

Dear CrossHaven Parents,

Less is more. We're fond of saying that around here. And much of the time, we're more effective living by it. But sometimes MORE is more. Want a voluminous vocabulary? Read more. Want to nail the lines for your part in a sketch? Rehearse more. Want to master the "Cha Cha Slide"? Practice more. You get the drift. And just like you need to lift more if you want bigger biceps, you need to do some things more **if you want to know God better**, like:

Read His Book. Can you think of a more foundational, first-step way to get to know Him? Plus, "God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right" (2 Timothy 3:16, NIrV). What better example of the importance of engaging in God's Word than Jesus as a 12-year-old in the temple? (Which happens to be the Bible story for week 1.)

Remember His words. "By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing" (2 Timothy 3:17, NIrV). Jesus showed us (particularly that time He was tempted in the wilderness) we not only need to (Step 1) read God's Word, we need to (Step 2) memorize it, internalize it, and take it to heart so that we'll be ready for whatever comes our way.

Talk to Him. "Don't worry about anything. Instead, tell God about everything. Ask and pray. Give thanks to him" (Philippians 4:6, NIrV). To get to know someone and to strengthen your relationship with that person, you have to talk him or her, right? It's the same way with God. You gotta talk to Him. This week (week 3) will help kids better understand Jesus' answer when one of the disciples asked Him how to pray.

Talk about Him with your friends. "I pray that you will be active in sharing what you believe. Then you will completely understand every good thing we have in Christ" (Philemon 1:6, NIrV). Saying what you believe out loud helps solidify your beliefs. Could this be one reason Jesus asked the disciples, "But who do YOU say I am?" (The story for week 4.)

Make Him more important than anything. "Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve" (Deuteronomy 6:13a, NIrV). This week (week 5) we'll be taking a look at what Jesus said about "the widow's mite" and how it helps us to worship the only one we should serve.

These are all priorities and habits -- disciplines -- that can help us (A) get to know God better and (B) grow stronger. Kids need to understand that they don't have to wait till they're older to get to know God; God wants them to start now. He's ready to help them, every step of the way, NOW. So this January, 252 Basics is designed to help kids see how discipline, which is doing what you need to do now so you can grow stronger, can help strengthen their relationship with God.

But that's not all. Because SOMETIMES more IS more. So in addition to helping kids understand and experience discipline as a godly virtue, each week in January will also offer practical experiences in the **5 Faith Skills** we think every kid should master:

1. Navigate the Bible (survey and locate)
2. Personalize Scripture (memorize and apply)
3. Dialogue with God (public and private)
4. Articulate faith (share and defend)
5. Worship with your life (praise and give)

So get your shoes on, lace up, and let's step it up.

