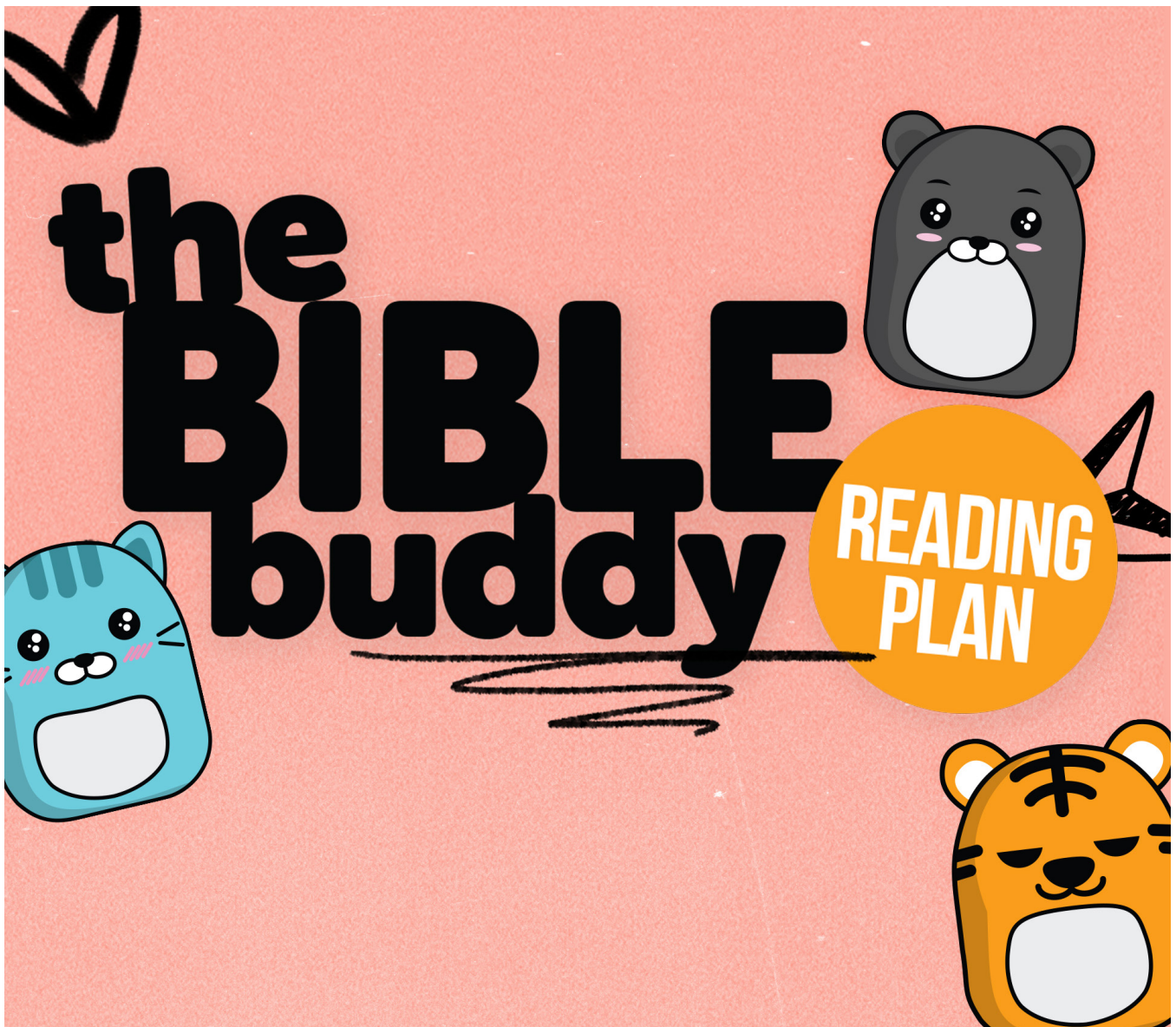


4

A SPIRITUAL
HABIT ACTIVITY
TO HELP KIDS

**SPEND TIME
WITH GOD**

FROM GROW'S ANNUAL *DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY*



OVERVIEW

This quarter, as we focus on the spiritual habit of spending time with God, we're going to encourage kids and families to spend some extra time reading the Bible on their own. Well . . . not *entirely* on their own. With The Bible Buddy Reading Plan, kids will adopt a stuffed animal buddy for the week! Their Bible buddy will tag along as they read, learn, journal, and grow by spending time in the Bible together. This reading plan comes with daily reading suggestions and a journal with prompts to help kids hear and remember what God is saying to them through Scripture.



SPEND TIME WITH GOD

If we want to grow spiritually, we need to spend time growing in relationship with God through personal times of prayer, reading Scripture, reflection, and worship.

WHAT WE'VE PROVIDED

We've given you all the resources you need to make this activity happen! Here's what that includes . . .

PLANNING

- ▶ **Activity guide**
- ▶ **Shopping list**

GRAPHICS

- ▶ **Editable graphics**
- ▶ **Title and background images** in horizontal, square, and vertical formats
- ▶ **Activity flyers**

FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

- ▶ **Instructions** for families
- ▶ **Calendar** of daily readings
- ▶ **The Bible Buddy Reading Plan Journal**

HOW TO USE THIS ACTIVITY

All our discipleship activities are built to be flexible for you and your ministry! You can use this activity in a variety of ways with just a little bit of modification, but **here's how we recommend using this activity . . .**

WHEN:

Anytime!

HOW LONG:

One Week

WHERE:

At home

WHAT TO DO

YOUR JOB

Your primary job as the ministry leader is to set kids, families, and small group leaders up for success throughout this activity. Here's what you will need to do to make this happen . . .

- ▶ **CHOOSE YOUR DATES:** If you're following along with the Grow Kids annual strategy calendar, we recommend using the week leading up to Easter Sunday as The Bible Buddy Reading Plan week. But you can use any week throughout this quarter that works best for your ministry! Once you've decided on a week, be prepared to explain how this activity works to your small group leaders before you kick off this discipleship activity.
- ▶ **PRINT:** On the Sunday you kick off this discipleship activity, send each kid home with a journal, instruction sheet, and calendar to share with their families. You can review those materials and make any edits or additions before printing them — or you can print the provided PDFs as-is! The journal pages can be printed one-sided, cut in half, and stapled to form a booklet.
- ▶ **COLLECT OR SHOP:** Each kid will also need their own buddy for this activity. Depending on your church's size and resources, you may want to collect these by asking your church members for donations before you go out and purchase a ton of new toys! Whether you decide to provide giant stuffed animals, pocket-sized [stuffed animals](#) or [squishy toys](#), or an assortment of adorable buddies in all shapes and sizes, what matters is that every kid gets a buddy if they'd like one!
- ▶ **COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES:** The earlier and more frequently you can announce this activity to kids' grown-ups, the better! Make sure families know when you'll be handing out these materials and how they can support their kids as they dive into the Bible with their new buddies.
- ▶ **COMMUNICATE WITH VOLUNTEERS:** Although your volunteers won't be directly involved with this activity, if parents and guardians are leading it at home, there are still ways for volunteers to get involved. They might . . .
 - ▶ Promote the activity with parents to make sure they have all the information they need and are ready to go!
 - ▶ Check in with kids during and after the challenge to see how their reading goes.
 - ▶ Be a back-up grown-up for kids whose parents aren't able to do this challenge with their kids.
- ▶ **ASK FOR STORIES:** On the following Sunday when kids come back together with their buddies and their completed journals, ask them to share stories together in their small groups or during your program. Don't make any kid feel obligated to share if they're uncomfortable, but make sure any kid who wants to talk about what they learned while reading with their buddy has the chance to do so.

YOUR VOLUNTEER'S JOB

Your volunteers' will be the ones setting families up for success and collecting stories at the end of this activity. To do this well, they'll need to . . .

- ▶ **COLLECT MATERIALS FOR THEIR GROUP:** Your small group leaders should be responsible to make sure they have enough [stuffed animals](#) or [squishy toys](#), instruction sheets, reading plan calendars, and journals for each kid to take home.
- ▶ **SHARE THEIR OWN STORIES:** Kids may wonder why it matters that they spend time this week reading the Bible on their own. Encourage your small group leaders to share what this time with God has meant to them in their lives.
- ▶ **ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO PARTICIPATE:** As small group leaders say goodbye and hand out these materials to their group, they can use this moment to encourage families to give this a try. It may only take a couple minutes out of their day and could make a lifelong impact in a kid's life.
- ▶ **CELEBRATE AND SHARE STORIES:** When kids come back together the Sunday after making it through their reading plan, small group leaders should hear what they learned and celebrate what they tried to accomplish. Make sure kids don't feel judged for not participating or as though this was a competition to win – the point is to celebrate trying something new!

YOUR FAMILIES' JOB

Families who would like to participate in this challenge with their kids can make a huge difference. For families to help their kids with their reading plans they'll need to . . .

- ▶ **SET A DAILY READING TIME:** Families can choose a time of day when they can all meet together for a few moments. It may be . . .
 - ▶ Before school while they're eating breakfast.
 - ▶ After sharing dinner together.
 - ▶ In the car on the way to school or practice.
 - ▶ Right before bedtime each night.
 - ▶ Or any time of day that is convenient for their family!
- ▶ **READ OUT LOUD TOGETHER:** Families can begin their time together by reading the recommended verses and then encouraging their kids to reflect on what they read as they work through their Bible Buddy Reading Plan journal for that day.
- ▶ **REMIND KIDS TO BRING THEIR JOURNALS TO CHURCH:** The Sunday after this reading plan is over, families should encourage their kids to bring their journals and their buddies to church with them so they can share what they learned with their friends in their small group.

CREATED BY THE STUFF YOU CAN USE TEAM



This resource was created by our team at **Stuff You Can Use!** We're a team of pastors, volunteers, church planters, writers, editors, designers, programmers, video creators, and more. We live in three countries, twelve states and five time zones, but somehow we all manage to hang out on Zoom at the same time. We're here to make ministry a tiny bit easier for you – and we really like making things for you!

... AND THE REST OF THE TEAM



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SHOPPING LIST



- [Stuffed animals](#) or [squishy toys](#)
- White card stock
- Paper cutter
- Printed copies of the **Bible Buddy Reading Plan Journals**
- Printed copies of the **Bible Buddy Reading Plan Instructions**
- Printed copies of the **Bible Buddy Reading Plan Calendar**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FAMILIES



HEY FAMILIES!

This week, we are challenging kids to explore the Bible together with you and their new buddies! Each day, we will challenge kids to read a short passage from the Bible out loud and then write, draw, or reflect on what they felt, learned, or were challenged by while reading.

If you would like to participate in this challenge with your kids, we recommend finding a set time of day where you can all meet together for a few moments each day this week. It may be . . .

- **Before school while you're eating breakfast.**
- **After sharing dinner together.**
- **In the car on the way to school or practice.**
- **Right before bedtime each night.**
- **Or anytime of day that is convenient for your family.**

Begin your time together by reading the recommended verses and then encourage your kids to reflect on what they read as they work through their Bible Buddy Reading Plan journal for that day.

When you're done, remind your kids to bring their journals with them to church next Sunday so they can share what they learned with you and their buddies with everyone in their small group!

READING PLAN



DAY ONE

Psalm 36:5-7

DAY TWO

John 12:23-26

DAY THREE

Hebrews 12:1-3

DAY FOUR

John 13:12-17

DAY FIVE

Isaiah 53:10-12

DAY SIX

John 19:38-42; Psalm 31:15-16

DAY SEVEN

Mark 16:1-8; John 20:19-22

READING PLAN



DAY ONE

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John 19:38-42; Psalm 31:15-16

DAY SEVEN

Mark 16:1-8; John 20:19-22

DAY TWO



READ: JOHN 12:23-26

WHERE DID YOU READ?

Draw a picture or write about where you and your buddy read today.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Draw a picture or write about what you read today.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS TODAY?

Draw a picture of you or your buddy using what you've learned from the Bible in real life.

DAY ONE



READ: PSALM 36:5-7

WHERE DID YOU READ?

Draw a picture or write about where you and your buddy read today.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Draw a picture or write about what you read today.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS TODAY?

Draw a picture of you or your buddy using what you've learned from the Bible in real life.

DAY FOUR



READ: JOHN 13:12-17

WHERE DID YOU READ?

Draw a picture or write about where you and your buddy read today.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Draw a picture or write about what you read today.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS TODAY?

Draw a picture of you or your buddy using what you've learned from the Bible in real life.

DAY THREE



READ: HEBREWS 12:1-3

WHERE DID YOU READ?

Draw a picture or write about where you and your buddy read today.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Draw a picture or write about what you read today.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS TODAY?

Draw a picture of you or your buddy using what you've learned from the Bible in real life.

DAY SIX



READ: JOHN 19:38-42; PSALM 31:15-16

WHERE DID YOU READ?

Draw a picture or write about where you and your buddy read today.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Draw a picture or write about what you read today.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS TODAY?

Draw a picture of you or your buddy using what you've learned from the Bible in real life.

DAY FIVE



READ: ISAIAH 53:10-12

WHERE DID YOU READ?

Draw a picture or write about where you and your buddy read today.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Draw a picture or write about what you read today.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS TODAY?

Draw a picture of you or your buddy using what you've learned from the Bible in real life.

DAY SEVEN



READ: MARK 16:1-8; JOHN 20:19-22

WHERE DID YOU READ?

Draw a picture or write about where you and your buddy read today.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Draw a picture or write about what you read today.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS TODAY?

Draw a picture of you or your buddy using what you've learned from the Bible in real life.



