

The Grace of Fellowship

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by Jared Bridges

If stay-at-home orders are difficult for adults, one can only imagine what such a disruption does for our kids. With schools, sports, music, and other activities canceled for the foreseeable future, kids can't even meet regularly with their local church as a source of stability.

That's where we as parents come in. While the day hasn't yet arrived where it's prudent to have Zoom Sunday School with kindergarteners (isn't there something in Revelation about that?..), there isn't a single day we have with our kids where it's not appropriate to speak the good news of Jesus to them. We don't have to wait until quarantine is over. We're all in children's ministry now.

I recently joined Sean Oxford and Wendy Schrock, both deacons in our children's ministry, for a brief discussion on some resources we can use to help us in continuing to speak the gospel during this time:

[Children's Ministry Panel \(May 2020\)](#) from [Occoquan Bible Church](#) on [Vimeo](#).

OBC's Family Ministry Council compiled the resource list below to help parents bring a familiar story to kids when familiar places are missing. It's not comprehensive, but it's a good start for equipping you to have better conversations with your kids about the gospel.

A. Focus on the Big Story of the Bible

These books contain 10 minute or shorter stories. For younger kids we suggest reading the story and then reiterating a major point, then praying. The topic of the story provides a good and simple prayer prompt—even toddlers can pray if you help them with words to say. For older kids it may be good to pause and ask open-ended questions along the way (e.g., why do you think he/she/God did that?), to make them think or to reiterate important points, and finish with prayer.

1. [Jesus Storybook Bible](#) (Sally Lloyd-Jones)

Emphasizes God's "never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love" and that every story "whispers" Jesus' name. Illustrated and teaches from OT and NT. About 5-10 minutes per story. Website says age range 4-8 but we have found it can work well for kids as young as two.

2. [Promises of God Storybook Bible: The Story of God's Unstoppable Love](#) (Jennifer Lyell)

"God's love is unstoppable. And that's a promise." Weaves individual stories into the thread of God's promises so that children learn more than individual Bible stories—they discover how

God has demonstrated his love for us. Illustrated and teaches from OT and NT. Has review questions to help emphasize important points. Website says age range 4-8.

3. [The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden](#) (Kevin DeYoung)

Connects the “classic” stories kids may already (think they) know with Scripture’s overarching message about God’s glorious plan to redeem his rebellious people. Illustrated and teaches from OT and NT, including the epistles. Website says age range 5-11.

4. [The Big Picture Story Bible](#) (David R. Helm)

Emphasizes God’s promises and how he keeps them. Teachers from OT and NT. Has pictures. About 5-10 minutes per story. Website says age range 8-12 but we have found it can work well for kids as young as three years old.

5. [Long Story Short](#) and [Old Story New](#) (Marty Machowski)

10-minute devotionals, five days a week, that involve reading a passage from the Bible and then explaining it, some questions and answers, and prayer. The OT book includes 1 day per week on the linkage to Jesus. The NT book focuses on sharing the gospel with the family. The books are not illustrated and although the website doesn’t list an age range I would recommend kindergarten at the youngest, through perhaps 12 years old.

B. Focus on Doctrine

1. [Emblems of the Infinite King: Enter the Knowledge of the Living God](#) (J. Ryan Lister)

A systematic theology book aimed at kids age 10+. Uses the following categories: God, humanity, sin, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, and last things. Has illustrated “emblems” that symbolize key facets of Christian doctrine.

2. [The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New](#) (Marty Machowski)

The Ology is a starting point to learning theology and aims to create a hunger and desire in children to learn more as they grow older. Designed for six-year-olds through preteens, this flexible resource includes built-in adaptations so the entire families can enjoy it together.

3. Catechism Questions from OBC Sunday School

Previously used in 4th-6th grade summer Sunday school class, and adapted from [A Catechism for Girls and Boys](#). Teaches about God/the Trinity, creation, glorifying God by our lives, the Bible, sin and the consequences, the covenant of grace, Jesus as both God and man, salvation. [Teaching guide can be found here](#) [PDF].