

FOCUS[™]
ON
THE FAMILY

Bedtime Blessings[®]

VOLUME 2

100 *Bedtime Stories & Activities
for Blessing Your Child*

John Trent, Ph.D.



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Bedtime Blessings, Volume 2

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Introduction

I feel strongly that there are moments in every day that set the table for spiritual truth to be shared with a child. And perhaps the best time of all for sharing is bedtime. For many families, though, bedtime is the worst time of the day. It is often filled with tantrums and threats and tears. Though the parent may win this bedtime battle in the end, the parent's "victory" is, in truth, a loss. It results in a loss of peace. A loss of love. A loss of joy. It also results in a loss of memories that could have been created had the evening not ended in a battle of wills.

This little book may help change all that. It is designed to make bedtime a memorable time, a time both you and your child will look forward to.

In these pages you'll find a collection of stories, activities, games, and other fun things. Each ends with a short prayer you can pray aloud before tucking your child into bed. Feel free to use the prayer, or if you prefer, substitute one of your own. You may also ask your child to say a prayer, too.

Some of the evenings' activities require special props. These are listed at the top of the page so you can gather them ahead of time.

Some of these blessings are designed to show you care about the details of your child's life, reinforcing your

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concern through meaningful touch. Other blessings communicate a spoken message of love, and some convey your child's high value. Some activities reveal God's genuine commitment to your child. Still others express the special future that God has for your child.

Over the course of these 100 evenings, you will be giving your child a photo album of positive pictures. Of course, some of those pictures will fade from memory. But some will be remembered and treasured as long as your child lives.

What you are doing at bedtime will last a lifetime.

Maybe longer.

Lord willing, some day your child will grow up, get married, and have children of his or her own. Some of what you have imparted will be passed down to your grandchildren, and from them to their children, and from them—well, there's no telling how many generations will be affected by what you start tonight.

As you head out on this journey, may the Lord bless, keep and guide you and your family—now and for generations to come.

John Trent, Ph.D.
President, Encouraging Words
and Strongfamilies.com

The Blessings Box

Some of the blessings that follow require certain materials—mostly easy-to-find household items. These are listed at the start of each activity so you can gather them ahead of time. A complete list of all the supplies is provided here. If you wish, gather the supplies in a “blessings box” so you’ll have them ready whenever you need them.

index cards
blunt scissors
pencils
paper
dollar or small gift
bar of Ivory soap
dull knife
cutting board
deck of cards
lemons
small drinking glasses
dull penny
lamp
small dish
toothpicks
two same-size cans of vegetables
matches
magnifying glass
shiny penny
notepad
old magazines
tape or glue

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crayons
two large bowls
stationery
postage stamp
address book or phone book
colored pen or pencils
small pot
comic book
small potted plant
concordance
pictures of sunrises or sunsets
empty oatmeal box
flashlight
nail
coin
two large balloons
two rubber bands
washable markers
checkerboard and checkers
two bananas
two straight pins
watch or clock with second hand
cookbook with cookie section
large piece of poster board
thumb tacks
white butcher paper
mailing tube (for butcher paper)
child's story book
dictionary

LET'S PLAY A GAME
Treasure Hunt

[You will need a treasure, a treasure map, and several clues.]

[Before your child goes to bed, hide a small treasure in his or her room. The treasure can be a dollar or a small gift. It could be a coupon that your child can redeem, one where you offer your time for something he or she wants to do, such as going out for a hot-fudge sundae or a movie. Or you doing your child's chores for a week.]

[Next, draw an "X-marks-the-spot" treasure map that points to hidden clues. Be as creative as possible. For example: "Hangings take place there every day, yet no one has ever died," could hint at a clue placed in the closet. "Once there, you will be only a few feet from the next clue," can point to a clue hidden in a shoe.]

Let's go on a treasure hunt—right here in your room!
This treasure map gives you all the clues you need.

[Once your child has found the treasure, tuck him or her into bed. Then place your hand on your child's head as you pray.]

Dear God,
Thank You for _____ [your child's name]. What a treasure he/she is to me. [List specific reasons why your child is a treasure.]

Amen.

LET'S SING A SONG
Rock My Soul

Let's sing a song tonight. It's one we can do hand signs with, so it ought to be fun. Here are the words. Listen as I sing them.

Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Oh, rock-a-my soul.

So high, you can't get over it,
So low, you can't get under it,
So wide, you can't get 'round it,
Oh, rock-a-my soul.

The hand motions are pretty easy if you think about the words.

- **Rock:** Put your arms together as if you're rocking a baby.
- **Soul:** Bring your hands together and, going from bottom to top, move them over your body in one sweeping motion.
- **Bosom:** Put your hands over your chest.
- **Abraham:** "Draw" a capital A in the air.
- **Oh:** Bring your hands together to form an O shape.
- **High:** Lift up one hand as high as you can.

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- **Over:** Make a gesture with your hand and arm as if you are pulling yourself up.
- **Low:** Push one hand down as low as you can go.
- **Under:** Use your hand and arm again, and pretend you are trying to pull something up from the ground.
- **Wide:** Spread your arms as far apart as you can.
- **'Round:** Make a motion with one hand going around in a circle.

[Talk through the lyrics and slowly practice the hand motions. When your child is ready, both of you start singing.]

Dear God,

Thank You for the gift of singing. It's a gift You've given only to the birds and to people. We feel so privileged to have it. Thanks again from both of us,

_____ [your child's
name and yours].

Amen.



LET'S MAKE SOMETHING
Soap Cross

[You will need a Bible, a bar of Ivory soap, a knife that isn't too sharp, and a cutting board.]

Is there anything we can do that's so bad God won't forgive us?

[Read aloud Psalm 51:1-3.]

These are words that David wrote after he broke God's laws and even had a man killed. But God forgave David. In the same way, He will forgive you for the bad things you do. Just tell Him what you did and ask Him to make your heart clean again.



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As a reminder of how God cleanses us, let's make a cross out of this bar of soap.

[Let your child do the carving. When the cross is finished, let your child hold it as you put your hand on his or her hand and pray. The next day your child can use the soap cross to take a bath.]

Dear God,

May this cross remind _____ *[your child's name]* that at times we all think things and say things and do things that are wrong. But also remind _____ *[your child's name]* that You are always there to cleanse us of those things. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

LET'S TELL A STORY
Alphabet Tales

[You will need a sheet of paper and a pencil.]

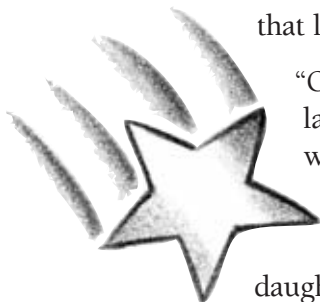
Tonight we're going to make up a story based on the letters of the alphabet. We'll say the letters together, and I'll write them on this sheet.

[Do this now, then explain the process.]

You can begin the story with any letter of the alphabet you want, but after that, you must follow the order of the alphabet. If you begin with the letter S, you have to go to the next letter—which is what? (T)

Here's how the game works. Say I start with the letter O.

I make up a sentence that begins with that letter. For example:



“Once upon a time in a faraway land by the sea, there was a castle where a king, his daughter, and their housekeeper lived.

“Princess Delia was the daughter's name, and she was always sneaking out of the castle at odd

hours during the night.

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“Quietly one night, she got out of her bed, climbed down the trellis that led up to her window, and tiptoed out of the castle grounds, then ran to the seashore where she met—”

You get the idea. Now let's begin.

[You can create variations of this game by talking only about your family, or setting the story in a specific place—such as the desert—or you can restrict the subject to something like food, as in the following example.]

“Alphabet soup is something I enjoyed as a child.”

“Beef is what I like, especially when the beef is made into hamburgers.”

“Can you tell me what you like to put on your hamburger?”

Dear God,

Thank You for the fun times _____ *[your child's name]* and I have together. There is no place I would rather be than here. And thank You that even such a dull thing as the alphabet can be fun if only we use a little imagination.

Amen.

LET'S PLAY A GAME
Tongue Twisters

Tongue twisters are sentences that are so difficult to say, it sounds as if you are talking with a twisted tongue.

Let's take turns doing a few. The first one is probably the most well-known of all tongue twisters:

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
A peck of pickled peppers, Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where is the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper
picked?

For this second one, say it once, then try to say it five times as fast as you can.

Fresh fish feel funny in your tummy.

The next tongue twister is:

Rubber baby buggy bumpers.

Here's another one. Say it five times as fast as you can:

Crow bait.

If your tongue isn't too tired, try this one five times as fast as you can:

We reweave rips.

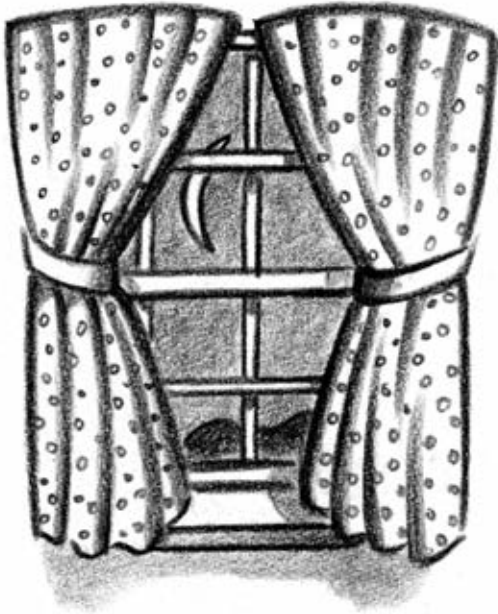
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Okay, let's give our tongues a rest now.

Dear God,

Thank You that such small things as words can be so much fun. May we always use our words wisely. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.



About the Author



Dr. John Trent is president of the Center for StrongFamilies and StrongFamilies.com, an organization that trains leaders to launch and lead marriage and family programs in their churches and communities. John speaks at conferences across the country and has authored or co-authored more than a dozen award-winning

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John has also been a featured guest on radio and television programs like *Focus on the Family*, *The 700 Club*, and CNN's *Sonya Live*. John and his wife, Cindy, have been married 28 years and have two grown daughters.