



Long Story Short: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God: Old Testament

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Transform Your Family with Ten Minutes a Day in the Gospel Story Christian parents know the importance of passing the gospel story on to their children, yet we live in a busy world filled with distractions. Schedules collide, there is homework and yard work and dishes and laundry, the car's oil should be changed, there are phone calls to make and before you know it, everyone is getting to bed late again. The Bible can seem like a long story for an active family to read, but when you break it down into short sections, as Marty Machowski does, family devotions are easy to do. Long Story Short will help busy parents share with their children how every story in the Old Testament points forward to God's story of salvation through Jesus Christ. You won't find a more important focus for a family devotional than a daily highlighting of the gospel of grace. Clever stories and good moral lessons may entertain and even help children, but the gospel will transform children. The gospel is deep enough to keep the oldest and wisest parents learning and growing all their lives, yet simple enough to transform the heart of the first grader who has just begun to read. Ten minutes a day, five days a week is enough time to pass on the most valuable treasure the world has ever known. Long Story Short is a family devotional program designed to explain God's plan of salvation through the Old Testament and is suitable for children from preschool through high school. Marty Machowski is a Family Life Pastor at Covenant Fellowship Church, a Sovereign Grace Ministries church in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, where he has served on the pastoral staff for more than twenty years. Marty leads Promise Kingdom, the children's ministry of Covenant Fellowship. He and his wife Lois and their six children reside in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Long Story Short: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God: Old Testament Details

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From Reader Review Long Story Short: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God: Old Testament for online ebook

Dan Glover says

Our family used this as the basis for our family worship/devotional time after supper 5 days a week in 2014-2015. Machowski walks through the unfolding story of the OT by boiling down the episodes into 5 day long examinations (78 Weeks in total). The first day of the week starts off introducing the particular story/episode with some concrete object lesson which is usually effective to grab the children's attention and engage their thinking and the author uses that to transition into the biblical story and the explanation of it for the next 5 days of devotionals/teaching times. Thankfully the object lessons usually involve minimal prep so it doesn't become onerous for parents. Each of the 5 days readings from Scripture are accompanied by a brief explanation of the text and the main themes highlighted are usually man's sin and need of God and God's gracious and faithful relationship with his people. Day three's reading takes a break from the main text and looks at how the week's story points forward to Jesus, often incorporating a NT reading. The fifth day's reading looks at either a Psalm or a Prophet to see how it points forward to Christ or speaks of salvation through Christ. The Psalm or prophetic reading chosen often highlights some theme or event from that week's story as well. After the readings and the explanations, there are usually 3 questions to help with comprehension and basic listening. There is also a question for the kids to ask their parents about a time where they may have done something or witnessed something related to the main focus of that day's reading. Sometimes also children are encouraged to recall a time when they committed a particular sin that is similar in nature to the sin a character in the story committed (more on this below). Each day's episode ends in a prompt to pray for or thank God for something themed according to that day's reading.

I found that Machowski's discussion of the OT events or episodes sometimes missed some very important observations, either in the historical context, or in the way those events pointed forward to Christ. Obviously this is to be expected when a book is structured to be a 10-15 minute devotional or teaching time...you're going to miss a lot. However, sometimes it seemed to me it was a central thing that was missed, passed over for a point of lesser importance. But in fairness this didn't happen very often so this wasn't really a drawback.

I also found that Machowski over simplified salvation and boiled it down to believing in Jesus, that his death on the cross forgives our sins so that we will go to be with him in heaven when we die. Not that he's wrong, just that it makes much of the discussion of salvation future-oriented (going to heaven instead of hell when we die) and leaves the present Christian experience of union with Christ or walking as God's children here and now often unexplored. Again, what he emphasizes is obviously of prime importance, but it does seem to focus on one aspect of the cross and leaves many significant aspects of salvation unexplored. Perhaps that is because this is meant to be aimed at the younger end of the spectrum, but I found that the point was all too often exclusively about "going to heaven to be with Jesus when we die". However, that is where a conscientious parent can step up and broaden or deepen the discussion depending on the ages of the children one is working through this with. So again, not a glaring weakness, just a heads-up to parents. The salvation we have through Christ's life, death, resurrection and reign is so rich, it would be good to bring in a more fulsome perspective on this in your discussion as a family.

Now, about the author's encouraging children to think of a time when they sinned in a way similar to the character(s) in the story, or encouraging parents to recall a time when the children disobeyed in a particular way (see above) - while I understand that this is meant to both show our own sinfulness and need of Christ, as well as show that we are not so different from the flawed characters of Scripture, I would encourage parents to do this wisely, cautiously and sparingly, if at all. Scripture presents us with a vision of God as one who forgives and then doesn't impute our sin and guilt to us any more, who removes our sins as far as east from west, and we are likewise called to forgive and love in such a way that keeps no record of wrongs.

What we don't want to do as parents is to repeatedly bring up our children's past sins in teaching times when we are focusing on God's salvation, forgiveness and grace to us through Christ Jesus. Of course to teach this we must talk about our sin and our children's sin, and sin is only theoretical if we never actually speak of specific ways that we sin, actual sins we sometimes commit. However, I would caution parents about bringing up past sins that have already been disciplined for, discussed and forgiven. Sometimes doing that can defeat or counter act the very lesson of salvation, grace and forgiveness we are attempting to teach.

Overall however, I commend this book warmly.

Hannah says

I've only flipped through this so far, but am looking forward to using it with my Little Peoples' Bible Study.

Stephanie Van Gorden says

A quick daily run through the Old Testament: a quick review of the previous day's reading, a short passage of Scripture, a paragraph or two explaining it, and a few questions for discussion. In our family, we used this as Bible curriculum as we homeschool. I usually did a devotion or two per day in order to get through in our 36-week school schedule. Highly recommend.

BDC says

I love these devotionals. They take you through one story or passage over the course of a week. I like the way they divide them up. The paragraph devotional is simple and well written for kids. The 3-4 questions at the end generally are good, but sometimes I find the sentence structure a little confusing for kids 6 and under. Not matter, I just rephrase it. On occasion I think they read more into the text then is actually there. I did not find that to be the case in the NT one.

Becky Sayler says

These ten-minute family devotions are companion pieces to our current Children's Church curriculum for ages 4 – 5th grade, and would be appropriate for children that age. Each week has five days' worth of discussion topics, questions, illustrations, Bible passages, and ideas for discoveries to make as a family. The weeks line up with the Children's Church story from Sunday, and the accompanying Bible passages help your family draw a connection between each story and the gospel. You could use this devotion without paying attention to the current Children's Church lesson and without using the Gospel Story Bible. I like how the topics for family discussion give parents and kids a chance to share about struggles and celebrate joys together (For example, "Kids, ask your parents to tell you about a time when God provided something for them in a way that they knew it was by God's grace, not their own effort."). These devotions could be a springboard for great family conversations about the ways each person is growing with God.

High Pointe Baptist Church says

Useful structured guide to family worship or devotions

Jonathan Wylie says

We finished this book as a family worship. We have moved on to Old Story New: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God. These books are great because very little prep is needed to use these in family worship.

"Blessed is the man who never stops starting family worship."

Julia says

This has provided a really great way for our family to study the (Christian) Bible together. We've really only just started it but I'm so glad to have found this resource to pull from over the next few years.

Will Kang says

What a great family devotion guide!

Great family devotion guide. The devotions helped my kids learn the stories in the Bible while teaching them the connection to Jesus the Savior. It also helped my husband and myself!!!

Sandie says

I love this book! I really think the questions drive the important points home for kids and some make them think. Often we will do a few at a time, but it depends on how long we have before bed. This is a great resource to read through the Bible with your kids in bite size chunks.

Mandy J. Hoffman says

MY REVIEW:

Fabulous!

I love this family devotional book that can easily be made to work for a wide range of ages. The first reason being that it ties the Old Testament to the gospel! Too many family/kid devotionals just give stories rather than truly help kids connect with the Word of God. In this book, which gives you five, ten-minute devotions per week, there is at least one day when your reading a New Testament passage that connects to the Old

Testament story line of the week.

The next reason I like this family devotional is that it's easy. And very simple, too. There are some suggest object lessons, but they are simple and certainly not mandatory for the kids to get the week's lesson. If you don't do it everything will still make sense.

And the third reason I like this book is because it's comprehensive. It incorporates reading Scripture, discussion and interaction, and prayer all together in an easy to follow format that really only takes ten minutes - if that.

In the words of Emily: "This book is fun!" And our family loves it!

BOOK OVERVIEW:

Christian parents know the importance of passing the gospel story on to their children, yet we live in a busy world filled with distractions. Schedules collide, there is homework and yard work and dishes and laundry, the car's oil should be changed, there are phone calls to make and before you know it, everyone is getting to bed late again.

The Bible can seem like a long story for an active family to read, but when you break it down into short sections, as Marty Machowski does, family devotions are easy to do. Long Story Short will help busy parents share with their children how every story in the Old Testament points forward to God's story of salvation through Jesus Christ. You won't find a more important focus for a family devotional than a daily highlighting of the gospel of grace. Clever stories and good moral lessons may entertain and even help children, but the gospel will transform children. The gospel is deep enough to keep the oldest and wisest parents learning and growing all their lives, yet simple enough to transform the heart of the first grader who has just begun to read.

Ten minutes a day, five days a week is enough time to pass on the most valuable treasure the world has ever known. Long Story Short is a family devotional program designed to explain God's plan of salvation through the Old Testament and is suitable for children from preschool through high school.

Susanna says

We are in our second week of using this for family devotions and so far it's been a hit with all 5 of us!

Becky Hintz says

We read through this book at the dinner table, taking a good two years to complete it. It was an excellent catalyst for theological discussion with our four grade-school kiddos and helped them learn to identify Christological types and shadows in the OT (though in some cases the author's links seemed a bit of a stretch). This book is probably best suited for parents who want to teach their children at a deeper level than simple Bible stories, yet don't know how (or don't feel equipped) to do so without a guide. For those who are natural teachers, this book might feel awkward at times.

courtneycaleb2 says

It bought my Family closer to God. Bible passages relating to the point of the day.

Gail Welborn says

Marty Machowski, pastor, father, husband and writer penned Long Story Short, a gospel driven, field-tested family devotional that pairs well with The Gospel Story Bible. The easy-to-use devotional features seventy-eight lessons from the Old Testament designed for busy, time-challenged families of preschool, grade school, middle school, high school or homeschooled youngsters.

Readings and discussions take ten minutes a day, five days a week. Teachings feature biblical truth from the “cross-centered” Old Testament that point to Jesus Christ and salvation. Devotions begin with Genesis and end with Nehemiah and feature a single scripture theme that repeats for one week.

The simple format includes a brief reading, an explanation with three discussion questions and a short prayer. The first two days concern the central teaching, while the third day connects a New Testament scripture to the message and the fourth day completes the story. Readings from Psalms or a prophetic book tie the weeks teaching to the main scripture theme on Friday. Since this book is text without pictures, The Gospel Story Bible I reviewed Monday adds a nice touch for younger children. Review: www.examiner.com/list/the-gospel-stor...

We live in a busy world of schedules that conflict with work, home and school responsibilities. Parents and children are exhausted by days end with little time for family relationships or fellowship. Still...Full Review: <http://tinyurl.com/cm45b5>
