

Family Scripture Study

“Always remember, there is no satisfactory substitute for the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. These should be your original sources. Read and ponder more what the Lord said, and less about what others have written concerning what the Lord said.” ~Ezra Taft Benson

IF we are struggling to remember the things of God, we can pray to the Lord specifically for help with our scriptures reading. He will help us to learn how to better apply and internalize what we’re reading – and he will help us to not forget what we’re learning.

ICON KEY	
	Music
	Application Questions
	Study Activities
	Scriptures

 But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. *(John 14:26)*

 This is the scripture icon. It indicates that a scripture is being quoted.

“Let us make a list of those basic activities that add value to eternal man and woman and determine in our year of jubilee that we will discontinue those activities that are of little value and worth that might even jeopardize our eternal welfare. Let us place higher priority on family prayer, family scripture study, and family home evenings and eliminate those activities that fill our lives with worldliness and evil.” ~ *L Tom Perry, A Year of Jubilee, Ensign, November 1999*

A. The Blessing of Family Scripture Study

“Latter-day Saint parents recognize the tremendous importance of scripture study in the family. Not only does learning the gospel together stimulate feelings of family harmony and appreciation, but it establishes a foundation of truth upon which children can build throughout their lives.

“Unfortunately, most children do not generate the same enthusiasm for studying the scriptures as they do for watching a first-rate movie. But that can be changed. With some commitment and creative preparation, parents can excite the entire family about scripture study and help each make gospel study a habit.

“Part of that preparation involves studying the scriptures ourselves. The best teacher has always been example, and parents who study the gospel regularly have the power of example to strengthen their words of counsel. Of course, finding time for regular gospel study can be a challenge. It may require a change in choice of activities, such as how much television we watch or how many outside activities we can comfortably handle. It might even mean an overhaul of family schedules, including arising earlier.

“Whatever we must do to fit gospel study into our lives, the rewards will be well worth the effort. The light we allow into our own lives will reflect upon the lives of our children.” ~*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*

“Scripture study as individuals and as a family is most fundamental to learning the gospel. Daily reading of the scriptures and discussing them together is a powerful tool against the temptations of Satan. This practice will produce great happiness and will help family members love the Lord and his goodness. Home is where we become experts and scholars in gospel righteousness” ~*Spencer W Kimball*

Family Scripture Study Will Protect Children



“A study of the scriptures will help our testimonies and the testimonies of our family members. Our children today are growing up surrounded by voices urging them to abandon that which is right and to pursue, instead, the pleasures of the world. Unless they have a firm foundation in the gospel of Jesus Christ, a testimony of the truth, and a determination to live righteously, they are susceptible to these influences. It is our responsibility to fortify and protect them.” ~*Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” Liabona, Nov. 2007*



Why is it so hard to consistently read the scriptures with my children? Why do we struggle so much to be able to read as regularly as we ought to? What are some of the obstacles that stand in the way of not being more consistent than we are?

We Remember Our Savior through Family Prayer and Scripture Study



“We . . . keep our promise to remember Him when as families we pray together and when we read the scriptures. At family prayer around a breakfast table, one child may pray for another to be blessed that things will go well that day in a test or in some performance. When the blessings come, the child blessed will remember the love of the morning and the kindness of the Advocate, in whose name the prayer was offered. Hearts will be bound in love. We keep our covenant to remember Him every time we gather our families to read the scriptures. They testify of the Lord Jesus Christ, for that is and always has been the message of prophets. Even if children do not remember the words, they will remember the true author, Jesus Christ.” ~*Henry B. Eyring, “Be One,” Ensign, Sept. 2008*

“If our young folks are traditioned in the teachings of the Book of Mormon, they will not only be inspired with righteous courage to choose the right by example, ... they will also be so schooled in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ that they will know what is right.

“From almost every page of the book, there will come to them a moving testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Redeemer and Savior. This witness alone will be a sustaining anchor in every storm.” ~ *Marion G Romney, In Conference Report, Apr. 1960, p. 112.*

Daily Scripture Study Invites the Spirit into Our Homes



“There are places where it is easier to feel the Spirit. Testimony meetings and general conference are some of those places. Certainly temples are another. The challenge for each of us is in providing an environment where the Spirit can be felt daily in our homes and weekly at church. One reason we are encouraged to pray and read the scriptures every single day is that both of these activities invite the Spirit into our homes and into the lives of our family members.” ~ *Vicki F. Matsumori, “Helping Others Recognize the Whisperings of the Spirit,” Ensign, Nov. 2009*

“How blessed is the child whose parents base their lives on the teachings in the scriptures! There is absolutely nothing more important we can do for our families than to strengthen them in the scriptures. Parents, call your families together to read the scriptures, and work to make it possible in your busy family schedules” ~ *Cheryl C Lant, My Soul Delighteth in the Scriptures, Ensign, Nov. 2005*

“Do you understand that we emphasize the teaching of the scriptures because they are the constant? From them we learn the purposes of life, the gifts of the Spirit. From them we learn about personal revelation, how to discern good from evil, truth from error. The scriptures provide the pattern and the basis for correct doctrine. From doctrine, we learn principles of conduct, how to respond to problems of everyday living, even to failures, for they, too, are provided for in the doctrines.” ~ *Boyd K Packard*

“I promise you that daily family prayer and scripture study will build within the walls of your home a security and bonding that will enrich your lives and prepare your families to meet the challenges of today and the eternities to come.” ~ *Back to Gospel Basics, L. Tom Perry, Ensign, May 1993*

“There are powerful moments of communication through regular family prayer and through family scripture study. The scriptures will help define family values and goals, and talking together about them will assist family members to learn to become individually secure, spiritually strong, and self-reliant. This requires time, and so we need to counsel together about how much television, how many movies, videos, video games, time on the Internet, or out-of-the-home activities should be allowed.” ~ *M Russell Ballard, Like a Flame Unquenchable, Ensign, May 1999*

B. Avoiding the Pitfalls and Roadblocks

Four Keys to Family Gospel Study (*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*)

1. *Commitment.* Once we commit to anything, our desire to succeed makes the task easier, whether it is losing five pounds, finishing up a college degree, or having regular gospel study. As a family, discuss ways to study the scriptures. Then, once the family has agreed upon a plan, get a commitment from each member to follow the plan. Until that commitment is obtained, your efforts will be only partially successful.
2. *Consistency.* Just about any activity done on a regular basis is more effective than those done randomly. You would probably ask for a parent-teacher conference if your child's teacher taught the class math for two days and then didn't teach any math for two months. So it is with studying the scriptures—the predictability of a set schedule encourages learning and frees us to learn with a minimum of interruptions. Family members need to determine the best time for study, then stick to it.
3. *Individuality.* Elder Howard W. Hunter said, “Families are greatly blessed when wise fathers and mothers bring their children about them, read from the pages of the scriptural library together, and then discuss freely the beautiful stories and thoughts *according to the understanding of all.*” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 64; italics added.) As no two families respond identically to the same situation, no one method of gospel study will be equally suited to all. Through thoughtful, earnest prayer, and by counseling together, each family can determine its best way to study the gospel.
4. *Variety.* Keeping the interest and attention of family members is essential. When young children are learning a concept, they best remember what they *do* (such as draw a picture, tell a story), followed by what they *see* (pictures, filmstrips), and then what they *hear* (reading, tape recordings). A lesson on the Nativity, therefore, might best be remembered by young children if each child role-played a part, supplemented by a reading from the scriptures. Modern technology and inspiration of Church leaders have made the gospel message available in a variety of forms. In addition to the scriptures, there are videotapes; audio tapes—some with accompanying books; filmstrips; magazines; books; and lesson manuals. There has never been a time when so many resources have been at hand.

Scriptures and the Holy Ghost



"Because they expound the doctrine of Christ, the scriptures are accompanied by the Holy Spirit, whose role it is to bear witness of the Father and the Son (see 3 Nephi 11:32). Therefore, being in the scriptures is one way we receive the Holy Ghost. Of course, scripture is given through the Holy Ghost in the first place (see 2 Peter 1:21; D&C 20:26–27; 68:4), and that same Spirit can attest its truth to you and me. Study the scriptures carefully,

deliberately. Ponder and pray over them. Scriptures are revelation, and they will bring added revelation." ~D. Todd Christofferson, "The Blessing of Scripture," *Ensign*, May 2010, 35

Give Family Study the Highest Priority



"Certainly there are times when getting the family together to read the scriptures does not stack up as a spiritual experience worthy of a journal entry. But we must not be deterred. There are special times when the spirit of a son or daughter is just right and the power of these great scriptures goes down into their heart like fire. As we honor our Heavenly Father in our homes, He will honor our efforts." ~Neil L. Andersen, "Prophets and Spiritual Mole Crickets," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999

"Never let a day go by without holding family prayer and family scripture study. Put this, the Lord's program, to the test; and see if it does not bless your home with greater peace, hope, love, and faith. I promise you that daily family prayer and scripture study will build within the walls of your home a security and bonding that will enrich your lives and prepare your families to meet the challenges of today and the eternities to come." ~Elder L Tom Perry

"I wonder if having casual and infrequent family home evening will be enough in the future to fortify our children with sufficient moral strength. In the future, infrequent family scripture study may be inadequate to arm our children with the virtue necessary to withstand the moral decay of the environment in which they will live. Where in the world will the children learn chastity, integrity, honesty, and basic human decency if not at home?" ~James E Faust, *The Greatest Challenge in the World – Good Parenting*, *Ensign*, November 1990

C. Scripture Study Ideas for Young Children

The ideas listed below are a compilation of ideas I have found as I have searched various resources. Unless quotation marks are included, these ideas do not come directly from the general authorities of the church. You can use them as you are inspired to do so.

Read it aloud.

“The tradition of reading aloud as a family diminished with the advent of radio, then almost disappeared after television was invented. Today, too few families participate in a tradition that for centuries bonded hearts and fostered learning. Arthur Henry King, a retired professor of English at Brigham Young University and currently president of the London Temple, stresses that children can learn to love the scriptures by listening to their parents read them: “The most important thing we can read to our children is the scriptures. . . . The voices we hear as little children remain with us, so parents must read the scriptures to their children as early as possible. The child who hears the scriptures in the loved voices of his father and mother will come, through that love, to understand the scriptures and appreciate them in the best way. . . . Through the voice of their parents, children can . . . become familiar with the voice of the Lord.” (*The Abundance of the Heart*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986, pp. 221–22.) We may choose to read topically or consecutively through the scriptures. Or, while children are still young, we may read and reread the same favorites, thus giving that “loved voice” to the language of the scriptures. The more this kind of sharing can occur, the more familiar the language of the scriptures becomes to our children, and the more approachable the scriptures will be.” ~*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*

Memorize it.

“Besides reading aloud, another traditional method of study is to memorize selected passages of scripture. Young children can memorize simple verses, and they will feel a great sense of satisfaction from their accomplishments.” ~*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*

In our family when the children were all young we used to memorize a scripture a week by repeating it together before praying over every meal. During the meal we would discuss the meaning of that scripture. By the end of the week we would encourage the children to recite the scripture from memory. -- Susan

Tape record it.

“Parents can record gospel-related stories for children to listen to. This approach is especially helpful for busy parents and those who must be gone from home for extended periods of time.” ~*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*

Book of Mormon Paper Dolls

Use paper dolls as a way to get young children involved in scripture study. Read the story to them from the Children’s Scripture Readers and have them act out each scene or read the first part of the story to them and have them act out the remainder of the story.



Dressing Up

Kids love to dress up, and if you have older children who have attended Moroni's Quest, you may already have some scripture type costumes. If not use bathrobes, sheets, towels or pieces of fabric to help bring scripture characters alive. You may choose to have dad or mom (or grandma or grandpa) dress up as one of the main characters of the story you are reading and 'visit' your family as you study together.

Drama

Act out a story, and then act out what you would do if those things happened to you.

Drawing

If your kids are artistically inclined they can draw their own pictures of scriptural events such as the tree of life or a specific story event. As a family you may assign each member to draw a picture for a specific part of the story you are reading and then put them together comic book style to tell the whole story.

Coloring Pictures

A picture to color after reading a Bible or Book of Mormon story can help emphasize exactly what happened in the mind of a young child. Be sure to take the time to talk about what the picture depicts and who the people are. Coloring pictures can be found in the Friend and on the internet.

Children's Scripture Readers

Children's scripture readers are ideal for children who are just learning to read. The story is told through pictures and words simple enough they can be easily understood. Below are some ideas taken from the internet for creatively using the scripture readers in your family study.

- Take some blank paper. At the bottom of each one, write out parts of the story (like: "*Lehi told his son to go to Jerusalem and get the brass plates*"). Hand out the paper with the captions on them to your children and have them illustrate whatever is written. When everyone is finished, gather everyone together, put their pictures in order, and then tell the story using their pictures.
- Copy the pages out of the scripture reader, or print them off of the church website. Cut the pictures up into individual pictures with the words underneath, but make sure the scripture references are cut off. If you have more than one child, divide them into 2 groups, and give each group a set of the pictures. Have them try to put the pictures in the correct order of the story. This is fun, because they have to reason through the story and what was likely to happen in what order. Also, the order of the story itself can be a teaching moment; you could discuss why certain things had to happen first. You could also make a list of questions about the story and have your children hold up certain pictures as you ask them questions. (This is one that works with big kids too!)

- Have a random pile of props, and then read the story and have them act it out (improvise) using the props in whatever creative way they come up with.
- Have your children study the story and inform them that the better they know it, the better they will do in your activity. In a bowl, have certain parts of the story written out on pieces of paper. Divide your family into 2 teams and have them take turns pulling out and either drawing or acting out what is written on the papers as their team tries to guess what they are doing. You could make some of the papers really hard!
- Have them draw a picture of part of the story and then cut it into a puzzle. Have your children exchange puzzles.
- Give your children play dough. Then, give them a list of objects they should shape (pick 6 or 7 objects from the story). Tell the story to them using the objects they just made.
- Same principle as above, except give them a list of items they need to run around the house and find, then tell the story using those items.
- Have your children make some paper dolls with the characters of the story. Put on a show with their paper dolls.
- Make signs, motions, or movements for each part of the story and have your children do the signs as you read. For example: Lehi told his sons to go to Jerusalem (march in place like you are walking) and get the brass plates (hold your hands open like a book)...



Family Treasure Box

Inside are the family scripture study materials. At the appointed time, preferably around the table, the family gathers to study the scriptures. In this box there is a scripture a night. Each night one scripture is discussed allowing family members to participate in lively gospel centered discussions. Children can highlight verses in their personal set of scriptures teaching them how to use and cherish the scriptures themselves.

Incentives

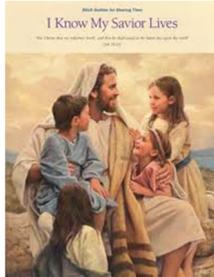
We started with an incentive program _ rewards for so many days of reading. Then it became a habit and no reward was needed other than the benefits that come from the habit of reading scriptures. --- Delanie

Story Books

Story books are a great way to study with a mix of younger and older children. You can read the story book first for the younger children, then read the same story from the scriptures. --- Jeannie

The Children's Friend

Use the Friend magazine as a resource for coloring pages, scripture stories, and the words of the prophet. Set a time and place and keep it short _ 5-10 minutes because young children have a short attention span. _ Lynne



Primary Preparation

Ask their teachers for the reading assignments that go along with their lessons and read and discuss them the week before the appropriate class. You may also consider picking up the Primary Sacrament Presentation theme and use it as a resource to reinforce the Primary theme of the year.

It is always appropriate to be prepared. _ Lyn

Make it Fun

I think young children learn by making a game with the scriptures and pictures to go with them. -- Shirley

D. Scripture Study Ideas for Teenagers

Look it up.

“The appendix in the new edition of the LDS scriptures provides an excellent tool for gospel study. When reading aloud as a family, you can find definitions of important words in the Bible dictionary, identify scriptures containing the same words in the topical guide, and locate geographical areas on the maps. As children become familiar with these helps, their understanding of the scriptures increases, and they make them a meaningful part of their lives.” ~*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*

Discuss it.

“Educators are concerned that today’s students cannot express themselves well verbally. Family discussions are excellent ways to strengthen this skill, as well as broaden gospel understanding. Families can discuss:

- The content of lessons taught in classes at church or seminary.
- Talks given in sacrament meetings or conferences.
- Articles in Church magazines.
- Poetry, stories, or books that have wholesome themes.
- Current events relating to the gospel.
- Current movies and television shows whose themes promote the gospel.”

~*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*

Share it.

“Give family members, according to their ages and abilities, a chance to share with the family what they learn about the gospel. Following are some ideas for making this approach a successful part of family gospel study:

- Ask your children to help teach a family home evening lesson.
- Ask a family member to prepare a short talk on a gospel subject.
- Let a member of the family choose a favorite story from scripture or Church history and tell it in his own words to the rest of the family.
- If family members have Church teaching responsibilities, encourage them to practice giving their lessons or talks to the family.”

~*Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987*

Plan a family-study activity.

“Following are some suggestions for family activities:

- Have members of the family write their own stories or poems about gospel subjects and compile them into a family book.
- Play question and word games using people, events, and principles from the standard works.
- Begin a family art gallery of pictures and clay models of scriptural stories, historical events, or gospel principles in action.
- Prepare a family program of songs, scriptures, and stories to share with the elderly or nonmembers.
- Make a family “filmstrip” of a scripture story using a camera with slide film and a tape recorder.”

~Family Scripture Study, Ensign, September 1987

Question Time

By starting when children are young, by the time they are teenagers the routine of scripture study is in place. Often we would have a 'Do you have a question' time _ then things that were on their minds would be brought forward. --- Delarie

For a time we would choose a question _ something like "Why do we need to listen to the prophet?" Once the question was chosen we would spend our family study time looking for scriptures that answered that question. Each person was given the opportunity to share at least one scripture and why they felt it answered the question. We had one family member record the list of scriptures we came up with. Once we felt like we had answered the question, we would move on to a new one. The idea was to teach the children how to find answers to their questions in the scriptures. _ Susan

Give a Talk

From time to time we will choose an inanimate object from one of the rooms in the house and challenge the kids to give a 2 minute talk on how that object teaches gospel principles. One of my favorite parallels my children came up with was how a beanbag is warm, cozy and very comfortable and so is the Holy Ghost. We have used items including curtains, floor, lights, doors, specific items in the rooms decor, musical instruments, utility room objects, cleaning supplies _ etc. There isn't anything that can't teach gospel principles. --- Susan

E. Strengthening your Family: A Suggested Format for Family Scripture Study

This is a format that is suggested by Elder Gene R Cook. Responses and input are filled with love and testimony, personal experiences and spirit rich discussion.

PERSON 1: Reads a verse of scripture and calls on anyone in the family to summarize it.

PERSON 2: Summarizes the verse in their own words. For younger children help may be needed from the parents.

PERSON 1: This person now asks an application question from the verse of scripture just read. The floor is then opened up to anyone in the family to give their input. Parents encourage the children to give their answers first.

PERSON 2: Reads the next verse of scripture and the pattern is repeated for each verse read.

We have been using this method for about 6 months. With children ranging from ages 8-17 we have found that everyone is able to participate. It always amazes me at how much my children understand, and sometimes even the questions they ask are remarkable to me as they help our family share insights into the gospel and the love of our Heavenly Father. We always begin with a song and a prayer to invite the spirit, and then when we close we offer family prayer. --- Susan

F. Scripture Study Ideas for Empty Nesters & Singles

“If couples contemplate often—with each other in the temple—sacred covenants will be better remembered and kept. Frequent participation in temple service and regular family scripture study nourish a marriage and strengthen faith within a family. Contemplation allows one to anticipate and to resonate (or be in tune) with each other and with the Lord. Contemplation will nurture both a marriage and God’s kingdom.”
~Russell M Nelson, *Nurturing Marriage*, Ensign, May 2006

Ready for Sunday

Read the lesson for the next Sunday, either the Relief Society/Priesthood lesson or the Sunday School lesson, not only will you enjoy the lessons more, but it will make the teachers happy that someone read.

Topic Study

Pick a topic out of the bible dictionary to study and learn more about.

Preach My Gospel

Study Preach My Gospel and try to apply it to your lives as members. It is a great tool to keep you missionary minded.

Read by the River

Take your Conference Edition of the Ensign to a River or some other beautiful and peaceful area and read talks together.

Conference Counsel

Make or buy a copy of the General Conference talks from the most recent conference and listen to them every time you get into your car.

Follow the Prophet

Read conference talks together and discuss how they apply to you in this season of your life.

Set a Specific Time and Place

I find that if I read and study the scriptures first thing in the morning then I don't get involved with my daily tasks or distracted by a ringing phone. --- Shirley

G. Bringing the Spirit into Family Scripture Study

“When we focus ... on seeking and receiving the Spirit, we become less concerned about a teacher or speaker holding our attention and more concerned about giving our attention to the Spirit.” ~*Receiving by the Spirit, A Roger Merrill, Ensign, Nov 2006*

President James E. Faust gave us three key things we can do to protect and strengthen our families:

1. “Family prayer. Parents must teach their children that they are God’s children and therefore need to pray to Him daily.
2. Family home evening. As President Faust taught us, family home evening is for all of us no matter what stage of life we are in. We must have Monday nights free of all other activities that might keep us from gathering as a family.
3. Personal and family scripture study. We need to help our children strengthen their faith and testimony through this basic habit.”

~ *Challenges Facing the Family,” Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, Jan. 10, 2004*

The “faith that causes us to cleave unto every good thing comes by hearing the word of God (see Rom. 10:17), and this word is heard with more power in family home evening lessons and in family scripture study. There is no better place to build faith than in the home, where the lessons and practical applications are realized and lived day to day.” ~*Francisco J Viñas, Applying the Simple and Plain Gospel Principles in the Family, Ensign, May 2004*