

Interview Questions for I AM: 40 Reasons to Trust God

What's unique about this Bible storybook?

The focus of the book is on the names and descriptive titles of God in the Bible. So every story shows how either an Old Testament or New Testament name tells us more about who God is. For example, the story of Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, shows us that God *is* The LORD Who Heals. Each story also contains a short devotion about the name and what it means for a child's daily life. There's also a prayer, a "Learn More" section, and a "What Happened Next?" section that links all the stories together from Genesis through Revelation.

How did you come up with the idea for this book?

I'm not sure! Some time back, I was introduced to the idea of reading the Bible to get to know God—as opposed to studying it for information or as rules to be followed. Since this book is designed to help children get to know God better, I suppose the idea actually began forming then.

The subtitle is *40 Reasons to Trust God*. How does trusting God relate to knowing his names?

God's names tell us who he is and what he does, so as we learn his names we get to know him better. Knowing him better leads to loving him more and realizing that he is the one we can trust! Every name gives us a different reason to trust him. Psalm 9:10 says, "Those who know your name put their trust in you."

You provide a pronunciation guide for many of the names in the book. Tell us about that.

I had help with the Hebrew pronunciations and how to present them in English from a professor of Old Testament at a Christian college, for which I'm very thankful. Many of the names in the Old Testament are a combination of "I Am Who I Am" plus a descriptive word or phrase, for example, Jehovah Uzzi, The LORD My Strength. Many people today have heard or use *Jehovah* instead of *Yahweh* for "I Am Who I Am," even though *Yahweh* is the more likely pronunciation, so for that reason we used *Jehovah* in the book—*Jehovah Jireh*, *Jehovah Shalom*, for example.

Some of the names and titles of Jesus in the New Testament are Hebrew and are commonly known today—for example, Immanuel and Messiah. But many are in Greek, and the Greek is not commonly in use, so we didn't provide pronunciations for those.

The cover and the illustrations are beautiful! Tell us about the illustrator.

The design team at Tommy Nelson outdid themselves on that cover! Diane Le Feyer is French freelance illustrator with a background in animation. She illustrated my previous Bible storybook *Words to Dream On* too. She was such a blessing to have on both projects! And I love that children will recognize characters from *Word to Dream On* in this book too.

You've written other Bible storybooks besides this one. Why is this type of book important to you?

I love creating engaging books based on the Bible that children want to return to again and again! An age-appropriate Bible storybook makes such a good entry point for children to engage with God's Word. When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, he noted that Timothy's faith began with his mother and grandmother and with the Scripture they taught him: "From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). Sometimes parents get introduced to God and the Word through a good Bible storybook too!