

DOORPOST SONGS

DOORPOST
SONGS

UNTO US

A FAMILY
WORSHIP
EXPERIENCE
FROM DAVE & JESS RAY

ADVENT FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE



INTENTIONAL MOMENTS OF
FAMILY WORSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP

How do I help my child become a faithful follower of Christ as an adult? It's a question that is close to the heart of any Christian parent. Most parents know they have a part to play, and want to do their part, but don't know what to do or how to start.

There is no magic formula, but research, experience, and Scripture tell us there's one thing you can do for your kids that makes all the difference: teach them to love God's Word!

THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU
TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART.
YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY
TO YOUR CHILDREN.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Doorpost Songs Family Worship Guides are designed to help you do just that. Each one pairs with an album of Scripture songs you won't be able to get out of your head. (And we think that's a good thing!)

All you need is fifteen minutes a week to create intentional moments of worship and discipleship with your family. (A Bible and a Doorpost Songs album wouldn't hurt either!) Let's see what happens when God's Word becomes part of your family life.



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UNTO US

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE

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WHY FAMILY WORSHIP

AND HOW TO GET STARTED

In a 2017 study, Lifeway Research sought to understand which childhood behaviors were the best predictors of spiritual health as an adult. They hoped to find the answer to a question that is close to the heart of most Christian parents: how can I help my child become a faithful follower of Christ as an adult? Of course, the answer to this question can't be boiled down to a statistical formula. There is no infallible equation for raising kids whose faith becomes their own in adulthood.

But the researchers did find that one childhood behavior had more positive effect on spiritual health than any other: reading God's Word. More than any other behavior – even some you might be surprised didn't make the list – a child who reads and loves God's Word is most likely to become a spiritually vibrant adult.

I'm guessing that didn't really surprise you. After all, God has been telling us about the importance of his Word from almost the very beginning. In fact, at a pivotal point in the history of God's people, as they prepare to enter the Promised Land, comes one of the most foundational commands in all of Scripture. In Deuteronomy 6, God places a huge responsibility on parents to pass down the truth of God's Word – his promises, his commandments, his story – to their children:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your

children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)

This scripture is the very heart of Doorpost Songs. It's an invitation to participate in God's design for generational discipleship, and the key to it all is hidden right in plain sight. If you want to help your children follow Jesus, then make God's Word a part of your everyday life, as common as sitting down or walking along, as routine as lying down or getting up, as normal as going in and out your door.

We know most Christian parents want to be spiritual leaders for their children. But many don't know exactly where to start. *I'm not a pastor. I'm not a worship leader. How can I lead my children in worship?*

Don't worry! You don't need some set of specialized skills to create a time of worship for your family! You just need a willing heart. At the core of worship is a very simple process: God reveals himself through his Word and through his presence, and we respond by worshipping. Worship doesn't require a seminary degree or musical talent. *It only requires a heart that is ready to respond to God.*

We want Doorpost Songs to be a tool for you to help create these simple moments of worship in the everyday life of your family. Start by putting the CD in your car and singing along to these amazing truths from God's Word as you go along your way. Then carve out fifteen minutes once a week and use these family

worship moments to create intentional times of worship and discipleship for you and your children.

USING the ADVENT FAMILY WORSHIP MOMENTS

The first five worship moments in this guide are designed around the season of Advent, one for each week of Advent and one for Christmas Day (or Christmas Eve). The fourth Sunday of Advent is always the last Sunday before Christmas, so to figure out the four weeks of Advent, just count backwards from there.

Consider lighting an Advent wreath as a family each time you use one of the family worship moments. If you're unfamiliar, an Advent wreath includes four candles plus a fifth central candle. The four outer candles typically represent hope, joy, love, and peace, and the fifth is called the Christ candle. The outer candles are lit successively during the four weeks of Advent, first one, then two, three, and finally all four. The fifth candle is lit on Christmas (or Christmas Eve, as many churches do).

Each family worship moment in this guide is a template for a fifteen-minute time of worship and discipleship based around one song from the Doorpost Songs *Unto Us* album. Each worship moment includes a passage of scripture to read, a memory verse to learn, lyrics to the song, a short devotional in a writing style designed for your children, discussion questions, and even suggested prayer topics.

You can use all of our suggestions or come up with your own. This isn't a magic formula; it's simply a place to begin, a way for you to step into your role as the primary spiritual leader for your children. It seems like a daunting task – but it's not! Your role is simply to lead them into God's presence and then let HIM do the

work! Fill your kids' lives with God's Word and watch what happens.

We want to encourage you to put this weekly time of worship on your calendar. Find a time that works for your family. It might be gathered around the breakfast table one morning each week. It might be the last few moments before bed. In our family it's usually an extension of dinner time. We all linger at the table, read a passage of scripture, talk about it, and pray together. Whatever you decide, set your appointment and keep it – even if you're tired, even it's been the most difficult of days. We promise you won't regret it!

Make your worship time interactive. If you have preschoolers, grab the plastic harmonica they got at church or the toy xylophone that's been sitting in the corner since Aunt Ruth gave it to you last Christmas. Let them play (or pound!) along and make a joyful noise. If your older children are learning to play an instrument, encourage them to learn the songs. If your child is learning to read, let him or her read a section of the scripture or devotional. Encourage every family member to participate in a time of prayer.

Parenting can be a rollercoaster of intense emotion! Sometimes it fills our hearts with incredible joy. And sometimes we feel helpless and alone. But don't forget that you are a dearly loved child of your heavenly Father! It is his calling that is on your life, and it is his power and strength that will accomplish it. Your children aren't the only ones who need to spend time in his presence. You do, too! Our prayer is that these simple moments of worship are life-giving experiences for both you and your children.

Now, call a family meeting, get out the calendars, and let's schedule a time for family worship!

UNTO US

ISAIAH 9:2,6-7

Verse

ON THE PEOPLE WHO WERE WALKING IN DARKNESS
INTO THE DARKNESS HAS SHINED A LIGHT
AND ON THOSE WHO, WHO WERE LIVING IN DARKNESS
DEEP IN THE DARKNESS HAS DAWNED A LIGHT
AND HE IS LIGHT AND LIFE TO ALL MANKIND

Chorus

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN
AND HIS NAME SHALL BE WONDERFUL COUNSELOR
MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING ONE
UNTO US

Bridge

AND THE GOVERNMENT
IT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDERS
AND THE GOVERNMENT
IT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDERS
AND THE GREATNESS AND PEACE
OF HIS KINGDOM NEVER ENDS

UNTO US

FAMILY WORSHIP MOMENT

ADVENT WEEK 1

READ IT

Read the Scripture passage aloud as a family. If your kids can read, consider having one of them read or letting them take turns reading.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (NIV)

² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

SING IT

Play the song from the *Unto Us* album and sing together. You can find Doorpost Songs on Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, Amazon, and more.

MEMORIZE IT

Pick a section of the verses to memorize as a family. Use the suggestions below or choose your own.

Long Version (Isaiah 9:6, NIV)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Short Version (Isaiah 9:6, NIV)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

LEARN IT

What's the BIG IDEA?

Jesus is the promised Messiah.

Have you ever waited for something you *really* wanted? Maybe you've been waiting all year for Christmas to come around so you could get that *one special thing* on your Christmas list. Sometimes it can be difficult to wait. It might feel like Christmas will *never* get here. But you wait hopefully because you know and trust that Christmas will come again.

The people of God knew what it was like to wait. God had made them a promise. He had promised to send the Messiah, the Saving One, the one who would restore God's kingdom and make everything right again, the one who would save God's people from evil rulers who made them like slaves, the one who would set them free again.

But God's people weren't just waiting a year for Christmas to come around again. They had been waiting for a *long time*. In fact, the Bible verses we read today were part of God's promise that the Messiah would be born, but they were written almost 700 years before the birth of Jesus. Can you imagine waiting 700 years for Christmas to come?

And then, one night in a tiny town called Bethlehem, all of the waiting ended and he arrived. The Messiah was born! Jesus was here! The Son that God had promised to send almost 700 years before had finally come. He was going to restore God's kingdom – not by creating a new nation or government now, but by making it possible for us receive forgiveness and to know God.

Every year at Christmas we celebrate the arrival of the Messiah. In fact, the four weeks before Christmas are called Advent, and the word *advent* means "arrival." During Advent we remember that God always keeps his promises. We feel the anticipation that God's people must have felt as they waited for the

Messiah to be born. And we celebrate that God *did* send the Messiah – the Saving One – and his name is Jesus.

TALK ABOUT IT

Use the questions below or ask some of your own.

1. Can you think of a time when you had to wait a long time for something? How did you feel while you were waiting?
2. Look at the verses we read today. What can we learn about the promised Messiah from these verses?
3. Who is the Messiah?
4. Why do we celebrate Advent?

PRAY ABOUT IT

Pray together. Here are some ideas:

- Thank God that he always keeps his promises.
- Thank God that he sent Jesus to be the Messiah, the Saving One.
- Pray that Jesus would help us to experience the anticipation of his arrival.
- Pray that God would remind us that the best gift of Christmas is Jesus.