebration of Advent* is the one to buy, in my opinion, because it had much more manageable readings with the addition of the tree and ornaments.

## **(12) HOMEFRONT MAGAZINE**

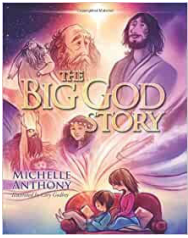
Editor in Chief: Holly Newman



*HomeFront* magazine is a bi-monthly digital publication that is free to download and read. New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado produces the magazine which is based on the ten spiritual environments discussed in another of our recommended resources, *Spiritual Parenting*, by Dr. Michelle Anthony. Because the Holy Spirit is the one who draws people to God, Dr. Anthony encourages parents to create environments, like identity and storytelling and course correction, that "put God on display" in any and every situation for your children to experience Him. The magazine is chock full of articles on a variety of subjects including prayer, tough topics, pop culture items that your child might interact with, grandparenting, and seasonal ideas, to name just a few. It has beautiful photography, memory verses with pretty graphics, interviews with families, prayers and blessings, and even recipes to encourage hospitality and family togetherness. Give this free resource a try at [homefrontmag.com](http://homefrontmag.com). We're sure there will be something in there for everyone!

### **(13) THE BIG GOD STORY**

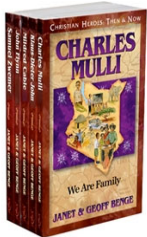
By: Dr. Michelle Anthony, Illustrated By: Cory Godbey



If you'd like a picture book that tells the story of the Bible in one sitting for young children to absorb and understand, this book is for you. Dr. Anthony begins at the beginning, continues with the wonderful story of God's love and faithfulness to His people, highlights the sending of a redeemer through God's Son Jesus, and ends with an invitation that welcomes children to be part of the story that God is writing, the story in which He is the hero. There is even a place where children are intended to write their names into the book on the very last page. It is important for children to see the Bible as a cohesive book that is connected and is telling one big story, the story of God, the story of life itself.

### **(14) CHRISTIAN HEROES: THEN AND NOW**

By: Janet and Geoff Benge

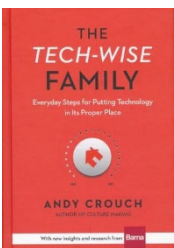


The Benges are a husband and wife writing team, one a former elementary teacher and the other holding a degree in history. They have written a 49-book series of child-friendly biographies chronicling the lives of Christians who have lived for the glory of God and made a difference in the world. These true stories are exciting, compelling, and inspiring. They are great for reading aloud together as a family, capturing the attention of children and adults alike. Some of the names you may come across are Lillian Trasher, C.S. Lewis, George Muller, Hudson Taylor, and Amy Carmichael, among many others.

\*Note that the first chapter always takes place at an exciting, pivotal moment in the person's life. Then, the second chapter goes back in time and tells the biography chronologically. I am not of fan of the way this is set up, so if reading aloud to your family, I recommend reading the first chapter to yourself, and then including it in the correct spot chronologically rather than reading it aloud at the very beginning of the book.

### **(15) THE TECH-WISE FAMILY**

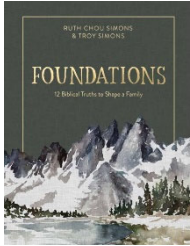
By: Andy Crouch



*The Tech-Wise Family* is a fascinating and inspiring read that centers around putting technology in its proper place. The "easy everywhere" aspect of technology is taking something important away from us as human beings. We need to see technology with a biblical perspective and set boundaries in our families so that precious things are not lost. Although author Andy Crouch does not condemn technology as a whole, he does give ten tech-wise commitments that encourage parents to foster wisdom and courage in their home, examine what true work and rest look like, and create environments that promote creativity over consumerism, among other topics. So, if you've been wondering how technology is leaving its mark on you and your children and what to do about it, then I recommend reading this book.

## (16) FOUNDATIONS: 12 BIBLICAL TRUTHS TO SHAPE A FAMILY

By: Ruth Chou Simons and Troy Simons



Although we already have an outstanding, highly-recommended, pair of family devotions on our list (*Long Story Short* and *Old Story New* by Marty Machowski,) we've included this one because of some key differences. *Foundations: 12 Biblical Truths to Shape a Family*, is less about grasping the biblical narrative than it is about the foundational truths that come from that narrative and shape how we live, things like...

...Love God above all else and with all you've got.

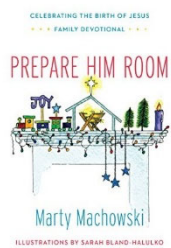
...Hate sin, especially your own.

...Hide the Word in your heart to live by it.

Each of the twelve truths has a key verse tied to it, followed by five devotions on topics related to it. Before any of the devotions begin, the Simons first give a pep talk to parents, sharing insight for how to create a regular, family worship time in their homes. The cherry on top is that the book is quite beautiful because Ruth Chou Simons is a best-selling artist, and her paintings fill the pages.

## (17) PREPARE HIM ROOM: CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF JESUS FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

By: Marty Machowski



Last December, I had the joy of using *Prepare Him Room* with my children during Advent. Here's what I loved about it. Machowski begins with a note for how to use the book, followed by instructions for making your own Advent wreath. For each week of Advent, there are three devotions, which is a manageable amount during the busy holiday season. Day one is always focused on "God's Promise." Day two tells us about "The Angel's Announcement" of that promise, and day three is a passage that shows the "Fulfillment of God's Plan." Every devotion has the following elements: a warm-up activity, a Bible passage to read, a summary of that

Bible passage, a time for discussion, a prayer prompt, songs to listen to or sing together, and occasionally a family craft or activity. I especially appreciated the new-to-me songs from the companion album from Sovereign Grace Music. A few of them even made it to our annual Christmas playlist. There is also a fictional story included within the book, called *Bartimaeus*, with one chapter to read for each week of Advent. Truthfully, *Bartimaeus* wasn't the best story I ever read, but at the end of the month, my children expressed a better understanding of what it means to be adopted into God's family, so I think it was worth reading. You can dive all-in and do everything that is suggested, but it is also very easy to pick and choose the elements that will work for your family. If you're looking for an Advent devotional that is easy to use, family friendly, and guides your heart to true worship, give this one a try!

## **(18) PREPARE HIM ROOM: CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN SONG**

By: Sovereign Grace Music



This album is a companion to the *Prepare Him Room* family advent devotional by Marty Machowski. These songs are referenced throughout the devotion, and the lyrics are printed within its pages, so you can follow along as you listen to them or sing them together as a family. Some of the tunes are familiar Christmas carols, while others are original and new. There are certainly a few gems, like “He Who Is Mighty” and “There Blooms a Rose in Bethlehem,” and honestly, the whole album is worth the price just for a particularly beautiful rendition of “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” You can purchase

a CD or buy a digital copy online, and you can also access these songs on Spotify and stream them for free if you have Amazon Prime.