



MORNING
TIME
SNAPSHOTS

JESSICA'S MORNING TIME

"IT IS SO MUCH MORE ENJOYABLE TO READ ABOUT BEETLES, OR ATOMS, OR STEAMBOATS WHEN THE BOOK TELLS STORIES INSTEAD OF DRY INFORMATION. THIS IS THE PART OF OUR MORNING TIME WHERE I FEEL MOST LIKE I AM LEARNING WITH MY CHILDREN, NOT TEACHING THEM."

How many kids do you have and what are their ages?

I have four children. Three girls ages 8, 7, and 3. And one little boy age 5.

How long have you been doing Morning Time?

We have been doing some form of Morning Time for about two and a half years. It began as a simple morning worship service where I helped my children practice some of the elements they could participate in at church. We would sing a hymn, read a bible story, talk about it and then pray.



When we began co-op classes, memory work was added to Morning Time. And finally, last year, I began to see it as the heart of our school day. I added poetry and some other read-alouds. This year, based on what I have learned about Morning Time, I have continued adding living books in more subjects, missionary stories,

math stories and puzzles. I am sure our Morning Time will continue to morph. That is half the fun!



What do you call your Morning Time?

Plain old "Morning Time." It seems a strange name, but it works. Perhaps we should have a "Name Our Morning Time" contest with the children. That could be fun. How about "The Wonder Hour?"

Typically how long does your Morning Time take on an average day?

On an average day, our Morning Time takes about one hour.

What is your favorite Morning Time subject or activity?

I love it all! But if I had to choose, I would say our daily reading from some sort of living book. Each day I read aloud from a book on our subject of the day. I am a book collector and enjoy scouring yard sales and thrift stores for older more conversational nonfiction. It is so much more enjoyable to read about beetles, or atoms, or steamboats when the book tells stories instead of dry information. This is the part of our morning time where I feel most like I am learning with my children, not teaching them. We are all learning from the author of the book. What amazing conversations have come from this part of our Morning Time!

What is your kids' favorite Morning Time subject or activity?

Ruth (8) says, "I really like the stories we read from the Bible and *Steamboats to the West*." Benaiah (5) says, "Reading from the Bible." Sarah Joan (7) says, "I like poetry."

What is your biggest struggle with Morning Time?

My biggest struggle is wanting to put so much into it! The world is full of amazing stuff! I struggle to remember that although I am enjoying a subject and would like to dig deeper, sometimes my kids are just done. Their little minds are happy with just a little bit. I have to remember that as an adult, I can hold more whereas they fill up much faster.



How have you seen Morning Time bear fruit in your home?

Our Morning Worship part of Morning Time has helped my children be more involved in our church service. It is so much fun, if not slightly embarrassing, to have them yell out, just before we are about to sing a song in church, "WE KNOW THIS ONE!" We do not spend a long time in Morning Worship. It is maybe 10-15 min of our time. However, I have seen that the small stones laid consistently will build knowledge of our faith. I don't expect to change their hearts by doing this, because I can't. I only expect to do what I ought in teaching them Who God is, and what He has done.

I have seen an intense interest in the more academic subjects we cover in morning time. They love to find out about things. They love it when they notice something we have read about in a different context. They love it when I read to them. I think Morning Time is bearing the fruit of a love of learning.

What are some of your favorite Morning Time resources?

This is like asking me to pick my favorite child! For the worship part of our Morning Time I love Terry Johnson's book, *The Family Worship Book*. It includes the why and how to begin family worship as well as the text to many hymns and psalms to get you started.



For Morning Time in general I think my best resource is Pam! We have had so many conversations about what to add to it and how to make it an instrument for true education. Because having a successful Morning Time is not the end goal, but rather a tool to get you to your end goal of educating a real human being. Pam is a great Morning Time resource for two reasons. One, she has written a whole book on it! But most importantly, she is a good friend who knows our family and can help hone my focus in this area. So, if Pam didn't live right up the street, I would answer that any good friend to bounce ideas off of is one of my favorite resources.

Another resource I utilize, perhaps to excess, is the thrift store. Anywhere I can go to look at and buy used, older books. More often than not, it is the best place to find living books that I never knew existed. I have a lovely conversational book about *Beetles* by Wilfrid S. Bronson and one on the *Atom* by Leonard de Vries.

For poetry we just LOVE *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children* by Jack Prelutsky. There are classic poems, funny poems, poems about beauty...it is just a great mix for Poetry Thursdays.

What are some of the ritual practices you include in Morning Time?

Our Morning Time looks different each day, but one thing that never changes is how we begin: always with our hymn or psalm of the month. The kids sing, clap, and sometimes play instruments. Next I read from our story Bible. Usually they beg for just one more story. Benaiah says this is his favorite part. I happen to think this is because we are reading Old Testament stories and usually someone is fighting a battle. Lastly we recite the prayer we are memorizing and I pray for our day.

On days where Morning Time must be cut short for appointments or family commitments, I try to always squeeze in this prayer. It is that important. I want my children to remember that God comes first and our worship of Him should be a part of our everyday lives, not just something we do on Sunday.

ABOUT JESSICA

Jessica Lawton is a homeschool mom to four fantastically fabulous children. Her hobbies include book hoarding, knitting, reading, and birdwatching. While neither



teacher nor writer were ever on her list of Things to Be When I Grow Up, she curiously finds herself doing both and enjoying it. This only strengthens her firmly held belief that God has better plans for us than we have for ourselves. You can find her as a contributor on [EdSnapshots.com](https://www.edsnapshots.com).

TERM: _____

MORNING TIME PLAN



DAILY

Four sets of horizontal blue lines, each consisting of a solid top line and a dashed bottom line, providing space for handwriting practice.
