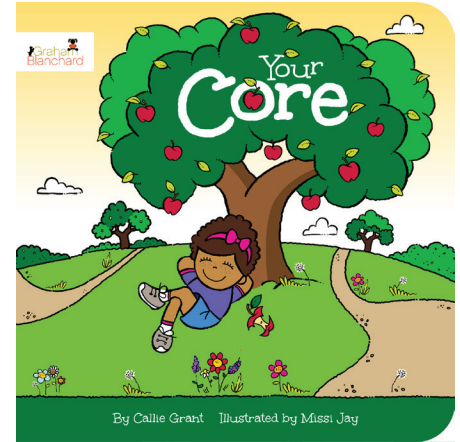


By Lynda Greene, Education Director

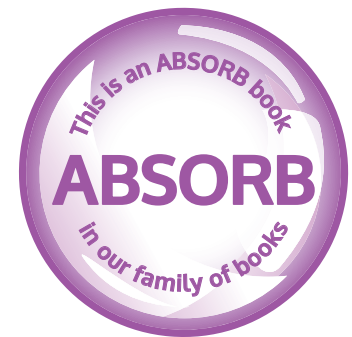
Your Core

Balls, the earth, and apples all have cores that can be seen or experienced. Through lively images and easy-to-understand examples, this book leads to an awareness of the special place inside each of us where our love of God can grow and dwell. The sweet text provides comforting reassurance of God's constant presence. Parents can reinforce the message to their young children that God is always within to help guide and keep them safe, even though He is out of sight.



Building on the Book:

- How many examples of cores can you and your young child discover? Take a large piece of construction paper and title it "Cores." Add pictures cut out of magazines or simple drawings of objects you observe or can think of that have cores. With each new example, talk about the purpose of that particular core and make the connection to your child's inner self.
- Welcome your child into the kitchen as you prepare food to discover how many fruits and vegetables have seeds inside their cores. Explain that the seeds enable the plant to grow anew, just as our core grows in faith and friendship with God.
- Once your child has experienced many concrete examples of cores, you can seize upon golden moments to discuss the deeper meaning of the soul. When you see your child behave in a generous and loving way, offer praise and a reminder that God's influence from within—your child's core—leads to these good deeds.

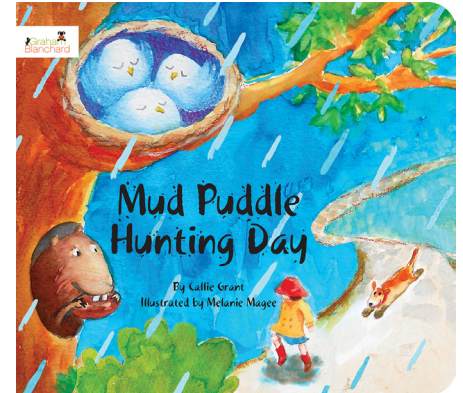


We would love to hear about your experiences with this book!
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By Lynda Greene, Education Director

Mud Puddle Hunting Day

This joyful book reminds parents how wondrous the world is to a young child. The musical text and watercolor images reveal the exquisite detail of nature that we sometimes miss, as we hurry children along in our busy lives. The glory of God's creation exists in the cozy bird's nest and the sound of rain falling on leaves that are so eloquently depicted in this lovely board book. Parents can help their children connect all these wonders to God's bounty and affirm the amazing gift of our senses and our innate ability to appreciate the world around us.



Building on the Book:

- Take a nature excursion in your own environment. Give your adventure a name, just like the book! "Hill Climbing Morning," "Woodsy Wander" – be creative and have fun together.
- Encourage your young child to look, listen, and feel all the myriad details and intricacies of the world around them. Sit down together and close your eyes. What do you hear? What can you smell? How do plants differ from each other?
- Allow your child to set the pace and lead the way at convenient times. Try to see the world through their perspective for a change, and encourage a conversation of what you are experiencing together.
- Encourage children to be inquisitive by posing questions to them. Why do you think squirrels hide nuts? What do bugs do when it rains? Don't worry if you don't know the answers yourself! If your child's age and interest allow, you can discover and learn together.



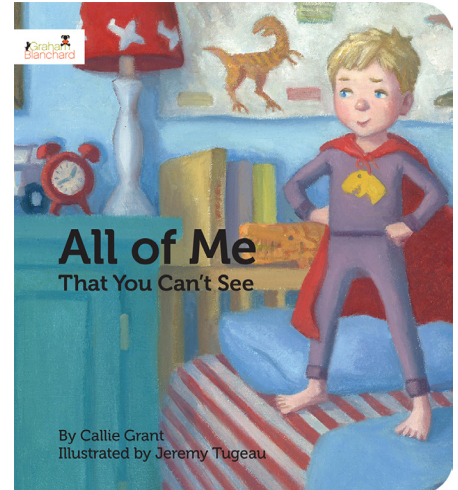
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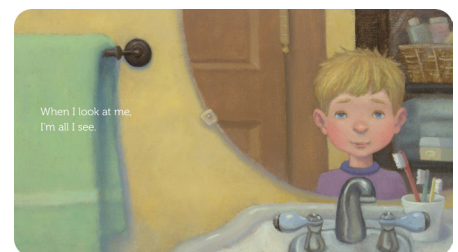
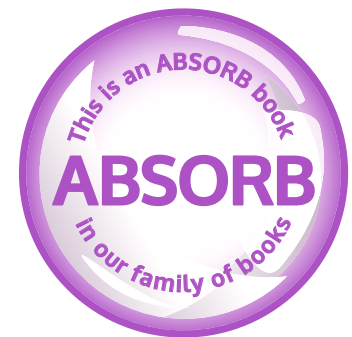
All of Me That You Can't See

How can we help young children comprehend their inner life, when we struggle so to understand our own souls? Small children are literal in their thinking, so this book begins with what is obvious to the eye when we look in the mirror. However the lyrical text quickly reveals that much more exists inside us all and introduces concepts of heart, mind, strength, and soul. The book invites parents to share simple, comprehensible examples of how our feelings and actions are manifestations of our miraculous inner selves.



Building on the Book:

- Be on the lookout for your child acting from the heart. Name her behavior when you observe her being kind and generous. While giving praise to your child, you also have a chance make a connection to God's grace, which inspires us to kindness and generosity.
- Reinforce the concept of outside and inside. There are dozens of opportunities around the house and in nature – a box filled with puzzle pieces, an egg in the kitchen, a seed pod fallen from a tree.
- Help your child to savor the good feelings that come when he helps you with chores or succeeds at a difficult task. Ultimately children need to be guided by their inner resources, so help them recognize the positive spiritual results of doing what is right.



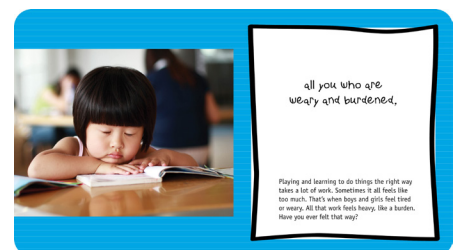
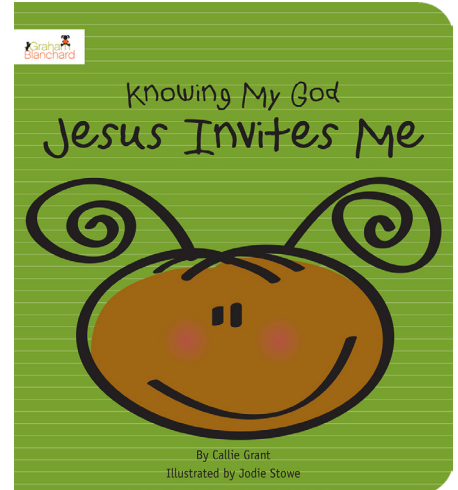
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Jesus Invites Me

Each book in the Learn collection presents the word of God in three distinct ways – through the actual scripture verse, simple explanatory text, and an illustrative photograph. Since young children are naturally egocentric, this book connects to a child's everyday experiences and examples from the world around her to reveal God's invitation to us all. Children learn by building upon what they know already. Each experience, thought, and idea builds a framework upon which deeper understanding is constructed. Parents can help children by relating the photographs and text to something a child has seen or done in the past, thus helping to develop their thinking and knowledge. Learning is personal!

Building on the Book:

- Select a photograph in the book that resonates with your child or recalls a past experience, for example the boy walking in the woods. Remind your child of her own walking experience and ask what she remembers. Discuss how her experience was the same or different. Were the colors the same? What about the plants and trees? The goal is to connect new information to previous knowledge.
- Delve into a section of explanatory text that appeals to your child. There is learning and discussion that can be based on each selection. Ask and listen, explain and teach.
- Help your child commit all or part of the scripture to memory. It is amazing how much even very young children can remember and repeat. Read the first few words and pause to let your child finish the sentence. She will feel proud of her accomplishment!

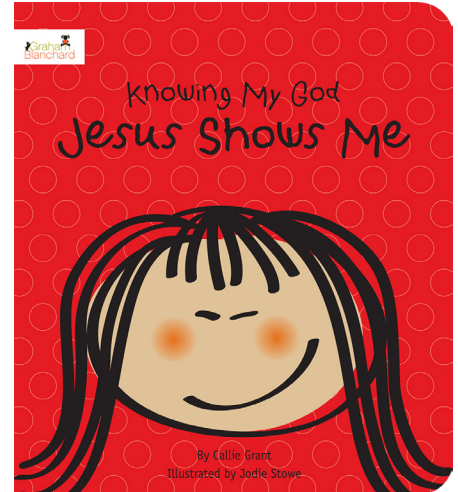


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Jesus Shows Me

Children demonstrate their understanding of the parent/child relationship at a very young age. They snuggle a favorite stuffed animal or rock their baby dolls, as they emulate the love and nurture they feel from the adults in their lives. This book extends that concept to God's great love for us all. Using the three-level construct of Bible verse, explanatory text, and illustrative photograph, God's love is revealed through examples of young being nurtured in the animal kingdom. Each two-page spread is rich with details of loving and nurturing, which parents can explore as they read and reread the book many times.



Building on the Book:

- Explain to your child how you manifest your love for him just as animals care for their young. For example, the penguin father keeps his chick warm, while you provide clothing, soft blankets, and a cozy home.
- Connect the guidance and good example that you provide to your child to the life and words of Jesus. Use the book as a springboard for explaining that parents teach children, just as Jesus teaches us all. Even if you think this is beyond her comprehension, lay the seeds for later understanding.
- Capitalize on the message of play as a manifestation of love. Our ability to feel joy and happiness is one of God's greatest gifts! Help your child rejoice and cherish happy times that you spend together – building on the example of the dolphins frolicking in the sea.

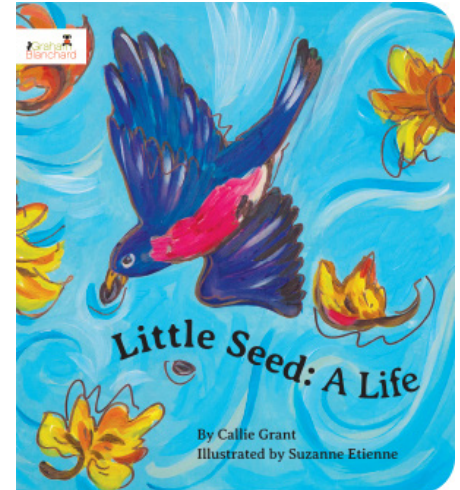
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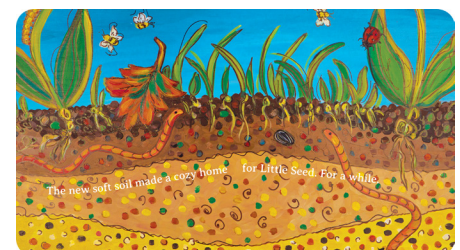
Little Seed: A Life

The rhythm of the seasons is brilliantly revealed through the gentle verse and glorious images. This Praise book illuminates the life cycle of a simple seed, while demonstrating how all of God's creation interacts – the weather, terrain, birds, and animals. Each two-page spread portrays the abundance and diversity of the world all around us. The book invites parents and children to explore and revel in our amazing world.



Building on the Book:

- Take advantage of the rich detail on each page. Name all the objects and colors you see and then ask your child to point to each one. Long before they can talk, young children can identify many objects with sufficient repetition. This practice lays the groundwork for their vocabulary and cognitive development.
- Talk about sounds and sensations that the images evoke. Does it look like it is warm or cold? What sounds can you imagine hearing? Teach your child to notice and reflect on all there is to see, hear, and experience. Learning to appreciate nature is a gift that lasts a lifetime.
- Take a treasure hunt and see how many of the plants and animals portrayed in the book you can find outside. Talk and describe what you see – even to babies. You'll be surprised when before long you will hear your words come back to you from their burgeoning young minds!
- For older children, encourage them to collect as many different seeds as they can find – once they have outgrown the stage of putting everything in their mouths! Provide them with a special box to store their discoveries. Talk about the various shapes, colors, and sizes. Reinforce the diversity of God's creation.



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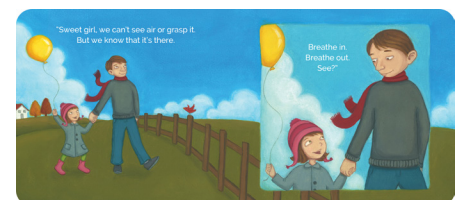
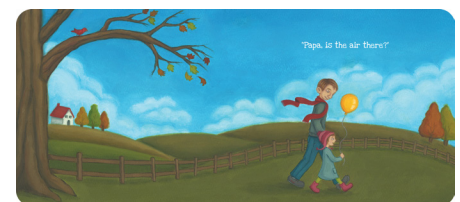
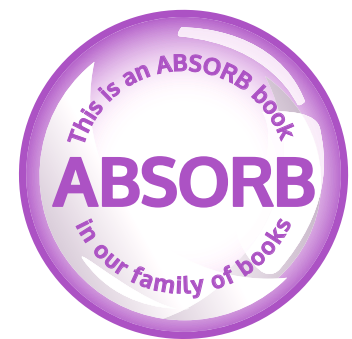
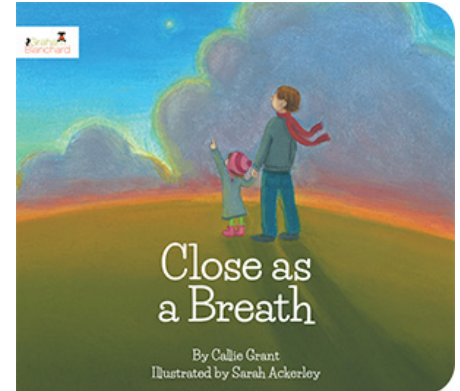
Close as a Breath

Every parent and grandparent has enjoyed magical moments with their children, when you are completely attuned with each other. That harmonious connection is also what we seek in our relationship with God. In this Absorb book, a child questions all that she sees in her search for understanding. Her patient and loving father attempts to explain the wonders and mysteries that abound in the world, using language and imagery that she can comprehend. The child gains a sense of contentment and safety, knowing her loving parent and gracious God are always close by.

Building on the Book:

- Make time for your own magical moments with the children you love. Be open to any opportunity that presents itself to connect and relish time together. It's time well spent you will never regret.
- Follow the example of providing short and age-appropriate answers to a child's question. It's tempting to provide too much information, but that's when we can break the spell. Take the time to listen carefully. What exactly is puzzling your child?
- I don't know about you, but there are many things that are still a mystery to me! Share what you know and freely admit what you have yet to learn. Serve as a model of questioning and yearning for deeper understanding.

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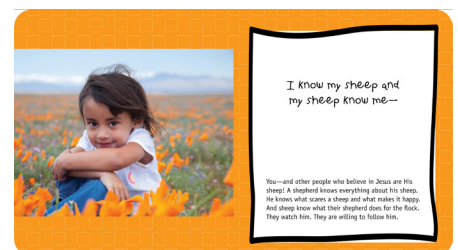
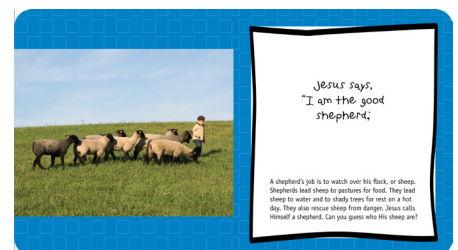
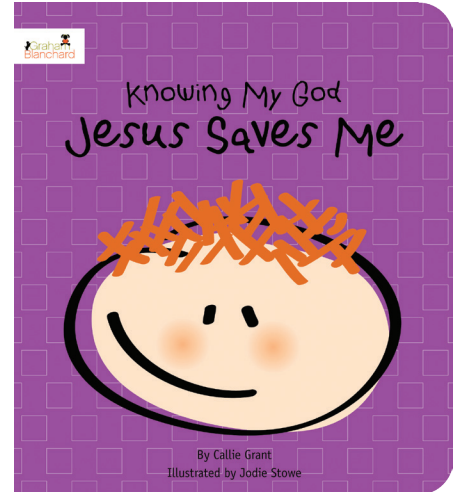


Jesus Saves Me

The reassuring theme of God as the Good Shepherd reinforces the bond between grown-ups and the children entrusted to them. This Learn book presents the concept through biblical verse, carefully chosen photographs, and rich explanatory text. A child's essential need to be loved and nurtured by the adults in their lives opens the door to understanding how God loves and cares for us. Each three-part spread provides a springboard for discussion and deepening understanding of the many concepts presented.

Building on the Book:

- Reflect on what it means to be truly "known," not only by the people we love, but also by God. Use the photographs and text to convey that sense of acceptance and validation that is so vital to a child's development. Plant the seeds of understanding of God's power of knowing and loving us for who we are.
- Draw parallels between what is portrayed in the photographs and what is present in your own context. Do you ever see sheep or farm animals? Do the grasslands, snowy landscape, or field of flowers resemble where you live? Children learn best when you can connect their own experience with new knowledge.
- Ask your child how they feel about each two-page spread. Or for very young ones talk about how it makes you feel. The child playing with his father looks happy. The sheep in the snow evokes a sense of loneliness. Help your child become aware of his feelings. Learning to manage your emotions is an important task of early childhood.



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