

What is *Faith Chronicles*?

Faith Chronicles is a Family Bible Study plan to help parents teach their children biblical faith through the systematic learning of the great stories of the Bible. While most parents have a desire to be involved in their children's spiritual training, they often become discouraged at their lack of success in maintaining a regular plan of Bible study. *Faith Chronicles* has been specifically designed to address three common problems parents often express as reasons for their lack of success in having consistent and effective family Bible study.

1. *A lack of time.*
2. *A lack of Bible knowledge*
3. *A lack of ability to teach*

Finding the time - This approach to family Bible study is flexible enough to fit any schedule. Families can begin with as modest a time commitment as one night a week for 30 minutes. As your family establishes a routine you will be able to increase the time you spend together. But even a 30 minute time together once a week, if committed to, can make a significant impact on your children. The secret to family devotionals is not the total amount of time, but the commitment to a regular time.

Lack of knowledge - Many parents feel they have an inadequate knowledge of the Bible. However, they often have more Bible knowledge than they give themselves credit for. Most parents are familiar with several of the classic Bible stories and that familiarity provides a rich reservoir of Bible knowledge. By focusing on those classic biblical stories, *Faith Chronicles* taps into that knowledge. As parents and children discuss together these great stories, that Bible knowledge becomes a great resource. And for those parents whose

knowledge of Bible stories is more limited, reading these stories along with their children is a great way to develop their biblical knowledge along with their children.

Ability to teach - Faith Chronicles helps parents discover that they are, by nature, the very best teachers their children can have. Moses instructed the parents of Israel to teach their children

*when you sit at home and when you walk along the road,
when you lie down and when you get up. [Deuteronomy 6:7]*

Faith is best taught in the daily routines and relationships of the home as children witness both the words and the works of the people they live with. Throughout the ages the primary method by which “the faith” has been passed down from one generation to the next has been the simple act of parents telling their children the great stories of the Bible. As the Psalmist declares:

*O my people, hear my teaching, listen to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter hidden things, Things from of old—
What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us.
We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done...
So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born,
they in turn would tell their children then they would put their trust in God
And would not forget his deeds, but would keep his commandments.*

Psalm 78: 1-4, 6, 7

This is what *Faith Chronicles* is all about, parents teaching their children the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord so that they will put their trust in the Lord and then continue that legacy of faith by teaching their own children.

How Does *Faith Chronicles* Work?

Faith Chronicles presents a very simple devotional plan for families. Children are given 4 tasks to do each week.

The Basic Plan

1. Tell the Story.
2. Locate the story on the Bible timeline.
3. Commit to memory a theme verse for the story.
4. Keep a journal on the three basic faith questions.

Telling the Story

For thousands of years the great wisdom of the Bible was passed down from one generation to the next by the simple act of storytelling. The basic goal of *Faith Chronicles* is to build a foundational knowledge of the great Bible stories in the hearts of our children so that they will know these stories well enough to tell them to their children. Or, as the psalmist wrote,

*We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord...
so the next generation will know them. [Psalm 78: 4, 6].*

While the Bible is a source of wisdom that even a lifetime of study could not exhaust, an amazing thing about this book is that so much of that wisdom is expressed in fascinating and captivating stories that can be understood even by a child. If these stories are planted deep in the hearts of our children, they will continue to bear rich fruit as those hearts grow and mature.

In *Faith Chronicles*, parents begin the process by telling their children these stories. As the years go by, the children learn the stories well enough to tell them. A basic goal for the children is to be able to tell all 48 stories and to be able to tell them in chronological order, that is, to locate them accurately along the Bible's historical timeline.

Locating the stories on the Bible timeline

Though many of the great Bible stories are well known, people are often confused about the chronology of these stories. Knowing these Bible stories in chronological order helps provide a historical framework for understanding the grand story of redemption, which is the essential story of the Bible. For that reason, the *Faith Chronicles* plan includes 48 classic Bible stories [24 Old Testament and 24 New Testament] which provide a complete chronological chain from the Creation to the Church of the New Testament. As each new story is told, the children review the previous stories they have learned, continually reinforcing their chronological knowledge of the stories. A simple Bible timeline is also provided (pgs. 15, 16) to help children learn where each individual story fits in the larger narrative chronology of the Bible.

Why only 48 stories? One reason is pragmatic. Learning 48 stories is a very reachable goal. There are of course many more excellent and important stories in the Bible. But these 48 stories have been chosen because they are classic stories which many parents will already be familiar with. Each of these great stories presents clear and powerful truths about the nature of God and man and the biblical lifestyle God desires for man. Finally, these 48 stories provide a complete, though not exhaustive, narrative framework for the larger story of the Bible. Once children know these stories and know them in historical sequence, they will be able to place the remaining stories into the

narrative context of the Bible.

The first 24 stories from the Old Testament represent the eight different historical periods in the Old Testament:

- 1) *The Beginnings*
- 2) *The Patriarchs*
- 3) *The Deliverance*
- 4) *The Conquests*
- 5) *The Kingdom*
- 6) *The Divided Kingdom*
- 7) *The Captivity*
- 8) *The Return.*

Faith Chronicles includes at least one story from each time period.

The time frame of the New Testament is considerably shorter than that of the Old Testament, covering less than 100 years in contrast to the thousands of years covered by the Old. Therefore, rather than focusing on chronology, the emphasis is to learn stories that are representative of the New Testament narrative. These 24 stories include eight which represent the Life of Christ, eight parables representing the teaching of Christ, and eight stories which outline the highlights of the experience of the first century church.

Another tool to assist your children in mastering the chronology of the stories of the Old Testament is a set of *Faith Chronicles Old Testament Cards*. Listed in the resource section of this manual are two card games which you can play together as a family which will help you to teach your children the chronology of the Bible stories. Or you can simply use the cards at various appropriate times [at dinner or bedtime] to review the chronology of the Bible stories. Below is a list of the 48 stories in chronological order and the Bible timeline for the Old and New Testament.