



PARENT GUIDE

LESSON EIGHT: LEARN

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LESSON EIGHT: LEARN

OBJECTIVE: To help families learn about their faith and the faith stories of others, so they can grow from what they learn just like Jesus did.

FOCUS ON FOLLOWING JESUS

Jesus grew in wisdom and had to learn as a child! We can be like Jesus and grow in what we know so that it will change how we live.

([Luke 2:52](#) “Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.”)

GRIP ON THE GOSPEL

God placed us into communities and churches, and God’s design is that we learn how to live out our faith in Jesus by following those who came before us. As we hear the testimonies of God’s saving work in the lives of others, we will be encouraged and equipped to come to God in faith and serve Him all of our lives.

([1 Corinthians 11:1](#) “Follow my example, just as I follow the example of Christ.”)

WHAT DO I DO?

- Read the [For Parents](#) article. Spend a few minutes thinking and praying.
- Read over the [Discipleship Lesson](#) and decide when you will do it with your family.
- Gather your family, a Bible and any supplies listed on the lesson sheet. Use the script provided to teach a [Discipleship Lesson](#) to your family, adapting as needed.
- Use the 5 mini-lessons as [Daily Bible Time](#) prompts through the week.
- Select one or more [Discipleship Activities](#) to incorporate into your week.



FOR PARENTS

When was the last time you were able to share your personal testimony – the story of what God has done and is doing in your life – with someone else?

Of all the tools and systems we have for sharing the Gospel with other people, our own story is possibly the most effective and most powerful tool we have. Yet, many Christians are afraid to share their story. There might be many reasons for this fear – fear of being vulnerable in front of others, fear that their testimony isn't impressive or exciting enough or even something as simple as a fear of public speaking!

Consider the Apostle Paul – in the book of Acts we see him deliver his testimony three times. When he was faced with Kings and officials, ordinary and learned people – no matter the crowd, he chose to use his testimony as a means of delivering the Gospel message. He had access to other tools – expansive knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures, formal training in philosophy and theology, an impressive reputation and lineage, and yet he told the story God was writing with his life. You have a story to tell that is just as important as Paul's, or your pastor's or any other Christian you meet. It's a gift that God has given YOU uniquely, and no one can tell it with the power you do.

So do your children know your testimony?

Several things happen when we talk to our children about what God has done and is doing in our lives.

1. **They Hear the Gospel.** This cannot be repeated too many times. Every person needs to know the sinful state they are in without their Saviour and receive the only hope we have in this lifetime – the name of Jesus Christ. This is especially true of our children, and we have the primary responsibility for giving them the Gospel as often as we can. This is one great way.
2. **They Receive a Spiritual Legacy.** They learn who their parents (or grandparents) were, and who they are becoming. They learn what influenced their parents lives and what finally made Jesus real to them. They learn that following Jesus isn't something that is a habit or something we do out of obligation, but at one time you made a choice and that has made all the difference in your life.
3. **They Trust God's Power.** Hearing from their own parents that God was able to change and heal and help you will help build the faith in them to trust in God's power. Your children need God to change their hearts and their minds. Young people today require proof and evidence – your testimony is the evidence that God is who He says He is, and – along with God's perfect word – is often the vehicle that God uses to impart faith.
4. **They are Inspired.** Mathematical facts may cause us to make different choices (for instance, how much we have in the bank might decide where we eat dinner tonight) but art has the ability to change how we feel about something, and inspire the emotional and spiritual parts of ourselves. Your faith story will inspire your children like no Bible lesson can – children know when they are receiving something true, something of value from an adult and are more likely to listen to you tell a story about when you were a



little girl than to memorize another verse. Our testimony is fact combined with art – a story. It has tremendous power!

So you might be convinced that you SHOULD share your testimony (and many aspects of it) with your child. What now?

1. **Prepare:** Consider your life before Jesus, what happened that led to you giving your life to Him and how things have changed after. More time should be spent on the ‘after’ than any other portion. Your kids need to know a real change took place! Write it out, jot down what happened in your life and organize your thoughts by asking yourself questions.
2. **Select:** Not every child is ready to hear all parts of your life. You will have to be careful if your life has included very scary or difficult times. You don’t have to tell everything all at once – your testimony can be told in many pieces, and repeated just like any other story you share from your youth. Choose the most relevant and important details to share with your child.
3. **Keep it Simple:** You should be able to give your story in a brief paragraph. Children will ask questions if they are interested in learning more. Avoid ‘church’ words or going into speech-mode! Your kids want a real authentic story about their parent.
4. **Be Honest:** It’s okay to admit there are mistakes in your past that Jesus has helped you with. You don’t have to be perfect to gain your children’s respect! It’s equally okay to have a very ‘boring’ testimony where you accepted Jesus as a small child and have had a relatively worry-free life! But chances are God is teaching you something right now, and this is a gift he’s given for you to share with your kids.
5. **Rinse and Repeat!** Sharing what God has done in your life isn’t a one-time thing! You can continue to share every time it comes up, especially when your child is facing a conflict God has helped you through in the past. Or share aspects of what God has done as it becomes relevant. Don’t be afraid to repeat!
6. **Jesus is Everything:** Remember, your testimony isn’t about you – it’s about Jesus! It’s about how his Gospel and his grace changes everything!

Consider these Questions:

1. When have you had the chance to share your story with your children or other family members?
2. Who else has a story they could share with your children?
3. Who in your life had a faith story that impacted you? How did it impact you and when did they tell it?
4. Who has left you a spiritual legacy? What do you want to leave behind to others?



DISCIPLESHIP LESSON

Instructions:

- Read or teach the text using your own words
- *Text in italics is a note to the adult leading*
- This icon  indicates a question you should ask
- This icon  tells you there is a Bible verse to read
- **Text inside a grey box is a tip or idea for you!**
- **Text inside this box is a short activity or task**

The lesson should take about **45 minutes** to complete.

Supplies Needed:

- **Bible**
- Prepare ahead of time: a small jar with water in it, add some sand and a tiny amount of blue food colouring, if available.
- Have a larger container on hand
- Have a phone/tablet/laptop or book about the ocean

LIFELONG LEARNING



Ocean Object Lesson

The start of this lesson uses an object lesson – learning about the ocean. It requires a few props as noted above, but they should be easily found. Additionally, we suggest bringing a phone, tablet or computer nearby to look up pictures of the sea creatures mentioned. A simple Google Images search will give you what you need. If you have any books on ocean life, shells from past vacations or other objects to interact with, it will enhance the lesson, but do what is comfortable for you!

Gather your family for the family Discipleship Lesson. Remind your family that this is something exciting to do together, to look at the Bible and Jesus and learn what it means to be a disciple!



What is one of your favourite things to learn about?

Today we're going to talk about learning. I really LOVE learning new things myself, I love to learn facts, new games, about people and cultures, and especially about Jesus and the Bible!

When I was your age, I loved learning about _____. Lots of kids like to learn about animals and sea creatures.



What is your favourite sea creature?

The ocean is so mysterious – so cool, so different from life on land! Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to live in the ocean.

Find a photo of an ocean beach.



Look at this picture. Can you tell much about the ocean by looking at it from the beach? Not really. We can see that it is blue, it has waves, but we might have no idea that stuff like this is hiding under the surface!

Find a photo of coral reef.



What do we have to do to see coral reefs?

That's right, we have to go UNDER the water! Then we can see amazing creatures like this!

Find a photo of a whale.

Find a photo of a pufferfish.

Find a photo of a baby sea turtle.

Those creatures are amazingly powerful, and very cute! There are also really beautiful and weird creatures like these!

Find a photo of blue tang fish.

Find a photo of a blobfish.

The ocean is so big and full of life that scientists are still discovering new creatures all the time! Look at this guy – a spiny crab. He was just discovered off the coast of Australia in 2017. No one knew this creature even existed! It was a new fact to learn! In 2020, scientists exploring the deep sea in that area found what may be the longest animal ever – a long stringy creature that spirals around in the water. There are new facts about the ocean to learn all the time!



I bet some of you know some facts about the ocean! **Can you think of any?**

The ocean fact I know is that, "It has water in it". Because I know that fact, it will change how I behave. Sometimes the things we learn are like that – they change what we DO! If I wanted to cross over the ocean, and I believe there is lots of water in the ocean, I will use a boat not a bicycle to get across, right? If I



Sometimes children who have grown up in the church find church 'boring'. They feel like they know the stories and know everything there is to know... then they shut themselves down to new experiences with God. This lesson is to try and combat that.



wanted to put my toes in the ocean, I know there are cute friendly creatures, but also creatures that could sting or pinch me – so I should be careful!

I have a jar of water that reminds me of the ocean right here.

(show family the jar you prepared ahead of time)



Does it look like the ocean to you?



It is smaller than the ocean, I guess – but it looks like the ocean so I wonder, if I studied this jar and learned everything about what was in it, even knew how many grains of sand were in the bottom – would I know everything about the ocean?

No! Of course not.

Today we're talking about learning. This jar reminds me about what some people think about learning about God, and what it means to follow him. When we're young, we learn that God loves us and that God is good. Those things are so true, but that's not all there is to know about God! Each of us – especially kids – are growing not just in our bodies, but also in our minds and spirits. When you were younger, you knew just a little bit about God, but now you know more!

Sometimes people think God is kind of boring. Or that there isn't anything exciting or amazing left to learn. These are people who learned a few things about God, but then stopped learning! They decided the few things they knew were enough.

(Pour the contents of your small jar into a big container, notice how there is so much more room to fill up! That small amount that once filled the jar doesn't look very impressive now!)

All of us can learn more about God and fill up our growing minds with new facts about him and new experiences in following Jesus. This container is bigger, but it's still teensy tiny compared to the ocean. Maybe in your life right now you are full of learning things about God, but the next day or the next you might feel like there is nothing left to learn. You know all the Bible stories, and the lessons might seem very repetitive. If that's you – this is important to hear. That feeling might not mean you've learned everything there is to learn. It might mean that you have room to learn something new about God, who he is and what it means to follow him!



This illustration works best for kids age 8-11, but that is precisely who is most at risk for beginning to think they have no more to learn about God! If your child or family are newer to following Jesus, this may not be as much of a risk.



Your whole life long you will never ever learn all there is to know about God, not until we can spend eternity with him!

It's important to remember that Jesus – even though he is God – took the form of a person and lived a life just like anyone else, starting as a baby!



Did Jesus have to learn things? Or did he come knowing everything?

What do babies and little kids need to learn to do?

That's right, Jesus had to learn to walk, talk, play and work!



What is something you have learned in your life so far?

(Take answers from your kids and prompt them to see how learning something new changed their life – learning to ride a bicycle changes where you can go and how fast, learning to use a computer means you play new games, learning a language means you can make new friends, etc.)

The Bible says that as Jesus grew up, he learned more things, just like us. Jesus was all human and all God at the same time – which means he had to learn the Bible, learn about God and how to serve and love like we do.



Luke 2:40, 52

Even though Jesus eventually had all this power and knowledge from God, he still waited until he was about 30 before he started to teach and help people! Why did he wait so long? It might be that he had to learn enough about what it was like to be a person on the earth and have lots of experiences trusting God before he was ready.

All of this is a bit mysterious – how God could learn anything – but what you need to know today is that Jesus loved to learn more about His Heavenly Father and the Bible – and we can follow Jesus by learning these things too!



It might seem strange to think of the God who created all things having to learn anything. But the alternate view is that Jesus possessed all knowledge, but merely hid his ability until it was natural to display them. But we also know that Jesus humbled himself and took on our weak form. Having to learn is central to the human experience, and we see Jesus attending synagogue which was a place of learning. Minimally, we know Jesus had to learn some things through doing them – such as obedience as seen in Hebrews 5:8.



What are some ways we can learn about who God is?



Proverbs 9:9

Romans 15:4

We can learn by reading God's Word, and by being taught by other people.

Jesus and others have left us examples to follow and learn from (1 Peter 2:21b, 1 Corinthians 11:1). Jesus didn't just learn a lot of things, what he knew changed what he did! Because of what he knew about God, he loved people and taught them. Because of what he knew about God's Kingdom and the future, he was willing to go through difficult trials and even lay down his life. Because he knew God loved him, he didn't care if all the people loved him – God's love was enough. Jesus was unlike any person who ever lived, because he knew more about God than any of us!

Following Jesus means learning things – and learning them until they change us and make us into the people that God wants us to be. Learning about who God is, is more exciting than discovering new creatures in the ocean. There is no end to how GREAT God is, and all He has in store for each of us!

Close by praying together that God would help your family to be disciples and keep learning.



DAILY BIBLE TIME

Take a few minutes each day this week to spend some time together reading from God’s Word and discussing it together. Questions and verses are provided for you below. Use the Bible version your children are used to. Nlrv is a good one for very young children.

1	<p><u>Proverbs 9:9</u> <u>Philippians 4:9</u></p>	<p>What is something you have learned that changed something about your life? <i>(Comment on each of your kids and something they have already learned – encourage them by this! Comment on new things they are in the process of learning)</i> We can not know everything there is to know about God yet, no one is ‘all filled up’ with everything they can know about God! What things have you learned about God? What does the verse in Philippians tell us should happen after we have learned something? (Check out this verse in the NLT version if you have it.) We must not just learn to have facts in our head, but put them into practice. What does it mean to put what we learn into practice when it comes to following Jesus? Can you think of an example? <i>Pray that you will be a family who practices all they learn about God.</i></p>
2	<p><u>Hebrews 5:8</u> <u>James 1:2-4</u></p>	<p>Start off with a challenge (such as placing a cookie on your forehead and trying to get it into your mouth without touching or dropping it, or keeping a spoon on your nose). Did you like that challenge? Was it difficult? What are some reasons we might not like a challenge? (Sometimes we’re afraid of looking dumb, or getting hurt, or that there isn’t a reward...) Living a life that follows Jesus is living a life that accepts challenges. God uses challenges in our life to teach us things! What do you think our verses today mean? What challenges are you facing? What is God teaching you through those challenges?</p>
3	<p><u>1 Corinthians 15:3-4</u></p>	<p>What story about your family do you want to pass on to your children someday? What is your favourite story from mom or dad or grandparents’ childhood? What questions do you have about our family history? Share about who in your family follows Jesus and where you as parents learned to follow him. If you had good examples to follow, share those briefly! You might want to get out photo albums or any other artifacts to tell family history. The apostles wanted to pass on – to teach – what they learned from Jesus to others. What did Paul, in this verse, say was the most important thing he could pass on? What do you hope to teach others about God someday?</p>



4	<p><u>Proverbs 19:20</u> <u>Proverbs 4:1-2</u></p>	<p>We can learn a lot from one another in our family. God gave us families to help teach us. Parents can teach children, and we can all be good examples to one another. The Bible tells us we can look to other people who are following Jesus well for advice, and to learn. What do our verses today mean?</p> <p>Who do we know who follows Jesus well? Who doesn't just know a lot, but puts what they know into practice? How do we know that?</p> <p>Consider questions that you could ask this person together as a family – especially if it is a grandparent or other relative it could be great to interview them together! Try to think of someone who is not the pastor or Sunday School teacher!</p> <p>What have you learned from other people?</p>
5	<p><u>Ecclesiastes 7:12</u> <u>Colossians 3:16</u></p>	<p>Our verse today lists two very valuable things. What are they?</p> <p>Why should we want to be wise?</p> <p>Where does the Bible say wisdom comes from?</p> <p>If you wanted to learn from a really smart person, what would you have to do? (Spend time with them, ask them questions, be where they are, watch them, etc.)</p> <p>How can we do those things with God?</p> <p>Share about the importance of daily Bible reading and prayer with your children; share what you have learned and, if they have not begun to read it for themselves, consider helping children who can read begin a regular daily Bible habit.</p>



DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

Use any of the following activities to extend the learning and disciple your child in everyday life.

- **Pray Together:** Take time to pray for wisdom, understanding and knowledge.
- **Memorize:** Proverbs 16:16 together as a family. Talk about this verse in daily life.
- **Missions:** Learn about where a missionary lives and what challenges they face. Learn about the people to whom they are sharing the gospel, and some unique methods for reaching people in places that are different than your own. Praise God for giving people creativity, wisdom and understanding.

Daily Life:

- **Christian History:** Choose one or more people from Christian history to read about. We suggest a biography from this website, which is appropriate for younger children and has discussion questions to follow: www.christianity.com/church/church-history/church-history-for-kids/
- **Christian History Podcasts:** You and older children can listen to the '5minutesinchurchhistory' podcast wherever your podcasts are available. These histories will give us all perspective on how the church came to the place it is, and rejoice in God's faithfulness through trials and difficulties.
- **Catechism:** Depending on your tradition, you may have a catechism (sets of questions and answers to memorize that teach about God) that you use. These can be useful tools for learning truths that will change our lives. Check out www.newcitycatechism.com for great tools for today's families. Consider beginning to memorize these together!
- **Take on a difficult 'challenge' together as a family** – memorize a chapter of the Bible, or the books of the Bible in order or a list of the names of God. Or consider putting into practice what you know about God through serving others in your community, church or internationally!