



CATCH THEM YOUNG

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“And these words which I command you today shall be in your hearts. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in you house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and it shall be as frontlet between your eyes. You shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6: 6-9, (NKJV). (NKJV)

Lots of parents complain about their children’s lack of interest in the Bible. For many of them, getting their wards to read the Bible on their own is a Herculean task. To a large extent, the fault is really not that of the children. Parents especially, mothers should take responsibility for this wrong attitude of their kids. Why? You seem to ask. The reasons are not far fetched.

1. Failure to start the kids early enough on the Bible.
2. Use of Bibles not relevant to their age or difficult translations.
3. Failure to personally spend time reading the Bible with the children.
4. Perhaps, they never saw you spending quality time with your Bible too. Spending time reading the Bible with children shows them that it is very important (much more) than their homework, television, videos or special outings.

A good starting point for toddlers is to use an attractive and well-illustrated Bible storybook. There are lots of them around now. Read and demonstrate to them. The colourful illustrations would help to catch and sustain their attention. If you make it a regular practice for about two or three weeks, your toddler would always remind you when you’ve forgotten.

Occasionally, out of curiosity, they may take the Bible by themselves; repeat your narrations to the intent that anybody around would think they could read already. While doing this, there may be stained or torn pages. Please, don't beat or yell at the child. It is better to have that, than to live with a grown up child who has no interest in God's Word.

As you help your children to read the Bible, look for opportunities to lead each of them to Christ preferably, individually. Teach them basic Christian tenets and precepts like faith, love, purity, obedience, kindness, forgiveness, endurance, hospitality etc. Use poems, rhymes and songs to drive home salient points.

Gradually, bring them to a level where they can do their personal Quiet Time. Our son has learnt to do this since he was 5 years old. By age 8, your child is ripe for more detailed Bible storybooks that are well illustrated too. Too little facts may not be good at this level. They should begin to know that Bible reading is serious business. By age 10, move on from Bible storybooks.

Get a translation of the Bible that is good, clear, simple to read and easy to understand. Good examples are the New International Version (NIV), New International Reader's Version (NIRV), Good News Version and Student's Life Application Version. Lots of specialized teens Study Bibles abound too. They have topical issues relevant to their spiritual needs and level of intellectual development. Especially useful are Bibles with introduction to each book, giving a bit of context and answering some of the questions about who wrote it, when, where and why.

Many children will enjoy reading the gospels aloud. Hearing it aloud, they often spontaneously begin a discussion of what it means. Don't be afraid of saying, "I don't know, but let's find out". That is what Church leaders are meant to do: To answer difficult, tricky or childish questions amongst other things. This way your child is on his way to greatness.