

The Family



SABBATH—OCTOBER 3

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Corinthians 4:6; Luke 1:26–38; Psalm 37:7–9; Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6.

MEMORY VERSE: “My son, listen to your father’s advice. Don’t turn away from your mother’s teaching” (Proverbs 1:8, NIV).



“The Lord commanded parents to start teaching their children about Him from the time they were babies.”

AS HUMANS, we always learn. Life is a school.

“Education always was important to the Jewish people. The Lord commanded parents to start teaching their children about Him from the time they were babies. Jewish parents taught their children that God was good and powerful. The law and their history also showed that God was good and powerful. God told parents to teach their children songs, prayers, and lessons from the Bible. The parents made these things simple enough for their children to understand. Fathers and mothers also taught their children that God’s law shows the love in God’s heart. When the children obeyed the law, their minds and hearts changed. The law helped them to become as loving and good as Jesus. Most of the time, parents taught their children without using any books. But children also learned to read the Hebrew writings and study the Old Testament.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 69, adapted.

For most of human history, parents educated their children at home. What does the Bible say about education in the family? What important rules can we learn about education in the Bible?

THE FIRST FAMILY (2 Corinthians 4:6)

We do not have any information in the first few chapters of Genesis about family education in the earliest days of human history. But we do know that children learned what they needed to know from their families.

“The family was the center for education in Eden. Adam was ‘the son of God’ (Luke 3:38). Adam and Eve were children of God. They learned from their Father. Their school was a family school.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 33, adapted.

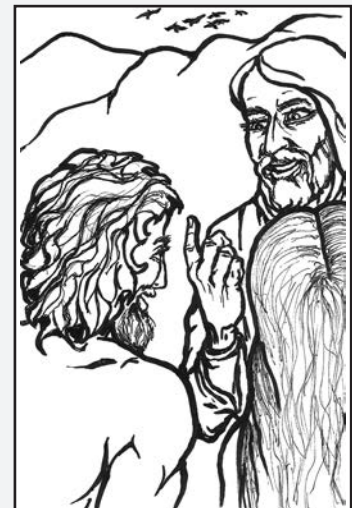
Read Genesis 1–2; Genesis 3:1–15; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Luke 10:27; Galatians 3:11; and Revelation 22:12. No doubt Adam and Eve made these important rules a part of their children’s education. What do these verses teach?

“God made the earth. At that time, God gave humans a plan for education. God wanted this plan to be an example for humans for the future too. So, God started a school in Eden. Eden was the home of our first parents. The school in Eden showed God’s important rules about education. The Garden of Eden itself was the schoolroom.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 20, adapted.

Christian education involves helping families and their members learn about Bible Teachings, worship, skills, friendship, sharing the Good News about Jesus, and serving God. Home is where you show family members God’s love and teach them about His promises. Home is where parents start to teach their children about Jesus. Parents show their children that Jesus is their Savior and Friend. Parents also read the Bible with their kids because it is God’s Word. Family is where parents show their children how to be close to their Father in heaven.

In Genesis 4:1–4, we see Cain and Abel bring their offerings to the Lord. We can be sure that Cain and Abel learned why these offerings are important to God’s saving plan. Of course, as the story shows, a good education does not always keep bad things from happening.

What choices can you make in your home to make sure that you and your family continue to learn and practice the truth?



“The Garden of Eden itself was the schoolroom.”

JESUS' LIFE AS A CHILD (Luke 1:26–38)

The Bible does not give us very much information about Jesus' life as a child. Much about those years is a secret. But we do know something about His human parents, Joseph and Mary. What we learn about them can help explain to us Jesus' early years and His education.

What do the verses below teach us about Joseph and Mary? How do these verses help us to understand what Joseph and Mary did to educate Jesus?

Luke 1:26–38 _____

Luke 1:46–55 _____

Matthew 1:18–24 _____



“Jesus’ mother is His first human teacher.”

In these verses we see that both Joseph and Mary are loyal Jews. They try hard to obey the laws of God. When the Lord’s angel visits them and tells them what will happen to them, Joseph and Mary follow God’s directions.

“Jesus is not educated in the Jewish schools. Jesus’ mother is His first human teacher. Jesus learned about God from her words and the Old Testament writings. Thousands of years ago, Jesus spoke these same words to Moses. Now Jesus learned God’s Word as He sat on His mother’s knee. As Jesus grew up, He did not go to the schools of the Jewish teachers. He did not need the education that they gave. God Himself was Jesus’ Teacher.”
—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 70, adapted.

For sure, Joseph and Mary were good teachers. But as Luke 2:41–50 shows, Joseph and Mary did not understand many things about their Son. Jesus had knowledge and wisdom that came only from God.

Read again the paragraph from Ellen G. White above. As a child, Jesus learned from His mother the words that He Himself told to Moses. Wow! It is hard for us to make a picture about that in our minds, right? What does this story about Jesus teach us about God’s wonderful love?

COMMUNICATION (Psalm 37:7–9)

Education is communication. The teacher is the one who has knowledge, wisdom, information, and facts to give to the student. Someone with a lot of knowledge must have the skill to communicate it to people. If a teacher cannot teach other people, then what good is anything that he or she knows?

Good teaching skills include more than communication. Teachers must build close connections with their students. “The best gift that a teacher can give his students is the gift of his friendship. We understand people only as we share in their sorrow and joy. This is true for men and women. We know this also is true for young people and children. So, we need to understand people. Then we can help them more.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 212, adapted.

What is this paragraph saying? Good teaching is not just about sharing information. Good teaching also includes improving the hearts and minds of students too. This is very important in the child’s first school: the family. A close connection must be built between the student and teacher.

Communication helps to build and grow our connections with people. What happens when Christians do not communicate with God? When they do not pray or read the Bible? Then their connection to God grows weak. Families need God’s help to grow strong in God.

Read these verses: Psalm 37:7–9; Proverbs 10:31, 32; Proverbs 27:17; Ephesians 4:15; 1 John 3:18; Titus 3:1, 2; and James 4:11. What do these verses teach us about how to build strong families?

Take time to communicate with family members. Good communication will help family members be closer to God and to each other. Communication will help your children to have success in life when they are adults. The important rules in these verses are not just for parents. These rules can help us to be better friends, workers, and family members.

What we say is important. How we say it is just as important too. Why? Maybe you said something in the past to someone that was correct. But you used the wrong words and caused that person pain. What did you learn from this?



“The best gift that a teacher can give his students is the gift of his friendship.”

GOD'S PLAN FOR PARENTS (Ephesians 6:4)

“Fathers, do not be too hard on your children so they will become angry. Teach them in their growing years with Christian teaching” (Ephesians 6:4, NLV).

“It is hard to find an excellent wife. She is worth more than rubies” (Proverbs 31:10, ICB).

Parents have a big job. The father is the head of the family. The family is the nursery, or baby room, where children are raised for the school, the church, and the community. What if the father is weak or not responsible? Then the family, church, school, and community will suffer and become weak too. Fathers should show the fruit of the Spirit to family members. “The fruit that comes from having the Holy Spirit in our lives is: love, joy, peace, not giving up, being kind, being good, having faith, being gentle, and being the boss over our own desires [having self-control]” (Galatians 5:22, 23, NLV).

For sure, mothers have the most important job on earth. Mothers have a lot of power in the home and with their children's lives. Mothers' behavior will decide how their children grow up. Mothers also can make the home a happy place. Fathers should do everything they can do to help mothers teach their children.



Marriage is a Bible word picture that shows Jesus' love for His church.

Read Ephesians 5:22, 23, 25, 26; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Romans 13:13, 14; 2 Peter 1:5–7; and Philippians 4:8. What can fathers and mothers learn from these verses?

Christian parents must be an example of Jesus and His church. Marriage is a Bible word picture that shows Jesus' love for His church. What happens when parents do not love each other the same way that Jesus loves His church? Parents show a false picture of Jesus to their kids and to other people. God orders all Christian parents to teach their children carefully (read Deuteronomy 6:7). Parents must teach their kids to love God with all their hearts. Parents also must teach their kids to obey God and give their lives fully to Him.

In Deuteronomy 6:7, God tells His people to educate their kids about the wonderful things He does for them. So, the teaching we give our kids helps them to choose to serve Jesus. In the end, our kids must choose to serve God. Then they must answer to God for the choices they made.

DO NOT FORGET (Deuteronomy 6)

Before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, Moses talked to them again. Moses told the Israelites about all the wonderful ways that God had led them in the past. Moses also warned God's people again and again. He warned them not to forget the things God did for them. The rules that Moses wrote in Deuteronomy continue to be important for our lives today.

Read Deuteronomy 6. What important rules do we learn about education in this chapter? What should be part of everything we teach to our children and to people who do not know about God? What warnings do we see in these verses?

God's people taught their children about the wonderful things God did for them. This information was an important part of everything the Israelites taught their children. Do you see how clear Moses' warning was too? He told the Israelites not to forget about God's wonderful work.

Parents have an important job. They are the first ones who teach their kids about Bible truth. So, their lives must show that they know Bible truth. Parents also must spend enough time with their kids to help them learn Bible truth too.

"The child's first teacher is the mother. There is a time in a child's life when his mind grows fast and is open to new ideas. During this time, his education is, for the most part, under his mother's control."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 275, adapted.

In the early years of a child's life, parents must teach him or her about God's love and promises. So, choose a time when you can meet with your child every day. Take time to teach him or her about God's wisdom and promises. Give this gift of time and wisdom to your children. Then you will bless your family for many years in the future.

Read this verse: " 'Be sure to teach them [these commands] to your children. Talk about these commands when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up' " (Deuteronomy 6:7, ERV). Explain what this verse means. How does it help us understand why it is important to teach ourselves and our children to always think about the Lord first?



"The child's first teacher is the mother."

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Preparation,” pages 275–282 in *Education*; “Cooperation,” pages 283–286 in *Education*; “Discipline,” pages 287–297 in *Education*.

“Fathers and mothers are responsible for the child’s early and later training. Both parents must do all they can ahead of time to get ready to teach their children. Parents need to do this work as soon as possible. Before men and women become parents, they should learn about how the body develops. . . . They should understand how the mind develops too. They also need to learn how to train their children to choose between right and wrong.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 276, adapted.

“Fathers and mothers should learn how to work together. This work must start in the home. They must train their children. That is why they should always try to work together. They should give their hearts fully to God. Then they can ask Him for help. . . . Parents who train their children in the right way will not blame each other. They understand that they are both responsible for training their children. So, the parents feel they owe it to their children and the school to honor each other and to work together.”—*Education*, page 283, adapted.



Parents “should give their hearts fully to God. Then they can ask Him for help” in training their children.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Maybe you do not have children. But we all share our lives in some way with other people. We talk with other people. What have you learned from this week’s lesson that can help you get along better with people you see every day? How can you share Jesus with them?
- ② We view education as a good thing. But when is education not good? Can you think of any examples? What can we learn from these bad examples that can help us?
- ③ God made everyone free to choose between right and wrong. This power is named free will. When children grow up, they will need to make their own decisions about the God they have been taught about all their young lives. Why must parents remember this important truth about free will?