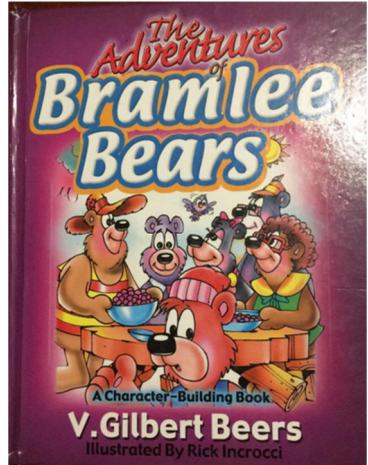


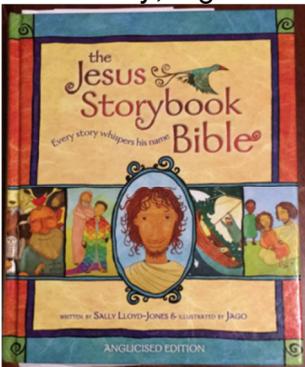
## The interesting journey leading to family devotions

Dear friends,

I remember much of the early years of being a parent, when Joseph and I started reading stories to my son during bedtime. We graduated from children stories to stories with good values, like the Adventures of Bramlee Bears series, which was second hand and gifted to me. Then we moved on to simple Bible stories which were thrifted (from thrift stores) when he was about 3 to 4 years old. In those early years, my spiritual life was rather dry as most of the time I was consumed with caring for my son's needs. By the end of each day, I would need a good night's sleep in order to prepare and cope with the demands of a full-time home maker for the next day. Even church on Sundays provided little spiritual input because I was too distracted trying to engage and keep an active child quiet during the worship service.

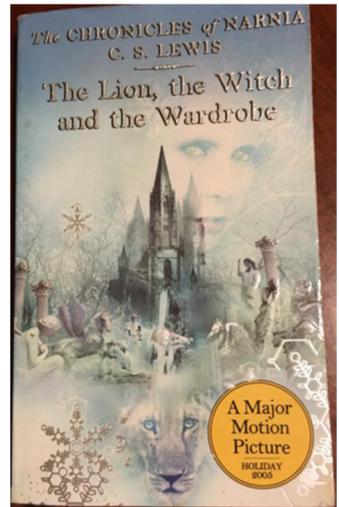


Thankfully, it got a little easier when he got a little older. Easier in the sense that I had a little more time for myself to rest and do more soul care when he went to preschool during those 3 to 4 hours. However, there were other challenges that came in with regards to discipline and the imparting of values. It was through the reading of Bible stories at bedtime that interestingly gave me the spiritual input that I was lacking. The stories were simple but the basic truths



were there to remind me. One children's Bible called 'The Jesus Storybook Bible' was particularly impactful because the author wrote it in such a way that each Bible story from the Old Testament to the New Testament pointed to Jesus as the central theme. I got to know about that particular children's Bible from a Facebook post of a friend and it prompted me to buy it. Looking back, it was a good investment not just for my son but myself as well.

I found that it was helpful to have a few versions of the children bible when the stories became too familiar for him and he needed the variety to keep him interested. Then when I felt he was old enough, we graduated to a children's Bible that was without pictures. In order to keep him motivated to listen to the Bible readings, I had to intersperse with the reading of 'The Chronicles of Narnia'. Children still like listening to stories and it was helpful to be able to hear the story of Jesus' sacrifice written in another story form. Now I'm beginning to understand why the Bible have so many stories!



Recently Rev Fredric introduced us to this family devotion called 'Growing Faith at home'. The good thing about it is that the Bible readings follow the lectionary readings and the church calendar seasons for the year. There is also a creative element that helps us to remember and practice some of the Bible teachings. However, some of the readings require more explanation and I was caught off guard by some of the questions that my son asked about the readings. Well, now that we are in the internet age, this can be helpful because there are resources out there to help us but we need to make sure we go to reliable sources. I

also realised that I had to do a little more preparation to make these readings more relevant to him. It is also better to read from the Bible translated for children to make it easier for them to understand. Reason being is that young children take the readings literally and imagine how you would explain to a child when you read the passage that says, "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." ( LOL, note for parents, choose Bible passages that are age appropriate for your children. )

My hope in sharing this is that we are encouraged to begin this journey and to press on for those who have already embarked on it. This is not only for our children, but for ourselves as well. The journey was not always easy but I think it was well worth it. Often it is our children who become our teachers in their simple faith and honesty towards God's basic truths that make us reflect on our own journey with God. Be Blessed!

Yours Sincerely,  
Your fellow sojourner,

*Saw Peh Ern*