

Interview Questions for *Say & Pray Bible: First Words, Stories, and Prayers*

One of your grandsons inspired this book. Tell us about that.

My husband and I have four grandchildren, all boys. Just one lives near us, but we care for him one day a week. He's been surrounded by books, including Bible storybooks intended for toddlers, since he was a baby, but I never felt any of them were truly age appropriate. They had too much text, or the pictures were too complicated, or the stories weren't the ones I would choose to tell young children. So I thought I might try to write a Bible storybook specifically for babies, toddlers, and young preschoolers. I also had noticed how much our grandson enjoyed pointing to photographs of labeled objects and people in some of his books, even before he could talk. I thought adding that pointing and naming activity in a Bible storybook would be a useful feature.

These are some of the shortest Bible stories we've ever seen! Why are they so short?

So often a little child just doesn't sit long enough to listen to very many words being read, and sometimes they are more interested in turning pages than anything else. They do absorb what they hear, however.

Tell us more about what's in the book.

Twenty basic Old Testament and New Testament stories are introduced, and there's a short Bible verse parents and children can repeat together, along with a short thank-you prayer. And of course there are all the labeled objects and people for children to point to and then, as they begin to talk, to say those words as well.

What's the purpose of the labels in the illustrations?

Pointing to objects and people in pictures and naming them are important ways children acquire language. The labels in the illustrations are a tool, or prompt, for the adult reading to the child to encourage the child to point and name. Children who are learning to read can use them too.

How did you choose the stories to include in the book?

Babies and toddlers are just being introduced to God, who he is and how he relates to them and their world. I wanted to associate concepts these children are learning—objects in nature, names of family members, parts of the body, household objects, for example—with God and his love. The stories begin with creation and end with the resurrection.

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 his Word through a good Bible storybook too!

What are some of the benefits of reading aloud to children from a young age?

Reading aloud to children builds vocabulary, it informs and entertains, but perhaps most important is that children who are read to learn to associate reading with pleasure, and that can impact attitudes toward reading God's Word. I want children to love to read the Bible!