

Keep in mind:

- (1) **The only two elements of family “worship” mentioned in scripture are instruction and discipline. Music, although it is normally a part of corporate worship, is entirely optional.** (Ptacek, pp. 72-3)
- (2) **Brevity will help everyone like family devotions. It is more effective to have 5 minutes every day than to have a one-hour session once a week.** (Ptacek, pp. 71-2)
- (3) **While it may be tempting to let a more biblically-literate mother do the teaching, the scriptural injunction is clear: this is the role for the father to take.** (Ptacek, p. 72)
- (4) **The husband/father should look for other opportunities to teach God’s truths during the day, not just during the “official” time.**
- (5) **The word of God is what is to be held forth in family devotions, not “devotional readings,” as good as they may be.** (Ptacek, p. 73)
- (6) **The wife/mother must be careful not to contradict her husband in front of the children, even if she has more biblical knowledge than he does. If she has a question about something taught, she should ask him privately.** (Ptacek, p. 73)
- (7) **Consider this pattern:**
 - (a) **For younger children, a simple Bible story, culminating in the main point of the story may be sufficient, followed by a related prayer.**
 - (b) **For older children, longer passages that involve commands can be incorporated with still longer stories. It can be a good move to let one of the children read a passage. Care should be taken to still summarize and close with a relevant prayer.**
 - (c) **For children nearing adolescence, some of the “gross” stories and more shameful aspects of biblical history can be covered. Simple questions can be posed, with an answer ready to be given, closing with a related prayer.**
 - (d) **For adolescents, anything in the Bible can be read, studied or discussed. More complex questions can be raised, even some that good Christians disagree on. God can now be presented as authoritative, yet also not fully comprehensible. If covering the entire Bible is a goal that has been set, now is a good time to begin pacing toward that end. Closing with relevant prayer is still essential.** (randall)
- (8) **Time must be given to the preparation of family devotions. Several things must be decided:**
 - (a) **What is to be studied.** It is important to pray about the direction God wants you to go before you begin. Perhaps a character should be studied, perhaps a book, perhaps a particular truth or a character trait to be modeled or avoided. **It is best to pray for each member of the family.** Where is each one in his/her walk with God. What is the strength of each family member? What challenges are they facing? What is Holy Spirit wanting to say to each one? These questions will help provide direction. (randall)
 - (b) **How the study will take place.** A good study bible, like the NASB Study Bible or the NIV Study Bible, is essential. Both of these have good study notes and a chain reference. A good commentary, such as Matthew Henry’s (many notes, often quite long, but very helpful) or Albert Barnes’ (not as long, but also very helpful) or Adam Clarke (a bit shorter still, but quite good) is also very helpful in getting a studied opinion. A good concordance, such as Strong’s or Young’s is also quite helpful. (Ptacek, p. 73)
 - (c) **What distinctive talents each member of the family can contribute.** One may be good at drawing, another may be good at researching on the computer, another may be good at reading aloud, and another may wish to find specific locations on Bible maps. Blending the God-given talents of the family will help the Bible come alive in a way that is unique to that one family. What a blessing! (randall)

Caution: Not all of your ideas will go over. It won't be "heaven come down" most of the time. ("Woe unto you and you and you," genealogies) Your goal is a long-term goal. Also, family devotions will not solve all of your problems. Still, it will be a tremendous help in many areas. Most of the results will not be readily seen for years. Remember, the more you teach on the subjects that will help your family, the more likely you are to give them truth that will help them, either now, or at some point in the future. Again, we are looking for long-term results.