

How to Choose the Right Bible Storybook for Your Child

You know you want a good Bible storybook for your child. But there are so many options, how do you decide? Here are 5 tips to help you sort through the possibilities.

1. Match the format to your child's age and interest. Babies and toddlers enjoy board books because they can turn the pages themselves. Books with long stories and more text than illustration are best for older children. Most Bible storybooks for preschoolers and beginning readers fall somewhere in between.

Consider illustration too. Most children respond well to bright colors and a range of contemporary art styles—but contemporary doesn't have to mean inaccurate. Older children can appreciate more realistic portrayals of Bible times.

2. Look at the Contents page. Are both Old and New Testament stories well represented? Do the stories present the overall story arc of the whole Bible?

3. Read a story or two aloud. Does the writing flow well, with interesting rhythms? Is the writing style appropriate for your child's age and attention span? You'll be reading from this Bible storybook often. The experience should be a pleasant one for your child and for you too.

Do you want a straightforward retelling of the stories or a freer style with more embellishments? Both exist and both can be done with excellence.

4. Check out how the author handles hard topics, such as the devastation of the flood, the destruction of Jericho, or Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. The Bible addresses some realities beyond the understanding of young children. Choose a Bible storybook that presents truths in age-appropriate ways.

5. Choose the right "hook" for your child or your family. Some Bible storybooks feature activity ideas or talking points to go along with each story—especially helpful to busy parents and parents unfamiliar with the Bible. New or beginning readers might want stories they can read with little or no help. Sometimes the hook might be application, or "life lessons." But be careful! When Bible stories become stories about how to behave, children often determine that good behavior is the way to find acceptance with God.

Now that you know what to look for, enjoy reading a new Bible storybook with your child soon!

Diane Stortz is the author of the Bible storybooks
The Sweetest Story Bible and *Words to Dream On* (February 2015).
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