

Interview Questions for *Words to Dream On: Bedtime Bible Stories and Prayers*

Why did you want to write a bedtime book?

Bedtime stories bring parents and children closer—they create memories, and they help us communicate with one another. Young children thrive on routine and ritual, and a Bible story at bedtime is one of the best! Plus, what could be better for a child at bedtime than to fall asleep with stories and verses from the Bible to dream on?

How did you choose the stories to include?

I always want to tell the whole Bible story, from Genesis to Revelation, in any Bible storybook. For this book I especially wanted stories that would help create a strong sense of security in God's love. All the stories in the book are focused on God—his power, his protection, his promises, his loving care, his plan. For example, in the story of the fall of Jericho, after the walls fall down, I didn't write about the battle, but how the Israelites could now keep moving forward in the Promised Land that God was giving them.

The illustrations are beautiful! Tell us about the illustrator.

Diane Le Feyer is a young French freelance illustrator and animator. She was such a blessing to have on this project! I especially enjoyed how she portrayed Jesus in the book, and how she kept track of all twelve disciples!

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!

How much license do you allow yourself when you retell Bible stories for children?

Not much. I try very hard to tell every story accurately, without adding details the biblical account doesn't include or allow for. The language must be true to Scripture yet appropriate for children, and the stories often must be condensed quite a lot to fit the format of the book. It's challenging!

Do you have any tips for parents who want to create a good bedtime routine for their children?

We actually included a page at the back of the book with bedtime tips, as well as tips for reading aloud to children. Being consistent, avoiding energetic activities beforehand, helping your child relax, and taking enough time to read, talk, and pray all go into a good bedtime routine.

Each story has a Bible verse that you call "Words to Dream On." There's also a "Sleepy-Time Prayer" and a "Bedtime Blessing." How should parents use these blessings?

I learned about blessings from the work of John Trent and Gary Smalley. The blessings in my book summarize the message of the stories, so they are statements based on God's Word about the child's relationship with God. When parents read the blessings aloud, they are speaking a message of high value about the child and his future. And by reading God's Word with children, parents demonstrate their own commitment to the success of the child being blessed. Parents can include a hug or other special touch—a hand on the child's head or shoulder—as part of each blessing.