

CULTIVATING HEARTS IN REAL LIFE

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Don't ask me what's happening in this picture... I cannot even remember why my boys made those paper bag faces, or what I am reading from the Bible. The fact is there's no indicator in that picture that anything felt unusual, and I think that's because 4 years ago it wasn't. I bet they prayed like that too. And here's the truth:

Shaping loves isn't always fancy. It can take lots of raw, unimpressive moments that cumulatively do foundational work.

I desire with all of my heart that these little eternal humans I love would know Him. That they would follow Him. Not because it's easy, but because it's life at it's fullest

measure. **Cultivating loves and engaging truth with our kids can take a zillion forms, but here are a few that have worked for us over the years:**

1. **Morning Time:** My kids each have a notebook with room to write and draw a picture. Whatever we read from the Bible that day, they have the opportunity to write something down, and draw a picture representing what they wrote. Once I spent nearly a year just reading the Psalms. One summer we read through 1 and 2 Samuel. We usually open with prayer and ask God to show us 1 thing he would want us to notice from his Word to us. I read. Then I turn on a worship song from you tube and they write and draw. It doesn't have to take more than 15 minutes, but sometimes the dialogue really gets going and it's kind of incredible to hear what they glean.
2. **Learn some verses:** You guys... kids can memorize. It's ridiculous. We probably have it so much harder than they do. Research states that memorization is easiest from about kindergarten through 4th grade — and we know this right?! Because they can repeat an episode from Bluey verbatim. Our school usually assigns a chunk of scripture for them to memorize over a semester, but we just tackle one verse per week. The first chapter we memorized was Psalm 19, and it is now one of my current faves. You can even incorporate this into your morning time!
3. **Charades** — Save this for the days when you have actual energy. It can be wildly entertaining to watch your kids act out a Bible story or Bible character; and interesting to see what they pick out or gravitate to. Mila used make one of her brothers carry her around the room pretending to be a donkey and fake give birth to baby Jesus. Every time.
4. **Songs** — I am all for opening your Bible with the kids every day; but honestly, letting them chose a song or two and just simplifying the night into worship can be pretty incredible. When they were little they marched around the room with flashlights singing "This little Light of Mine!" Now it's Hillsong or Maverick City Worship.
5. **Use a Devotional:** [Louie Giglio's "Indescribable."](#) is an awesome example. They're fast, interesting, and when you're exhausted, sometimes you need a resource to help with a quality interaction. One summer we would FaceTime my brother and niece so we could go through the devotional all together. It was a BLAST. My oldest has graduated into a place where we want more depth so we are reading through the Bible with Him this year via the Bible Recap. The reading plan and the

podcast are my literal favorites.

6. **Pray** — One of my kids often asks, "What should I pray for?" And whenever that surfaces we like to say, "if you're not sure, just start with 'God you are...'" and it's always enough. Our kids can finish that statement, and you'll probably learn something about your kid's perception of God as you listen.

You guys, obviously this is just a start. Our kids don't need us to be fancy, they just need us to be consistent. They just need frequent doses of truth. It can be done on hikes or around a table, with paper bag faces or princess dresses. It doesn't guarantee what they'll chose as adults, but it does cultivate the soil of their hearts to be prepared for truth to land and take root. So let's cultivate, and ask God to call the hearts of our kids to himself.