

Album-making ideas for Christian faithbooking

Now that you have an idea of some methods for faithbooking, the next big decision is to decide the type of album you want to make. Basically, you have two choices: theme albums or faith pages in existing albums.

Faithbook pages in a traditional album

Since Rhonda was 15 years old, she has been creating chronological photo albums that capture the traditional pictures most people take (birthdays, holidays, vacations, special events, haircuts, friends, etc.). As her children were born, she began making personal albums for them, again using a chronological method to document their lives. Once she started creating faithbooks, she continued to do her albums the same way - in chronological order, but now she incorporated the "methods of Christian faithbooking" focusing on capturing God's fingerprints in her albums.

The other option is to choose one of the following types of specific faithbooks.

1. ABC scripture album

An easy way to begin creating faithbooks is with an ABC Scripture album. In this book, you can choose favorite scriptures by using the letters of the alphabet as a guide. Starting with the letter A on the first page, find a scripture that begins with the letter A. (Some people find a verse that contains any word that begins with the particular letter - it doesn't have to be the first word in the verse). Once you've selected a scripture verse, select a picture that compliments that verse. The final step is to write the short/long story that came to mind when you chose that picture and verse.

For example, on the "L" page of an alphabet album, Rhonda has the following journal entry: Proverbs 25:25 "Like cold water to a weary soul, is good news from a distant land." I read that verse on September 3, 1985, the day we got the phone call telling us our adopted daughter Janetta was flying home to us from India. That call was certainly good news from a distant land. I have a picture of her arrival on the page with that story.

Once you have finished your "A" page, you move on to the letter "B" and so on, until you have finished the alphabet. Scripture ideas are included for an entire ABC album (three different versions). Another benefit to this type of faithbook is that once it is complete, you can use it as a tool to help you memorize the scriptures you've written on the pages. This is especially great for kids.

A smaller version of this album is handy for children to view frequently. Just think how their faith grows after they've looked at the album hundreds of times. It truly hides the word in their hearts. It also makes a great bedtime story book.

2. Identity album

You can use this smaller album to create another helpful faithbook, the identity album. One of the most important concepts we want our kids to grasp is their identity in Christ. They do not have to have the approval of people. The Lord's approval is more important. The identity album contains scriptures and photos that reinforce this concept. For example, in Rhonda's daughter Janetta's identity album, one of the scriptures was I Corinthians 19-20 "I have been bought with a price. I belong to God." Along with the scripture, there is a photo of her in a large product basket with some play money. The obvious message is that God loved her so much that He gave something more valuable than money - He gave the life of His only Son, so Janetta can live forever in heaven.

3. A prayer album is another method for creating a faithbook. You may choose to use a 7 x 7 album for its convenience. On one side of a double-page spread, you could include a photo of the person/family/organization you are praying for. Next to the photo, include some of the current prayer requests and leave the opposite side blank. As prayers are answered, record the answered prayer on the blank side. (The ruled pages help you write straight). When you have used all album, space, you will have a permanent testimony of God's faithfulness. You can view the book at any time and be constantly reminded of God's goodness and how He does answer prayers.

4. Spiritual family history album

Some people know many stories and details about the lifestyle of their ancestors, their occupation and their living conditions, but have you ever longed to know their spiritual stories? What did they think about their faith? How did God make Himself real in their everyday life? Other interesting potential stories are:

- someone's personal testimony - how they came to know the Lord as their Savior,
- how they met their spouse and any details about their decision to marry
- any major sign posts in their life and how they saw the Lord at work around them.

A spiritual family history album captures these stories. Think about yourself for a moment. Do your children know your personal testimony? Do they know when you met your husband and how God drew you together? Do you know the testimony of your parents? If you answered yes to any of these questions, have you written these stories down? It has been said, "The palest ink is stronger than the greatest memory." We cannot rely on our memory alone. We must record these stories in our albums so future generations can know how faithful God has been and continues to be.

Other faithbook theme possibilities are:

- favorite hymns and worship songs
- faithbooks of scenery pictures accentuating God's creation with scriptures.

HOW TO GET STARTED

At this point, some of you may feel overwhelmed just thinking about the mountain of photos you have to organize. Or, some of you have completed albums and are thinking, "How can I go back and add more faithbooking ideas to the albums I already have?" Others may be wondering, "Where do I start?" Relax! You can and will successfully tell the stories

1. Decide which type of albums to make. Will you choose to do a theme album (refer to handout for ideas) or will you incorporate faithbook ideas into a chronological family album? Some people start with an album for a specific person, such as a first-born child.
2. Use the Methods sheet to get you started. If you are struggling with how to begin, look at the Methods of Christian Faithbooking handout, and find one that applies to the photos and story you are working on. Don't sit and wait for a burst of inspiration - just get started!
3. If you have completed albums and want to go back and add stories of faith, you can by using 8 1/2 x 11 portrait pages. By adding an 8 1/2x 11 page to 12x12 albums - the space between the "stitches" (staples) is the same. With this method you can print the stories on a computer, slip them into the portrait sleeve and add them to the album.
4. It's fun and helpful to work with someone else. In fact a great idea is to have a "Family Crop." Gather your spouse and children and have everyone work on the faithbooks together. Even young children can mount photos and write their own story of the Lord's impact on their life. We have found that Sunday afternoons are a great time for family Crops.
5. Train your children, pass on the tradition. Remember, even if you don't participate in family Crops, you are still passing the tradition of faithbooking to the next generation. It is essential that our children understand the importance and urgency about looking for and remembering God's activity in their lives. Involve them whenever you can. You can let younger children make their own albums by giving them extra photos. Pre-teens and teenagers do an excellent job with albums - let them help with the photos you've taken or encourage them to begin taking their own pictures and putting them in albums.
6. Schedule time to work on your albums. For example, you can set aside fifteen minutes a day, an hour a week, or three hours a month to work on your albums. Some people attend weekend Workshops or retreats.

7. One more reminder to pray. Remember, this wonderful adventure is more about hearing the Lord. He is alive and active in our lives and the process of capturing faith in our albums will help us love and honor Him.
8. Additional reading. Other books to help you with the process of faithbooking/album making. "The God Moment Principle" by Alan Wright, "Listening Prayer," by Linda Olson, "The Creative Memories Way" by Cheryl Lightle and Rhonda Anderson.

NOTE: If using the computer, position your photos on a double-page spread and allow for journaling space. Decide what your faithbooking emphasis will be. Measure the size of your journaling space. Type your journaling on the computer and size it with the size of your space. Print a practice copy on regular paper to see how your journaling fits. If it works well, print again on acid-free laser copy paper. If the printed journal entry does not fit, you can either reduce the font size or remove a picture. Frequently, a bold title is created for pages using the alphabet stickers and colored paper. The title immediately alerts the reader to the subject of the page.

SCRIPTURE ABC ALBUMS

Following is an example of the scripture ABC album:

- A - As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
- B - Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.
- C - Come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest.
- D - Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
- E - Every good and perfect gift is from above.
- F - Fear not for I am with you.
- G - God is love.
- H - He is my rock and my salvation.
- I - I will never leave or forsake you.
- J - Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me..."
- K - Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul.
- L - Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
- M - Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.
- N - Not to us, oh Lord, but to Your name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness.
- O - Oh give thanks unto the Lord for He is good.
- P - Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
- Q - Quench not the Spirit.
- R - Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice!
- S - Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness.
- T - Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
- U - Unto us a child is born.

V - Victorious in the sky.

W -- We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those that love God.

X - Exceeding great and precious promises are given to us.

Y - You are the light of the world.

Z - Zion heard and was glad.