



The Partnering Stage

In the **Partnering Stage**, typically around ages 8–12, children begin expressing a growing desire for independence.

As a Beloved Caregiver, your role shifts from doing things *for* your child to doing things *with* him/her.

This season is all about inviting your child into shared responsibility—spiritually, relationally, and practically. Children want to contribute meaningfully, and they’re ready for more than we sometimes expect.

Just like Jesus called His disciples to walk closely with Him, this stage invites you to build a side-by-side relationship with your child. Whether it’s helping with chores, reading Scripture, or making small decisions, every moment becomes a chance for growth. Your support helps them form healthy habits, grow in confidence, and deepen their understanding of God’s presence in daily life.

“While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”

Matthew 4:18-19

Tips for Caregivers

- Be consistent in offering feedback: encourage progress, not perfection.
- Children are more capable than they seem—empower them with trust.
- Provide age-appropriate opportunities for or to show responsibility, like setting the table or helping a sibling.
- Read Scripture together. This practice builds spiritual maturity and strengthens reading.
- Remember that Christian growth takes time. Be patient; celebrate effort.

Growth Model

Plant

Explore Scripture with your child and help them move beyond Bible storybooks and videos.

Root

Regularly read Scripture with your child in different places, with different formats, and with different people.

Growth

Teach your child how to find books and passages in Scripture independently.

Fruit

See your child begin to read Scripture without being prompted or encouraged.



Activity: Reading Scripture as a Family

STEP 1 (The Why)

Reading the Bible is a lifelong journey—and the Partnering Stage is a great time to begin building this habit. This activity gives your child a sense of ownership and confidence while helping them encounter God’s Word in a meaningful way.

STEP 2 (Activity Directions)

You can do this practice weekly and call it a “Scripture recital,” allowing your child to practice reading a passage aloud to the family. Here are the steps:

- Use **Colossians 3:16** (see below) as a guiding verse to frame the importance of Scripture.
- Let your child choose a book or passage from the Bible he/she wants to read.
- Choose an age-appropriate Bible translation (NIV or CEV are great options).
- Encourage practice and help them with tricky words and ideas.
- After the reading, you might respond together: “We are thankful for God’s Word.” Simple routines like this build long-lasting faith.
- Thank them for sharing God’s word with the family in front of other members of the family.

Some helpful tips to consider as your child feels more comfortable:

- Help your child explore different genres:
 - *Poetry* – Psalms connect emotion with God’s character.
 - *Story* – The Gospels help kids walk with Jesus.
 - *Letters* – New Testament letters show how early Christians lived and learned.
- Use a Bible Reading Chart to track progress—revisit favorite books!

Encouragement

Imagine what it might be like if the message of Christ echoed and dwelled in your child’s life. Reading Scripture aloud empowers your child to hear how his/her voice may fit into Jesus’ story and see how he is active in the life of your family.

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

Colossians 3:16