

KEEP A RECORD OF GOD'S LOVE

“Why, then, do I set before You an ordered account of so many things? I’m stirring up love for You in myself and in those who read this so that we may all say, great is the Lord and highly worthy to be praised. I tell my story for love of Your love.”

— St. Augustine of Hippo, “Confessions”

Of all the life stories that have been written, which one has impacted you the most? Is it adventurous like the journals of Lewis and Clark, or anxious like *The Diary of a Young Girl*, by Anne Frank? Or maybe another story?

Reading a person’s story helps us know them better, brings deeper understanding. Of course, our relationship is even deeper if we live those stories with them. The same is true of God. We know God through stories of his past intervention and, even better, through our own unfolding story with him.

Every human story has one purpose — to leave evidence of God’s powerful love. Over and over in Scripture, God tells us that the reason things happen is so that we know that he is God. But we tend to be slow to learn and quick to forget, so God continues to give us real-life examples of his love and his power in our own stories.

We honor God when we honor the story he is writing with us. And the value of our story increases when we record it so that we remember it, and then others can know God through it. **Journaling becomes a spiritual practice when we “tell our story out of love for his love.”**

An entire people group was rescued because a small deed of loyalty was recorded. The deed was only remembered and rewarded because the chronicled account was read to the king on a sleepless night. The pivot point of the book of Esther comes when a journal is opened, and God’s intervention is displayed. Such evidences of his presence with us are worth recording. And they continue today.

“I will teach you hidden lessons from our past — stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us. We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders.” Psalm 78:2-4 is a journaling invitation to children and to all who influence children.

The faith of children is strengthened when we help them see the value of their story with God. **Confidence in God’s love will deepen when we help them see that their story is intentionally put in place by God.** We nurture their love relationship with God when we confirm to them that their life right now is important and filled with God stories, and it is worth recording and remembering.

Start the conversation with your child!

“Come and sit with me a minute and let’s talk about a really important story ...”



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INVITATIONS TO ENGAGE

EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-6 years old)

Today you can start writing a book called "God Loves [insert child's name]." You can add stories or make fancy words or draw pictures to fill up this book. If you want to start at the beginning of your story, you can draw a picture of yourself inside mommy's tummy, because God loved you before you were even born! It's right here in Psalm 139.

Now we will sit here quietly for a minute so you can ask God to help you remember a time when he showed his love to you. *(Pause in quiet while the child listens to God.)* You can use any of these things to add to your story. *(Provide pencils, crayons or pictures of nature.)* Sometimes I can be your scribe, and you can tell me memories to write in your journal.

We will add to your story often. I can't wait to see what you add next! *(Use single sheets of paper in a folder, a blank book or an empty scrapbook.)*

ELEMENTARY AGE (5-10 years old)

Let's read Psalm 78:2-4 together. God put lots of stories in the Bible so we'd remember who he is and how much he loves us. God is putting things into your life that show who he is.

We will sit here quietly for a minute so you can ask God to help you remember a time when he showed his love to you. *(Pause in quiet while the child listens to God.)* What did you remember?

Let's begin recording your story. You can start by drawing a picture of what you thought of and maybe writing your name in fancy letters. Which would you like to use? *(Make a mural on the back of the bedroom door or put several sheets of paper together lengthwise and roll it into a scroll.)* We will keep asking God for reminders and add them to your story journal/mural/scroll.

PRETEEN/EARLY ADOLESCENT (10-14 years old)

First, read Psalm 78:2-4 to me. God has put some amazing stories into the Bible to show people his love. One time a man "happened" to hear a plot against the king. He saved the king's life but wasn't rewarded for his loyalty. Later, his enemy was scheming to hurt him and God interrupted it by ... well, I almost spoiled the surprise. Read it to me — Esther 6:1-11. God used a sleepless night and a record book to interrupt an evil plan. Can you imagine — what if the story had not been written down?!

It's so important to record what God does. Your story with God is important to record, too. Start by writing that story from Esther as a news report. Then sit quietly with God and ask him to remind you of a time when he turned something right-side out for you. Then add that to your report. We'll keep adding reports or drawings or stories of God's love to your journal.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

Legacy: 60 Life Reflections for the Next Generation, by Steve Macchia (LTI Publications)