



ORGANIZING *you*

YOUR GUIDE TO A *Vibrant* FAMILY FAITH

*12 simple ways to bring your family members
closer to God and each other.*



BY CHRISTIAN SPEAKER, AUTHOR, AND BLOGGER

SHANNON UPTON

Published by Columbus Press

© 2015 Copyright Shannon Upton, Organizing You Ministries, All Rights Reserved

INTRODUCTION



Have you ever felt frustrated by the ways your family members treat each other?

Do you want to pray and read the Bible with your family,
but you don't know how to get started?

Does faith feel like a peripheral part of your family life rather than the center of it?

Then this is the resource for you!

Family devotions at dinner and memorized prayers at bedtime can start to feel stale, compulsory...and boring. But, Parents, the Lord is anything but boring!

As a follower of Christ, you are a powerful spiritual influence on your spouse and kids. **You can organize family faith initiatives that make your family's spiritual life vibrant.**

I'm so excited to share these ideas with you! I've done the legwork so you can get each of these initiatives rolling in as little as 10 minutes. Each activity is simple, inexpensive, and as short- or long-term as you'd like it to be.

In my own family life, I've found that shaking things up about once a month keeps family faith times fresh and meaningful. This resource has 12 ideas for you to try—one a month for a whole year! (And be sure to get the bonus ideas to implement alongside them.)

These initiatives are for the whole family. I've included modifications for toddlers, teens, and families of every size. I've also included ways to adjust the initiatives for different holiday seasons.

Parents, in order for your children to take any of these things seriously, they need to see genuine, growing faith modeled in *your* life. Rather than "assigning" the activities to your kids, invite your spouse and kids to join you in these endeavors! I've also incorporated ways for you to adapt these ideas for your own spiritual life. Our personal relationships with Christ are definitely worth the initiative!

No matter what, have *fun* with these ideas. If a certain activity isn't working for your family, don't force it; try another one instead. If you're enjoying an initiative but miss a day or two, hop right back in. And if a day comes when you're feeling reluctant (because you're tired, or everyone's in a bad mood), then that's the time to persevere and press on toward the goal of a rich family faith life! Just do it—and allow the Holy Spirit to turn your hearts toward the Lord.

If your family's really enjoying a particular endeavor, you don't have to stop at the end of the month. Keep it rolling for six weeks, eight weeks... indefinitely! The goal here isn't to "accomplish" 12 family faith initiatives, it's to develop a vibrant family faith life that honors the Lord and draws you all closer to Him.

The bottom line is this: *You* can make a difference in the spiritual life of your family. With this resource, you can bring your family together to praise, love, and serve God as you never have before!

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (NIV)

IDEA #1: SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK



THE PROBLEM

We want to read scripture with our kids, but it's a bit daunting. For adults and bigger kids, familiar words can go in one ear and out the other. For smaller kids, unfamiliar words leave them with little to no comprehension.

THE SOLUTION

Try introducing a Scripture of the Week. Each Monday for a month, post a verse or short passage of scripture around the house: on mirrors, by the phone, on the door, in the car... anywhere you and your family members will see it. Also, keep one notecard with the verse written on it on your kitchen table to remind you to talk about it over dinner.

Each night, have one of the kids read the scripture aloud. Then, go around the table and ask each person to share how the verse applied to them that day. For example, if the verse is about rejoicing in the Lord, each family member could tell of a time they praised God or were thankful for something. For a verse about God watching over us, each person could share one difficult moment when they knew God was with them. To encourage acts of kindness, be sure to include one verse about helping others.

THE PREP

Choose four verses and write them on multiple index cards. Make notes on your calendar (or in your planner) to remind you to hang up your Scripture of the Week notecards each Sunday night for a month. Be sure to leave one in the middle of your kitchen table to remind you to talk about it at dinnertime. You could just lay it there, or put it in a special frame or on a stand.

GETTING YOU STARTED

Here are some verses I'd recommend: Isaiah 43:2, Philippians 4:4, Hebrews 4:16, Colossians 3:17, Matthew 5:14, Psalm 42:1, Mark 12:30–31, and Romans 12:6a. (Of course there are so many possibilities—these are just a few ideas!)

MODIFICATIONS

Paraphrase the verses for very small children. If they're stuck on how the verse applied to them that day, give them plenty of "hints." Challenge teens to take it up a notch by journaling about their daily "Scripture of the Week" experiences for that month. During the month of February, you could focus on love verses (for Valentine's Day); in March you could focus on evangelism verses (for St. Patrick's Day).

FOR YOU

Think of an area in your own spiritual life that feels a little shaky right now—where do you need some scriptural encouragement? Type some related key words into Google and find four Bible verses that speak to you. Pray over them—and actively apply them—each week for a month. You may even want to journal about your experiences to help keep you on track.

IDEA #2: THE PEACE JAR



THE PROBLEM

Mealtime prayers can be rushed and perfunctory. When put on the spot to pray, even adults can become nervous. Meanwhile, the listeners' heads are usually spinning with thoughts of their days... and when we say "Amen," everyone attacks their food (often while looking at their phones under the table)!

THE SOLUTION

Make a Peace Jar. Essentially, this is a container of water with glitter that you shake like a snow globe. Let your family members take turns shaking it up before family meals for one month. While the glitter gently floats to the bottom, the whole family can engage in silent prayer and meditation. The goal here is to center your thoughts on the Lord and calm your hearts for a peaceful family meal. Encourage your kids to be still and know He is God.

THE PREP

Find a clear container and fill it with water (but not to the very top). I used a mason jar, but an empty juice container or water bottle will do. You may want to add a drop or two of food coloring for interest—blue and green are calming colors. Then add some glitter or plastic confetti. The bigger the pieces, the faster they'll sink, so be sure to add some very small glitter and shake it with a swirling motion to keep things afloat for a minute or two. To help you remember to use your Peace Jar, keep it on your kitchen table.

MODIFICATIONS

For very young kids, the Peace Jar could double as a "time out" jar: they have to sit quietly to think and pray about their behavior until everything has settled to the bottom. To encourage peaceful meals with teens, you may want to introduce a "no phone at the table" rule with the Peace Jar. If you'd like to use a Peace Jar during Advent or Lent, add themed confetti like snowflakes or Easter eggs.

To extend this activity, choose a landmark on your way to church (perhaps 3 to 5 minutes away from the building) that will remind your family to quiet their hearts in preparation for their special time with God. On the way home, use that same amount of time to reflect quietly, using the landmark as a cue to open up conversation about what everyone learned at church or Sunday school.

FOR YOU

You may want to use a Peace Jar to calm your own heart before your quiet times with God. Or, you may want to give yourself a "time out"—time to settle down when you're frustrated with a loved one, or about to reply to a social media post that hurt your feelings. We all need to be still before God!

IDEA #3: FAMILY DEVO HOP



THE PROBLEM

Family devotional time can become a stressful time. We often struggle to corral squirmy little ones or ignore the eye-rolls of older kids. And if we do the same thing for too long, even parents can get bored.

THE SOLUTION

Try a Family Devo Hop! First, tell your family members that you're going to read formal devotions together for one month only. (That way no one will worry it's going to go on forever.) Set up the expectation that you'll meet for 5 to 10 minutes a day. Then tell them you'll gather together in different locations in your home, switching every few days.

Each time you gather, light a candle so everyone will recognize that a special time to learn about God is commencing. A flickering candle is a beautiful way to center the heart! This will also lend a sense of consistency to what you're doing, even as you shake it up with the location.

Each time you change meeting spots, kick it off by praying over that room, the people who use it, and the things you do there. By the end of the month you'll have prayed through your whole house!

THE PREP

Choose a devotional that you'd like to follow with your family for a month, then discern the time of day that will work best for everyone. Next, list the rooms of your home and figure out how frequently you'll need to switch locations in order to cover your home in prayer. Post this schedule in a place you'll see it—maybe on your fridge—so you won't forget.

GETTING YOU STARTED

For family members of almost any ages, you could use the *Power Thoughts Devotional* by Joyce Meyer or *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers. Or you may want to prepare your hearts for a holiday with an Advent or Lenten devotional. You may want to ask your friends or post a question on Facebook requesting suggestions for devotionals for particular ages.

MODIFICATIONS

Be sure to choose a devotional appropriate to your family members' ages and stages. For young children, I highly recommend reading a chapter out of *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or Max Lucado's *The Story For Children*—and make your very first gathering places their bedrooms! To engage teens, put them in charge in some way. Have them choose the devotional, let them set the location schedule, or assign them one day of the week to share a devotional moment from something they've read or been thinking about.

FOR YOU

Be intentional about creating your own special prayer or devotional spot and stocking it with all of the things you'll need to spend focused time with God: a Bible, a prayer journal, a devotional, a candle, a coaster for your tea... anything! Then try a new devotional for one month—and if you don't like it, try another one!

IDEA #4: THE PRAY BOARD



THE PROBLEM

Intentional prayer can be difficult. We say we'll pray for people—and we really mean it!—but we often forget to follow through for long. Or we'll pray and God will faithfully answer us, but we forget to say “thank you.” And when we do pray, especially with kids, our prayers can lean toward one-sided asking.

THE SOLUTION

Hang a PRAY board near your kitchen table to hold all of your family's prayer requests and praises. Write the “PRAY” acronym (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield) across the top to guide your children as they learn to talk with our Father. Then write family “Prayer Requests” on the board and move them to the “Thanksgiving” section as God answers them! A section for “Special People” will keep those with long-term illnesses or other issues at the forefront of your hearts. For one month, pray at the end of dinner instead of the beginning so you'll have a chance to discuss the board together first.

THE PREP

Find a small-to-medium dry erase board and marker (you could use a chalkboard instead, but those are pretty messy). At the top, write “P=Praise, R=Repent, A=Ask, Y=Yield.” Then make sections for “Prayer Requests,” “Special People,” and “Thanksgiving.” You can make this as simple or as fancy as you'd like. Make sure you're hanging it in a place where any kid can write on it.

MODIFICATIONS

For very young kids, you may want to draw pictures that represent the request, or post photos of people to lift up. For teens or school-aged kids, the prayer board is a great dinnertime conversation starter: “Did anything happen today that needs to go on the prayer board?”

FOR YOU

You can keep a similar, private prayer list by your calendar or daily planner—even on your phone. Not every request needs to be shared with your whole family, after all (in fact, if the prayer requesting at your kitchen table is getting gossipy, nip that in the bud!). You may want to read over your prayer list with Jesus first thing in the morning, last thing at night, or whenever is your best time of day.

IDEA #5: FAMILY VERSE MAPPING



THE PROBLEM

Sometimes scripture seems like it's not truly for us. We can feel that those glorious verses are for people who deserve God's promises more than we do, or that scriptural admonishments are for people who need the guidance more than we do. Neither is true! All scripture is relevant to all of us, and we need to take it personally.

THE SOLUTION

Try Family Verse Mapping, personalizing one verse a day for a month. While one family member reads a chosen verse aloud, have another write it down on a large cutout shape like a heart or circle, leaving plenty of space between the lines of text. Then as a family, cross out any pronouns (like "you," "us," "we," or "they") and replace it with your family name ("The Uptons") or the names of your individual family members. Read it aloud again.

Next, circle any words or concepts that jump out at you and discuss them. What does this verse mean for *you*? You may want to go back to the Bible to talk about the context of the verse, or read any text notes. (A Life Application Bible can be a big help here.) Then post the mapped verses—fill your fridge door or cover your cabinets over the course of the month!

THE PREP

Cut out or purchase 30 large, colorful paper shapes. Then choose the verses you'll use. Keep the shapes, a marker, and your Bible in a basket on your kitchen table so you'll remember what to do!

GETTING YOU STARTED

John 3:16, II Corinthians 5:17, and the I Corinthians 13 "love verses" are classics for this method. Here are a few more to get you going: Psalm 9:2, Psalm 139:14, Romans 8:38–39, John 14:27, and Philippians 1:4 and 6. If you'd rather, you can just open up your Bible each night and choose a verse at random. You could also to decide to pick verses from Psalms or Proverbs together as a family.

MODIFICATIONS

For very young children, you may want to choose paraphrased verses out of a children's Bible or book. For older kids and teens, get them engaged by having them choose the verses—everyone in your family could rotate turns.

FOR YOU

Map some verses for yourself! There are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs. Read one chapter a day for a month, looking for the verses that are calling to you. Place your own name inside those verses and highlight phrases that seem important. Challenge yourself to grow!

IDEA #6: PRAYER PAIL



THE PROBLEM

We tend to pray for our immediate needs and the needs of our friends and loved ones, which is great—but we can forget to pray for larger life circumstances and world issues.

THE SOLUTION

Create a Prayer Pail filled with large craft sticks. On them, write the “big” things you want to lift up to the Father. For one month, let your kids pull one stick a day and pray over it as a family.

When we did this, our kids were old enough to pray over different facets of the topic. For example, when we pulled the “health care” stick, my oldest chose to pray for health care workers like doctors and nurses, my daughter chose to pray for medical researchers, my littlest prayed about hospitals, my husband prayed for health care financing, and I prayed for health care in underdeveloped countries. We went around the table and each lifted up two or three sentences regarding our specific concerns.

THE PREP

Find a pail, bucket, or container that will hold 30 large craft sticks vertically. Then write your prayer topics on the sticks, stand them in the container, and place the container wherever you’re going to use it (like in the center of your kitchen table or on your child’s nightstand).

GETTING YOU STARTED

There are so very many things to pray for, but here are some ideas: your church, your kids’ schools, local government, state government, national government, international leaders, missionaries, health care, world hunger, the sick, the homeless, your and/or your husband’s workplace, those in prison, widows, orphans, the elderly, the world’s children, the poor, unbelievers, and enemies of the faith.

Don’t forget to include specific people you want to pray for like your pastor, the president, your neighbors, and your kids’ teachers and coaches. You may want to include out-of-town or extended family members as well. We like to put married couples or families on one stick; for example, instead of separate sticks for Uncle Paul, Aunt Kristen, and their kids, we made one stick for “The Paul Kelley Family.”

MODIFICATIONS

Ask your older kids and teens to prepare the sticks with you and include topics that they’re passionate about. For little ones, you could tape small pictures that represent the topics right on the craft sticks (or just bring up pertinent images on your computer or phone each time).

FOR YOU

You could keep a list of topics like this in your prayer journal to lift up on a rotating basis, including more adult topics like victims of domestic abuse or people suffering with mental illnesses.

IDEA #7

EMBRACE A STORY



THE PROBLEM

We sometimes read scripture, especially familiar stories, as if there's nothing new there. But the Holy Spirit can make scripture fresh in our hearts every time!

THE SOLUTION

Try following a Bible character's story line with the SOAP method (from Wayne Cordeiro's *The Divine Mentor*). The SOAP method is all about application—how are you going to learn from what you've read?

Scripture: Read one chapter together as a family.

Observe: What are some character traits of this person? What do you think you would have done if you were there? (Really imagine it!) How did God use them? What can we learn about Godly living from this person?

Apply: How do you want to apply this passage to your daily life? What changes do you need to make, and how will you make them? You could talk about this individually or apply it to your family life.

Pray: Pray and ask God to help you bring His Word to life in your lives.

THE PREP

Decide whom you're going to study and how you're going to approach it. Try starting with a short book of the Bible about a great character, like Ruth, Esther, or Jonah. You can also assemble snapshots in the life of "bigger" characters like Moses, Joshua, or Jesus to study. Choose 30 chapters and create a checklist bookmark so you'll remember which chapter is next! Then choose a time of day that will work well for your family.

GETTING YOU STARTED

This is exactly how I blog. Check out OrganizingJesusMoms.com/blog for series I've written on heroes of the faith like Paul, David, and Ruth—you can see which the books of the Bible I chose to study each person's story.

MODIFICATIONS

If you have young children, again you may want to read chapters out of a children's Bible or storybook. Ask your older kids and teens to take turns being the "SOAP Secretary," writing down the scripture reference, your family's observations, your intended applications, and your prayer. You can read the nativity stories or Holy Week accounts in the different Gospels to prepare for the appropriate holidays.

FOR YOU

SOAP it up with me! Follow my blog for a weekly challenge to really study The Word and apply it in a meaningful way. I'd love for you to join me!

IDEA #8: POSITIVE POMPOMS



THE PROBLEM

We all have bad habits that are contrary to God's will for us—and sometimes they become very apparent in our children! Family problems may include complaining, worrying, disobeying, lying, selfishness, or wishing for more. These “intangibles” are hard to quantify and harder to stop!

THE SOLUTION

Take a one-month family challenge to stop the behavior that's plaguing you. Start by filling a jar to the brim with colorful pompoms and placing a second, empty jar next to it. Then have your family members transfer a pompom to the second jar every time they're tempted to perform the bad behavior, but stop and choose a Godly behavior instead!

For example, try a 1 Peter 5:7 No Worrying Challenge. Each time you want to worry but surrender it to the Lord, you get to move a pompom into the second jar. When all of the pompoms are in the second jar, you can enjoy a family reward like a night at the movies or an ice cream run!

THE PREP

Set up the two jars and fill one with pompoms (in order for this challenge to last approximately 30 days, include one pompom per family member per day). Then, find a scripture verse that speaks to the issue (like 1 Peter 5:7), print it out, and tape it to the first jar. On the second jar, tape a list of viable alternatives to the behavior. (For worrying, some alternatives may be: “Pray about it,” “Do what you can to solve the problem,” or “Find something to be grateful about.”) Then place the jars in a prominent place.

GETTING YOU STARTED

You could take a 1 Peter 5:7 No Worrying Challenge, a Philippians 2:14 No Complaining Challenge, an Ephesians 6:1 Obedience Challenge, a Proverbs 12:22 Truth Challenge, a Mark 10:43-45 Service Challenge, or a Philippians 4:11 Contentment Challenge.

MODIFICATIONS

You might need to ask young children, “Was there a time you wanted to worry today, but you didn't?” to help them remember the jars. For teens, you might want to substitute rocks or “jewels” for the pompoms. These challenges are perfect initiatives for “preparation” seasons like Advent or Lent. You can also keep things fresh by choosing a different challenge each week for a month.

FOR YOU

Trust me when I say that any of these family challenges will challenge you personally as well! When our family tried the Philippians 2:14 No Complaining Challenge, Travis and I quickly learned that the two of us were the biggest complainers in our family—grown-ups have more expectations to be thwarted! If you'd rather do something like this on your own, try giving yourself hash marks for each resisted temptation and work toward a reward like a massage or time with friends.

IDEA #9: ABUNDANT LIFE PUNCH CARDS



THE PROBLEM

Like Paul says in Romans 7, we know what we want to do, but we just don't do it. Jesus himself said the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Doing the right thing can be so hard for kids—in fact, it can be hard to start a new positive habit or routine no matter what age we are!

THE SOLUTION

Create Abundant Life Punch Cards and help your family members earn rewards for creating new positive habits. In John 10:10, Christ said that He came so that we could have life, and have it abundantly! And our abundant lives in Christ aren't only about "spiritual" things—they could be ways to keep our bodies, minds, and souls healthy. What new habits will help your family members claim that joy?

You may want to make a positive family goal, or make cards for each individual. Assess each family member to discern what challenge would be right for them. Then punch their cards whenever they take action toward their new habits.

THE PREP

Create a punch card for each family member. Make 30 dots around the edge of an index card to be punched with a hole punch as they complete the challenge. Personalize the middle by writing, "Sarah's Abundant Life Card" and adding a scripture. You may want to use John 10:10b, or a verse that's directly related to their individual challenge. Then set the rewards—a family reward or individual ones. Hang the cards and a hole punch from your fridge door handle and get ready to punch.

GETTING YOU STARTED

Your family members could earn punches by exercising, reading, completing homework before dinner, brushing teeth without being asked, reading the Bible independently, praying independently, or performing an act of kindness each day. Putting things like these on a punch card isn't saying that your kids need to be rewarded for them—it's showing them that you think they're important enough for 30 days of focus. Try to go for experience rewards instead of stuff, things like a date night with mom or dad, a King-for-the-Day hat, or a chore pass.

MODIFICATIONS

For younger kids, you may need to give smaller milestone rewards at 10 punches, 20 punches, and 30 punches. Ask older kids and teens what they want their own challenges to be. And be sure to think of age-appropriate rewards for each person—ask them what they'd like. They may surprise you!

FOR YOU

Even if you choose a family goal, you may want to make your own 30-day punch card to get you praying each morning as you arise, doing your devotions for 30 solid days in a row(!), or completing the steps of a procrastinated project. You can do it!

IDEA #10: VERSE DETECTIVES



THE PROBLEM

The whole idea of different versions of the Bible can be confusing, for kids and for adults. What does the Bible really say? What is the true nature of God?

THE SOLUTION

Turn your family members into Verse Detectives. Make a paper clue chain 30 links long. Each day, tear off a new link and look inside for the Bible verse of the day. Look it up in several different versions of the Bible. Compare the wording—how are the versions the same or different? Then discuss the true meaning behind the words. *How does this verse show the heart of God?*

THE PREP

First you'll have to decide which versions of the Bible you'd like to use (probably whatever you have on hand around the house). I'd recommend the New International Version, the New Living Translation, the New King James Version, and The Message. (The Message is a looser translation that may help your kids understand the wording, especially when you're comparing it to more complex versions.) Yes, I know you can look them up on your computer or phone at the speed of light, but actual paper copies can help you and your kids become more comfortable with where things are in the Bible.

Next, make the clue chain. Cut 5 pieces of construction paper into 6 strips (make them short and fat, not long and skinny). Write a scripture reference on each one, then staple them into circles, forming a chain. Hang the chain in a prominent place and store the different Bibles alongside it.

GETTING YOU STARTED

There are so many great verses to include! Here are some of my favorites: James 1:22–24, I Thessalonians 5:16–18, Psalm 33:20–22, Psalm 4:8, Romans 1:20, Galatians 6:4–5, I Thessalonians 5:23, Revelation 22:1–5, Proverbs 14:8, Mark 10:21–22, Psalm 1:1–2, I Corinthians 10:31, Daniel 12:3, Matthew 16:27, Galatians 5:22–23, I Corinthians 3:16, Psalm 5:11, Ephesians 3:16–18, Philippians 2:3–4, Psalm 105:3–4, Matthew 28:19–20, Isaiah 52:7, John 14:6, Psalm 94:19, Psalm 61:1–4, Colossians 3:17, Revelation 21:4, Isaiah 40:11, I Corinthians 10:33, and James 1:17. That's 30 days right there!

MODIFICATIONS

For younger kids, be sure to include a children's Bible in the mix. For older kids, you can hold a *friendly* competition to see who can find the verses the fastest. For teens, you may want to replace the chain with notecards holding the scripture reference of the day in a photo clip or frame (place pretty paper in a 5x7 frame, then hot glue a clothespin or binder clip to the glass).

The point is to make it something new and fun to discover every day, no matter how old they are! And of course, the clue chain can double as a “countdown” chain to any holiday.

FOR YOU

This month, try reading one chapter of John a day in at least two different versions (perhaps the NIV and The Message). Does this change the way you see Jesus?

IDEA #11: PRAYER PALS



THE PROBLEM

It's hard to know what to say to God sometimes, especially when we're tired. We could all use some encouragement to close the day in prayer!

THE SOLUTION

Assign nightly Prayer Pals. Partnering your kids in prayer will strengthen their relationships with each other and give them the freedom to explore prayer without feeling like an adult who "knows how to do it right" is listening. Also, one or the other of them is bound to remember their prayer time, so you won't need to remind them as often!

To help them get started and keep them on track, give each set of Prayer Pals a ring of "prayer starters." They can use these phrases each night... or not, if they have something else they want to talk to God about.

THE PREP

Decide who you'd like to partner up with whom, and how long the partnership will last. You can keep the same partners throughout the entire 30 days, but if there are enough people in your family, I'd recommend that you rotate partners once a week so everyone gets a chance to pray together. If there's an "odd person out," make a team of three.

Then, print some prayer starter phrases on notecards, punch holes in the top left hand corner of each card, and attach the notecards together with a binder ring (or piece of yarn or ribbon). Make one set for each person and keep them on their nightstands. Your kids may want to decorate them!

GETTING YOU STARTED

Here are some prayer starter phrases: God, I love you because..., You are so..., I'm thankful you gave me..., I'm so glad that you were with me when..., Thank you for helping me with..., I'm sorry I..., Please help me tomorrow with..., Please watch over me as I... Please help my friend..., Please bless..., and so on. Also, listen to your kids' prayers to discover what phrases they naturally use!

MODIFICATIONS

For an only child, you could purchase a special stuffed animal to be his or her prayer buddy, or you and your husband could take turns partnering with your child. Very young children may need picture prompts on their cards (a heart for praises, a happy face for thanksgiving, a sad face for repenting, an angel for asking for help). Older kids may want to write their own prayer prompts. They may also be interested in partnering with a friend on the phone during the last week of the month (a great way to strengthen their Christian friendships).

FOR YOU

We're never too old for prayer partners! Ask one of your Christian friends or mentors to partner with you in prayer for 30 days. You could meet in person, pray on the phone, or just pray for each other individually throughout the month. You could also share specific requests with them through emails or texts.

IDEA #12: THE FAMILY BIBLE



THE PROBLEM

Bible studies can feel transient in our lives, like they're not making a permanent mark.

THE SOLUTION

We'd all like to leave a legacy of faith for our kids, and a Family Bible is a wonderful way to create a permanent, tangible reminder of your family's faith life. Most versions of the Bible come in "Bible Journal" form, with wide margins to accommodate personal notes and prayers. Purchase a Bible for your whole family and determine to write in it together for 30 days.

Pass the Bible between family members each morning and evening, maybe by laying it on their seat at the kitchen table or on their beds (for a family of six, every family member would receive the Bible once in the course of three days). You can let each family member choose their own passages to journal about, or you can start with the book of Psalms and encourage them to choose one of those.

THE PREP

Buy a journaling Bible or (choose a copy that you have at home). You may also want to buy a special set of colorful pens and Bible "drylighters" that will highlight without going through the thin pages. You can be as creative as you'd like with this—I've seen some examples online that are works of art! If you make it clear that each family member can write—even draw or doodle—whatever they'd like within its pages, you'll produce a wonderful family treasure.

MODIFICATIONS

For a smaller family, you could pass the Bible to one another just once a day. For very young children, you may want to be their "secretary" and transcribe their thoughts and observations for them. For example, you could read them a children's book about Samson, then turn to Judges 16 in the Family Bible to record their comments about the story. For teens who may be less open to sharing what they're writing, you could buy them their own journaling Bible and commit to sitting together in a companionable silence while each of you journals in your own Bible.

FOR YOU

Of course, you can keep your own journaling Bible. You could write solely for you and Jesus, or you could write with the intention of your kids reading it someday, like a precious letter to them. If you're participating in a group study right now, jot the ideas and revelations that resonate with you right in the margins so the study will have a lasting place in your heart.

ABOUT SHANNON UPTON AND ORGANIZING *YOU* MINISTRIES



THE PROBLEM

We all have *spiritual* clutter, those negative thoughts and fears that tell us we aren't doing enough or being enough. We can feel overwhelmed and stressed out. Anxiety like this keeps us from fully enjoying our families and growing closer to God.

THE SOLUTION

Read the Organizing *You* books. I'll take you on a journey with Jesus so you can discover your spiritual clutter and use a little organization to clear it out. You'll learn how to manage your time, organize your home, and live an abundant life in Christ!

THE PREP

There are two ways to clear out spiritual clutter: writing it down and lifting it up. Sometimes your worries are prompts to get intentional about something, to start living all in for Jesus in that area of your life. That's when it's time to get organized—write down those thoughts and decide how you want to tackle them with the help of our Lord! Sometimes, though, those worries are useless and hurtful lies of the enemy, so you need to prayerfully surrender them. In my books, I help you think through all of your spiritual clutter and determine exactly what you want to do about it.

GETTING YOU STARTED

I have great, realistic organizational systems for you to implement! I'd love to help you manage your time, make an efficient chore plan, organize your belongings, and run your household with Jesus. And as for thought management (like reducing anxiety and mommy guilt), I've been in the trenches of a clinical anxiety disorder and can share with you real tools will help you to prayerfully fight those attacks.

MODIFICATIONS

Just as I did in this resource, I share plenty of ways for you to adjust and adapt the systems in my books to your lifestyle. Whether you're Type-A personality, a free spirit, or somewhere in between, you'll be inspired to find new ways that *you* can live intentionally for Jesus Christ.

FOR YOU

I have so many things for you at OrganizingJesusMoms.com!

- Need guidance about how to organize with Jesus? Read the *Organizing You* books.
- Looking for life organizing tips? Read my “Fun Stuff” articles.
- Love finding organizing and family fun ideas? Follow me on Pinterest.
- Would you appreciate encouragement and prayer? Follow me on Facebook and Twitter.
- Wishing for support and accountability in the organizing process? Get my free *Organizing You* Six-Session Group Bible Studies.
- Seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus? Follow my blog and live abundantly through scripture!
- Would you like to have me speak at your event? Check out my Speaking page.
- Want to have me speak, but your moms’ group can’t afford to fly me in? Discover my Time Management Video Meeting.
- Struggling with anxiety? Don’t miss my “Reducing Anxiety with Jesus” article and my “Thought Shot” blog posts.