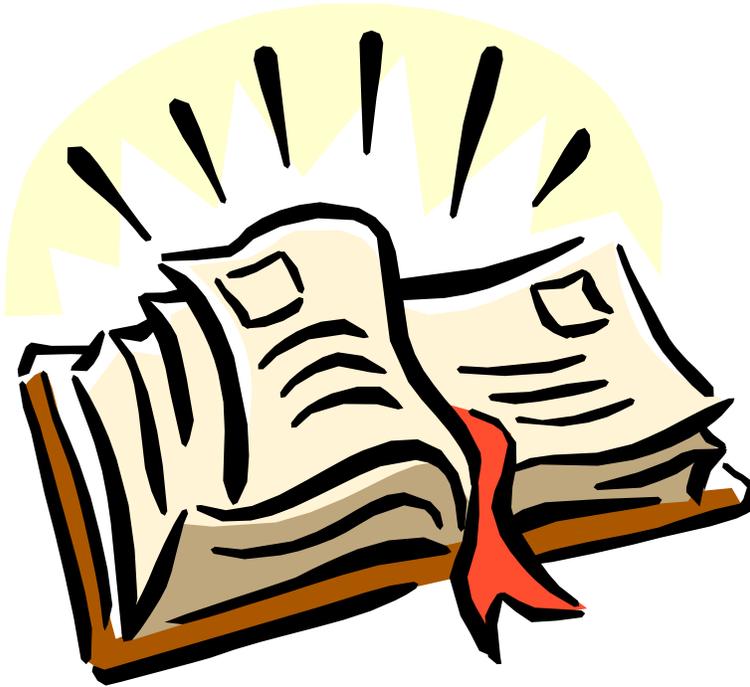


Bible Time for Kids!



CHILDREN'S DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF:

LESSON TITLE: The Early Church

THEME: We are members of the body of Christ and we need to help one another.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37



Dear Parents...

Welcome to Bible Time for Kids. This is a series of daily devotions for children and their families. Our purpose is to supplement our Sunday morning curriculum and give you an opportunity to encourage your children to develop a daily devotional life. We hope you and your family will be blessed as you study God's Word together.

This week we learned about The Early Church. The theme was "We are members of the body of Christ and we need to help one another." When we ask Jesus to come into our hearts we become a part of God's great big family. And everyone who is a Christian all over the world is our brother or sister. This week we are going to learn more about being part of that family and what our part is in that family.

We are going to learn that in God's family we have a responsibility to help our brothers and sister. We also need to pray for them and encourage them. We will also find that the Lord uses His family to help us and to encourage us when we need it. What a blessing it is to be a child of God and in His family!

The section of scripture that we studied was **Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37**. The following five devotions are based on either the scripture and/or the theme for Sunday's lesson. As a starting point it would be good for you to review these verses with your children.

These devotions are designed to help you reinforce Sunday's lesson throughout the week with your children, provide some more ideas for the application of God's Word in your children's lives and provide a tool to help in family devotions.

Obviously children at various age levels will respond to the devotional in different ways. You may want to add your own ideas to these to make them more age appropriate.

May the Lord bless you as you study His Word together!

Day One

God's Family Sticks Together

Text: Acts 2:44: - "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,"

Read Acts 2:42-47

Jeff has a large family and they all like to do different things. His little sister likes to ice skate. His brother likes to water ski and the twins like to hike and camp. His mom and dad liked to go to museums and Jeff enjoys reading. Even though they all enjoy doing different activities, they love each other very much and enjoy spending time together. Every year, when it is time to plan their summer vacation, mom and dad gives each family member a turn to choose where they would like to go. This way everyone has a chance to choose his or her favorite place. But no matter what they do each year they have a lot of fun because they do it together as a family.

Our church is much like Jeff's family. We each have our own individual way of serving Jesus. Some of us like to sing and others enjoy teaching a class. There are some that love to say hello to people and welcome them to church each week and others who take the offering. Every person is special and unique. We are different, but we all have one very special thing in common—we all love Jesus and have given our lives to Him.

When the church first began in the book of Acts the people were very different from one another. But they all had one thing in common - their relationship with Jesus Christ. They all worked together to tell others about Jesus and loved and encouraged one another at church. We need to do the same thing today. We come to church to learn more about Jesus as well as helping our brothers and sisters and serving Jesus by using the gifts that He has given to us. We are a family in Jesus' name and God's family sticks together.

- Name some ways that you enjoy serving Jesus.
- Ask your family members how they like to serve Jesus.
- Do you know someone who isn't in the family of God? How can you help them?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Family: A group of people sharing common ancestors—members of a household. The Bible teaches that when we ask Jesus into our heart that we become members of the family of God.

Day Two

God's Family Prays Together

Text: James 5:16 - "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

Read James 5:13-16 and Acts 4:23-31

Jimmy was so excited. He had just received his report card and wow! His grades were great! This year his grades were higher than ever before. Last year he hadn't paid much attention to his schoolwork and fell behind in class. He almost did not pass. His parents took him out of football to help him concentrate on his homework. At first he wasn't very happy about his parent's decision, but he decided to work real hard and get good grades so that he could join the football team again one day.

He couldn't wait now to show his family the report card. Even though he had to drop football, he knew that his folks were on his side. They had showed it all year long. When he was stuck or needed extra help with his schoolwork, his mom or dad were always there. They would also pray with him every day and asked the Lord to help Jimmy with his schoolwork. And his whole family would pray together sometimes for the Lord to help with his homework and grades. It encouraged Jimmy to know that his family really cared. And tonight he would share the good news and thank the Lord with his family for what the Lord has done.

In the same way that Jimmy and his family shared good and bad times together, our church family shares good times and bad times together as well. The Lord wants us to pray together and encourage each other. We should share with others the things in our lives that we need prayer for and also share how the Lord is answering those prayers. Just like we have learned in today's reading, Peter and John had just come through a very frightening time with the religious leaders. They didn't know what would happen to them, but God kept them safe and they shared their happiness with their brothers and sisters in Jesus. All of them glorified God together. This is a great example of how God's family should share the good times and the bad times in prayer together.

- Why is it important to pray together?
- Why would God want us to share His answers to prayer with each other?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Encourage: To inspire and support someone in his or her walk with Jesus.

Day Three

God's Family Shares With Each Other

Text: Acts 2:44-45 - "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."

Also read Acts 4:32-37

Every time the weather changed, Cathy's family had a Sharing Day. Three times a year, spring, fall, and Christmas time the whole family went through all their drawers and closets and took out things they didn't use or could no longer fit into. Clothes, toys, books and even canned food from the kitchen, were placed in the middle of the room and the whole family would pray and ask the Lord to help them to know who could be blessed with the items. Then they would make a list of the people they thought could use the belongings. If there was someone in their family who needed something, it was given to them. Then they had a list of others, church family or others that might need something.

Cathy knew that if she couldn't think of someone to give her things to that her mom or dad would know someone who needed it at church. And if they couldn't find someone who needed it, they could give it to a local charity. Cathy's parents made sure the family was sharing items they would want to receive as a gift.

When the first church began gathering together to share God's blessings, the people shared equally with one another. There were thousands of new believers and no one had need for anything. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and if any one of us has a need and we are able to help, then we should share our blessings with them, because that pleases God.

- How does sharing help God's people?
- Name something you have shared with someone else.
- Pray about finding ways to share your love for Jesus with others.

Kid's Bible Dictionary

Sharing: To participate in the distribution of things in common to help others. Sharing Jesus with unbelievers is distributing the knowledge of the gospel.

Distributing: To deliver or give out.



Day Four

God's Family is One in Christ

Text: Acts 2:46 - "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,"

Read Acts 2:44-47

David loved his friend Nirmal very much, but there were no two boys more different. David loved football, but Nirmal thought it was a silly game. He liked to play chess. David enjoyed reading but Nirmal liked to put bicycles together from broken parts. They were even born in different countries and spoke different languages in their homes. But the two boys had one thing in common that was so important that nothing else mattered—they both loved Jesus.

When they see each other at church, they would love to sit by each other in class and share the neat things that the Lord was doing in their lives. When one boy spent the night at the other boy's house, they would have a great time playing and learning how to do different and sometimes new things. But they always liked to read from their Bibles and pray before bedtime. Sometimes if one of the boys did not act right the friend would tell him, but only in kind, caring words, as Jesus would. They enjoyed each other's company and serving the Lord together.

No matter how different we may be, when we are in God's family Jesus brings us together as one. We might like to do different things and be very different people. But when we are in God's family we all love Jesus and should enjoy reading the Bible, praying and hanging out with our brothers and sisters in Jesus. Just as the early church in our scripture today was "of one accord" and had "a singleness of heart," we too should be one in Christ with our church family. It pleases God and brings great joy to His heart and ours when we are one in Jesus and love our brothers and sisters in Jesus.

- What did David and Nirmal have that was in common?
- Consider how many people were included in the early church. The Bible says thousands were added. How were they "of one accord?"
- Who makes us as a church family "of one accord"?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



One accord: In agreement, unity and harmony.
Singleness of heart: Having the same common purpose and goals.

Day Five

God Blesses His Family

Text: Hebrews 13:3 - "Remember the prisoners as if chained with them, and those who are mistreated, since you yourselves are in the body also."

Also read Acts 4:31-33

This week we learned about God's family and how the early church treated one another. The Bible teaches us how we are to treat our brothers and sisters in Jesus. We also get to learn true stories of real life people who learned about how to serve the Lord together. The early church had a wonderful and close fellowship. They were blessed as they helped each other. They prayed together and they shared with one another. No matter how different they were, they all loved Jesus and their hearts were one in Christ. They all were doing what pleased God and they were within His will. The early church was blessed with great power to witness to people who didn't know Jesus and God protected them.

When we become members of God's family we become part of a very large family. We have brothers and sisters all over this world. They all worship Jesus and sing His praises every week. Some of our brothers and sisters though aren't able to worship freely like we get to. We are very blessed to live in our country. We can go to church, pray out loud and we don't have to be afraid because we are Christians. But in some countries it is against the law to worship Jesus.

Can you think of some ways that we can help our brothers and sisters in this situation. That's right! We can pray for them. We can ask the Lord to help them and to encourage them. Maybe we can even write them a letter. As a family you can learn more about the Christians that are suffering for Jesus in the world through groups like Voice of the Martyrs. Let's remember to pray for our family - the family who lives in our house with us and our family in Jesus all over the world.

- Can all Christians worship Jesus without being afraid of going to jail?
- What can we do to help our brothers and sisters who are suffering?

Kid's Prayer Time



How wonderful it is to come before God and thank Him for His plan for us to be in heaven with Him. Please pray for our family in other countries who might need encouragement and power from the Holy Spirit. Ask God to show you how to be in "singleness of heart" with your family and how you can support and encourage them.

Memory Verse...

First and Second Grade

“...they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine...”

Third Grade and Above

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Acts 2:42