

SU News

An inside view of
Scripture Union

A Favorite Scene

Every once in a while, I am asked about my favorite verse or passage in the Bible. I find the inquiry nearly impossible to answer. How could I choose just one thing from all of the richness contained in Scripture—words of comfort and encouragement, hope and joy—for any situation, all pointing to the one big story.



When asked, though, I have noticed that I have a consistent response. My mind almost always goes to

Jesus on the beach after his resurrection, when he made breakfast for his disciples. I really, really love that account in John, and the images and message it evokes for me. The disciples were back to fishing and had little to show for their work. From the shore, Jesus called out to them and told them where to cast their nets. He already had fish and some bread heating on burning coals when he asked them to bring some of their catch to add to the meal. They joined him when he called them to breakfast. Then, their

Savior engaged with them. He took the bread and offered it to them, the fish, too, and conversation began. Important points were made, teaching continued, relationships were restored.

Probably because I love food so much, and because the bulk of my Italian-heritage childhood centered around the kitchen and eating—those scenes with Jesus eating, drinking, teaching, and enjoying company, draw me close to him. Evidence of community post-Resurrection and the promised feasting when Jesus returns bring me comfort and even joy, as these are some of my most treasured memories in life together with family and friends.

That is why I am really excited to share about new resources SU-USA has created (and gotten ready with the help of volunteers gathered around tables and meals). They are designed for families to connect around their tables. Important things happen in these spaces, and we are praying that among those things, there will be precious meetings with Jesus, who calls us to come and who provides all that we need when we join him.



Gail A. Martin
President,
Scripture Union

2023 SCRIPTURE UNION LAMP AWARD

The Lamp Award is given to individuals for their faithful and sacrificial effort to advance the cause of Bible engagement in the United States. This past fall, our 2023 Lamp Award was given to two honorees: Ryan Baitzel and Lou Gauvain. Ryan and Lou have both served as team members for Scripture Union's CSSM beach missions since the early 1990's. Just one town down the island from one another in New Jersey, they now lead ministry outreaches in Ship Bottom and Surf City. Their wives and children serve and participate alongside them each year and share in this award. We thank them and are grateful for their service!

The Importance of Connecting

With increasingly busy schedules, finding moments for meaningful connections within the family can be challenging. Yet, the importance of these connections cannot be overstated. Research indicates that families intentionally engaging in shared times of prayer and reading the Bible often report deeper faith, stronger bonds, and greater resilience in the face of life's challenges.

One study shows that most parents spend less than 2 hours each day with their children. This includes mealtimes and bedtimes! Life has become very busy for most families—it has impacted how much time we spend with one another. This decline in time together impacts more than just your relationship with each other; it can also impact mental health, physical health, and spiritual health!

Here's why Scripture Union wants to encourage you to spend more family time together.

Benefits of Family Time Around the Table

Did you know that simply sharing a meal around the table has multiple benefits?

For Our Children

Studies show that children who share a meal with their family have lower rates of depression and anxiety. They have decreased risk of eating disorders, substance abuse, and obesity, but have increased communication skills and improved academic performance. Family meal time boosts self-esteem and children tend to be more resilient.

For Our Family

Sitting around a table is important for relationship building as well. If you think back to Jesus' life, he enjoyed a lot of meals with people!



Photo by Tyson on Unsplash



Introducing CONNECT:

Our newest family resource is perfect for table time! Set aside time as a family each week and explore the Bible and pray together. Cultivate a habit of shared reflection on Scripture and prayer, foster growth in faith, and strengthen family bonds.

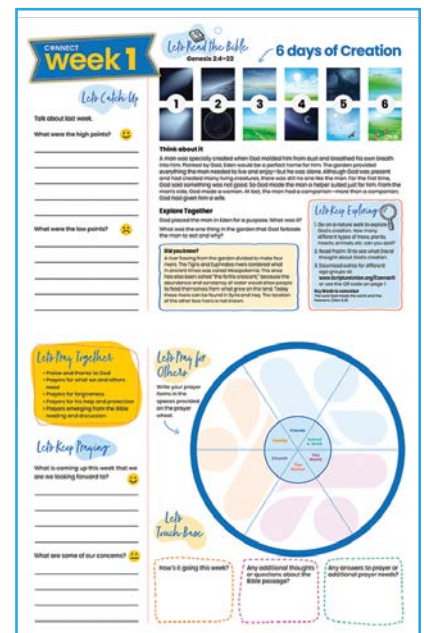
Each issue of CONNECT contains 13 weeks of content that help families catch up with each other, explore a Bible passage, and pray together. Created

to hang like a calendar, each week offers lots of opportunities for input and interaction.

Your time together will be directed with segments that give opportunity for:

- Family members to connect with each other and share about their past week
- Reading, reflecting, and exploring the Bible together
- Praying together
- Talking about the coming week's activities
- Thinking about who and what needs prayer, and writing them down. Continue to connect throughout the week with ways to make your family's time together special.

The School of KidsMin YouTube channel has a video called "Cultivating Faith Formation Around the Table." Find the link at www.schoolofkidsmin.com



Volunteer Days



SU friends and volunteers from local churches gather to help assemble seasonal ministry resources.

Why do you volunteer at Scripture Union?

“When I learned that help was needed to put together Advent and Lent kits for families, I was eager to help—and to bring friends along with me. The investment of time not only offered an opportunity for hands-on kingdom work, it included fellowship, fun, laughter, and great lunches! As we worked together, we shared stories of what God was doing in our own lives and churches, as well as in the world.

It is good to know that our hours of work free up valuable time for the SU staff to use their gifts in sharing the Word of God. It’s wonderful to think about God using these resources to help families know Jesus better. I can hardly wait for SU’s next volunteer need!” —Judy

“Making a worthwhile contribution to the kingdom feels good and I have fun.” —Deb

“Why do I volunteer for Scripture Union? I volunteer because I believe in the Bible and I believe in Scripture Union. The Bible is the book of LIFE, but it is not always easy to understand. That is where SU comes in and alongside, to help children and adults understand God’s plan more deeply. Who wouldn’t want to volunteer to support that?

There are a gazillion ways to volunteer for Scripture Union. Some the staff can plug you right into, and some require imagination springing from your specific gifts. Either way you will be blessing others by helping SU.” —Robin



Lenten reflections cut and ready for insertion into daily packets for the family kit.



Volunteers assembling God’s Promise Kept, family Advent journey.



Countdown to Easter. Imagine the fun it will be to open each scroll, read together, and place the sticker on the journey map.



Footsteps of Jesus: A Lenten Journey boxed and ready to go!

Join Us!

If you live near Valley Forge and would like to join our growing list of volunteers, please let us know at info@scriptureunion.org or call 1-800-621-5267. We would love to have you help us share ministry resources with those in your church and network.

If you live outside of the area, consider joining us as a Scripture Union Advocate. Contact us to learn more.

Testimonials

Soon after we married in 1967, my husband signed me up with Scripture Union. It continues to teach and encourage me each day. Thank you!

– NH, Charlotte, NC

God has blessed me tremendously through my daily devotionals in Encounter With God. Thank you for your dedication to this organization.

– JS, Centennial, CO

I have loved using Encounter with God for many years. I pray for this ministry regularly and am thankful for it.

– CH, Mooresville, NC



Honor your family, friends, and loved ones by making a 'Salt and Light Legacy' donation to Scripture Union. Your generous tax-deductible gift will help make God's Good News known to children, young people, and families—and encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer.

www.ScriptureUnion.org/saltandlight

IN HONOR OF:	GIVEN BY:
Bill and Leona Burns	Ruth Withee
Gail Martin	Anonymous
Sharon Sacks	Adam and Bethany Sacks Angela Sacks
Mary Sutton	Tim Woodruff
Marion Avis Thomas	Ruth Withee
Mildred Webber-Holmes	Anonymous

IN MEMORY OF:	GIVEN BY:
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Ruth Endean	Deborah and Eric Endean and loved ones
Gordon and Nancy Haresign	Anonymous Chet Jarman Anonymous
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