



WOVEN

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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NURTURING A FAITH YOUR KID DOESN'T HAVE TO HEAL FROM

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Chapter 1: Walls and Webs

- Had you heard of “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD)” before reading about it here? Can you relate it to any key religious ideas you grew up with (in a church and/or your family)? How close were these to MTD (really close, some overlap, very different)?
- Starting on p. 10 Meredith writes, “In a trust-based paradigm, my goal as a parent when it comes to faith is to offer my child time, space, and experiences to help them get to know who God really is” [which] “depends on a simple, unflashy, but nonetheless essential ingredient: taking the long view.” [p. 11] What is your reaction to taking the long view in nurturing your child’s faith? How is that hopeful? What makes it scary?
- On pages 15-20, Meredith discusses faith as a wall or a web. Can you think of examples of tensions or breakages in your own web of faith? If you’re comfortable, share an example. Did it feel like a threat to a structure, a strand that could be repaired/replaced, or something else?

Chapter 2: Weave Your Own Web

- When you were growing up, did you know families you would have nominated as “exemplars” in your neighborhood or faith community? What did you notice that made you admire them or want to spend time with them?
- What factors (relational, cultural, church, denominational) have helped shaped assumptions about how your family’s or child’s faith should look?
- Did any of the four unhelpful approaches (Moralism, Obedience Training, Wait and See, and Being Reactive) have a pull on you? Why might that be?
- Meredith suggests alignment around a larger, shared goal, to be with our kids as they get to know God and discover if God can be trusted. How do you respond to this goal? Does it feel scary, hopeful, or something else?

- Of the four helpful elements (Bible Exploration, Experiences, Rituals and Traditions, and Relationships), which comes most easily to you right now? Which do you most look forward to engaging more?

Chapter 3: Do Less on Purpose

- When you think about your own child's questions and curiosity about God, what responses have you generally felt? Look at the list of questions on pages 45-46 in the book. Circle some and add your own if you wish. Identify one to your group.
- Meredith presents three broad approaches to doing less on purpose. Which of these approaches do you think will come more easily for you? Which will be more challenging? Explain your response.
 - Spiral learning: presents one truth, at your a child's level, to build upon later
 - Skip and Save: chooses stories appropriate to a child's age / level of development
 - 3 S's:
 - Smaller reduces amount of content so that a child is fully engaged and enjoys the conversation
 - Shorter ends the conversation before child loses interest and engagement
 - Slower reduces the frequency of Bible and faith conversations to a sustainable, life-giving rhythm that fits a unique family
- Meredith writes, "Saving some Bible stories until kids are older respects both their unique development and the Bible itself ... If you can't tell an accurate version of a Bible story in a kid-accessible way, skip the story. Save it until you can." Are there particular Bible stories you feel you heard at too young an age? Can you remember your response at the time?

Chapter 4: About the Bible

- If you grew up attending Sunday school, how would you describe it? For example, was it organized by grades? What was the focus of the teaching and activities, as best you recall?
- God-centered storytelling is an interpretative framework that makes God's character and actions the main focus of the story (as opposed to highlighting the

humans as heroes or antiheroes). Can you share any experiences, no matter what age you were, where this approach has been used? What was that like, or what did you observe?

- What feels hopeful about the idea of inviting children to explore and respond to Bible stories (as opposed to guiding them toward a predetermined application)? What feels difficult or unsettling about the approach?
- If you have time, as a group, try the Bible story exercise provided on page 84.

Chapter 5: God Is Good

- Think of a time when you experienced God's goodness in some way. It can be as simple as toes in the sand or much more complex. Share this with the group.
- Growing up, what were some key ideas you had about the story of creation in the Bible? Did any of these change as you grew older?
- What are some of things your family already enjoys that might help celebrate God's goodness? Is there one in particular that would fit for you, perhaps with some intentionality?

Chapter 6: God Is Powerful

- Do you remember a time when you were afraid to ask God for something that might not be granted? Why do you think you were hesitant? Was it about God's power, God's wisdom, God's love for you personally, or a combination of these? If comfortable, share this with the group.
- What are ways of praying that help you connect relationally with God?
- This chapter offers some ways of praying that might help children connect relationally with God. As you think about your own kid(s), what are some that you might want to try?

Chapter 7: God Is Just

- Think back to the time, generally, that you first became aware of God's justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed. Who or what helped your awareness? Did it change your perspective on sin, and if so, how?
- This chapter suggests several practices that share a common commitment: to tell the truth. "Anchoring to a God who is just requires us to be relentlessly committed to telling the truth, however messy it is." How do you imagine leaning into truth-telling in your context?

Chapter 8: God Is Joyful

- How would you describe your relationship with joy?
- "Joy is a marker of the kingdom among us, a new reality that we're invited to access at all times, simply because it matches who God is." [p. 160] How does this resonate with you? Does it feel normal? Difficult? Fraught? Hopeful? Think about your own response considering your own history with faith.
- What has been your own experience with some of the joy-building suggestions offered? Do you have favorites?

Chapter 9: God Is with Us

- Do you have a story of a time when God's presence seemed very real? If you are comfortable sharing it, please do.
- In discussing the exodus story of pillar and cloud, Meredith writes "And so we're back to presence, which serves to reshape these people who have been controlled into people who choose to love God and one another. Yahweh God is reshaping the people from being controlled to choosing to trust." [p. 181] How do you respond to the idea of moving from being controlled to choosing to trust?

Chapter 10: Jesus Is Lord

- “Whatever happens, it will be OK because...” How would your childhood culture (home, friends, region) have answered this question?
- What are some ways you have celebrated Christmas or Easter that have helped your family trust that Jesus is Lord?
- In discussing conversations about differing worldview, Meredith brings up four elements: image-bearing respect, simple accuracy, what “I” believe, and important history. How do you respond to the ideas suggested? Have you experienced any of these with your own friends or colleagues?

Chapter 11: Where Webs Begin

- Have you ever experienced a “moratorium” in your own faith journey? Has it brought about more resilience? Is it still in process?
- Name. Narrow. Try. Tinker. Meredith develops these and gives an example of how this process has worked and has also needed revision in her own family. Then she invites you to the intentional and ordinary task of weaving your own web, to “partner with the Holy Spirit to craft a way of living life that is joyful, sustainable, and anchored to the character of God.” How are you feeling about that invitation?