

Sun Up To Sun Down Family Devotions



The Goal

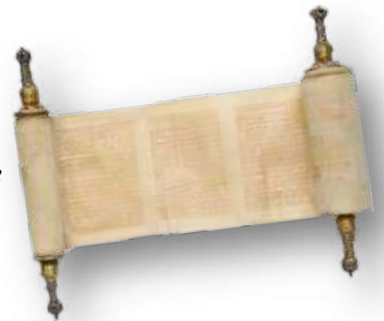
To discover how to model the Christian life, and to teach the Word of God to our children all day long.

God's Plan For "Family Devotions"

The "Shema"

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These words I am commanding you today are to be upon your hearts.

And you shall teach them diligently to your children and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as reminders on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates."



Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Principles of the Shema

1. Parents must make Jesus, the Lord of their lives, and love Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. Parents shall **teach them diligently** to their children.
3. Parents will **speak of them** to their children throughout the day.
4. The standards of God will be **tied to the parents' hands** to remind themselves.
5. The standards of God will be **written on the doorposts and gates** as a witness to others.

The Shema Is Reinforced By Jesus

"Now one of the scribes had come up and heard their debate. Noticing how well Jesus had answered them, he asked Him, 'Which commandment is the most important of all?' Jesus replied, 'This is the most important: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

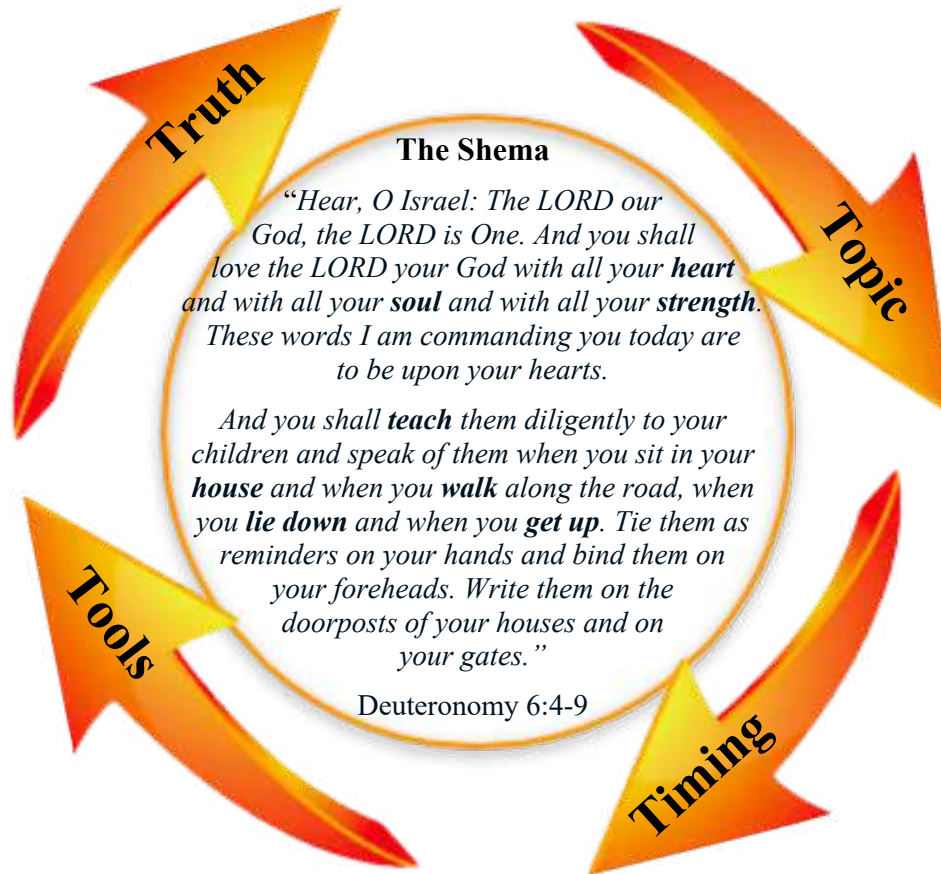
Mark 12:28-31



The “Formula” For An Effective Family Devotion (T⁴)

Taken from the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Topic (relevant) + **T**iming (preparation) + **T**ools (activity) = **T**ruth (application to life)



The “topic” is the subject of the discussion or devotion. In the Shema, it is referred to as “...these words that I am commanding you.” The “topic” can be anything that God says in His scriptures; which includes principles for living, character development, reactions, choices, plans, thoughts, etc.

1. The “topic” is either chosen or “discovered.”
 - If a devotional guide is used, the “topic” may be chosen for you.
 - The “topic” may be “discovered” during a family experience or encounter.
 - The “topic” must always be related to the child, and to the Shema.



2. “Love” is the **one topic** covered in 66 books across 5,000 years! Modeling love in the home is the foundation for effective family devotions!

*“And **you** shall love the LORD **your** God with all **your** heart and with all **your** soul and with all **your** strength. These words I am commanding **you** today are to be upon **your** hearts.”*

The Shema - Deuteronomy 6: 5, 6

- Loving / respecting / honoring your spouse in words, deeds, attitudes, and actions.
- The parent is the first representation of God that the child encounters.
- A “bad” father effects the child’s perception of God, the Father! An uncaring parent effects the child’s trust and dependence on God.
- If the parent “teaches” love, yet models something different, the child is confused, and doesn’t respect the parent. The Shema becomes meaningless!



3. The example of loving “our neighbors” is the second part of the “Greatest Commandment” that Jesus identified.

- The child watches his/her parent modeling how to love the “neighbors.”
- According to Jesus, the parent’s “neighbor” is his/her spouse!
- If the parent “teaches” love, yet models something different, the child is confused, and doesn’t respect the parent. The Shema becomes meaningless!



The “timing” is when a lesson, devotion, or topic is discussed. In the Shema, the “timing” is broken up into 4 sensitive times in a child’s day. Parents can also decide whether or not the “timing” is right, based on their child’s age, maturity, or readiness.

1. The 4 sensitive times identified in the Shema are:

- “When you sit in your house...” (inside the house times)
- “When you walk along the road...” (outside the house times)
- “When you lie down...” (bed time)
- “When you rise up...” (morning time)



2. God spent 40 years teaching His law/identity to the Israelites, so they could be a testimony of the ONE God in a world of many gods. We have 12-18 years to do the same with our children in a world of “many gods.”

3. “Teachable moments” – unplanned encounters that can be the “perfect time” to teach your child. (challenges, injuries, trials, joys, fears, hopes, disappointments, behaviors, failures, successes, etc.)



4. Sharing a meal together is a sensitive time for 2 of the times listed in the Shema.

5. Share meaningful conversations about life, when the “timing” is right.



The “tools” that are used in teaching the Word of God are planned activities, or experiences that assist parents in teaching their children. A “tool” performs a function. A “tool” can repair or build something. The “something” that parents build, or repair is their child’s spiritual development. Knowing what “tool” to use, and how to use it takes practice, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. (See “Activities” section below for an expanded list of possible “tools.”)

- Using stories
- Enjoying art
- Playing with toys
- Doing chores
- Running errands
- Visiting destinations
- School experiences
- Sports experiences
- Experiences with friends



The “truth” of a family devotion is the life-application of the “topic.” The “truth” is how the child’s life is different, or better, because of the “topic.” Without a clear “truth,” a discussion or experience doesn’t really apply the principles of the Shema because it is not clear how the child’s behavior can express his/her love for the Lord.

1. Parents need to identify the “truth” in the devotion. Children may not be able to do that on their own.
2. Parents need to challenge the child’s own application of the “truth.”
3. The “truth” should always teach children how to practice the Shema in life: *“And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”*

Jesus’ Examples of Using The “Sensitive Times” of The Shema



<u>Encounter</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Tools</u>	<u>Truth</u>
At Mary & Martha’s house (Lk. 10:38-42)	Time with God	<i>“When you sit in your house.”</i>	Conversations at meal time	Time with God is most important.
Encounter with the Scribe (Mk. 10:25-37)	Who is my neighbor?	<i>“When you walk along the road.”</i>	Telling a story “Good Samaritan”	Everyone is your neighbor.
During the storm at sea (Mk. 4:38)	Fear, trust God	<i>“When you lie down.”</i>	A storm	Jesus can calm your fears.
Jesus cooks breakfast (Jn. 21: 1-14)	Love and serving	<i>“When you rise up.”</i>	Conversations at meal time, fish	Jesus is alive, serve Him!

“Traditional” Family Devotions

The “traditional” devotion is usually conducted “When you sit in your house.” This can be during a meal time, or whenever the family gets together. The focus is the devotional book or a specific passage of scripture. Find out where your “topic” intersects with the Shema and your family. It is either a heart, soul, mind, strength, or neighbor issue.

Jimmy Kimmel book club “The Giving Tree”

Topic = selfishness

Timing = “When you sit in your house”

Tool = a story

Truth = do not be selfish (Phil. 2:3,4)



Devotional Do's And Don't's

Devotional Do's



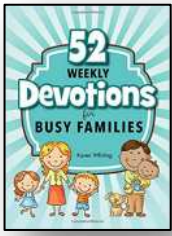
- **Pray** – Ask God how to make the “topic” fit your family.
- **Edit** – Shorten or condense content to meet attention spans & learning levels.
- **Introduce** – Authors, terms, settings, characters, customs.
- **Connect** – The “topic” to the child’s feelings/struggles and to the *Shema* (love).
- **Play** – Be natural, ask questions, keep a sense of humor, have fun!
- **Answer** – Answer questions (even off-topic); it is how children process information.
- **Focus** – Return the conversation back to the point when kids get side-tracked.
- **Reward** – Reinforce a child’s comments as a sign of “getting the message.”

Devotional Don't's



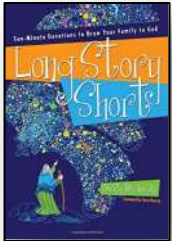
- **Force** – Don’t try to make children feel, think, or react the way you insist they do.
- **Bore** – Don’t just talk! Be creative--children must **DO** something in order to remember.
- **Just Sit** – Don’t insist on quiet sitting for too long; it’s painful for kids.
- **Dismiss** – Don’t ignore a child’s questions that are not part of your planned topic.
- **Quiz** – Don’t require memorization or correct answers after devotions.
- **Penalize** – Don’t punish or withhold approval when kids “don’t get it.”





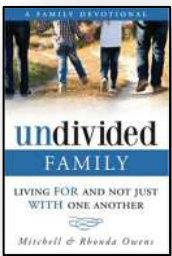
52 Weekly Devotions For Busy Families

Enjoy having 52 weekly devotions packed with engaging stories, hands-on activities, memory verses, and relevant discussion questions. Flexibly designed for families with busy schedules, it is the perfect way to get your whole family together for fun and memorable moments while building a personal connection with God! **Cost: \$10.53**



Long Story, Short

Transform Your Family with Ten Minutes a Day in the Gospel Story. Christian parents know the importance of passing the gospel on to their children, yet we live in a busy world filled with distractions. Schedules collide, and before you know it, everyone is getting to bed late again. **Cost: \$18.92**



Undivided Family

Undivided is a 12-week devotional that is truly for the ENTIRE family. From preschoolers to teenagers to parents, Undivided teaches each family member how to live FOR and not just WITH one another. Using 12 "one another" passages in the New Testament, each chapter breaks down into 4 easy and fun sections: "Learn It" - read and examine the context of the "one another" passage. "Live It" - determine how to apply the "one another" passage through a practical devotional reading. "Ask It" - answer discussion questions that will help all family members explore Biblical truths. "Give It" - complete an activity to reinforce each lesson. **Cost: \$11.99**



One Year of Dinner Table Devotions & Discussion Starters

Getting the kids to turn off the TV and video games is challenge enough—let alone gathering as a family to read and discuss the Bible! This book helps families start where they are already gathered together on a daily basis—around the dinner table. As the meal comes to a close, family members can take turns turning to the dinner-table devotion for that day, designed to be done together as a family in 10 to 15 minutes. The result is a meaningful daily discussion in which every family member can participate, drawing the whole family closer to God, and each other. **Cost: \$15.99**



New Morning Mercies

Mornings can be tough. Sometimes, a hearty breakfast and strong cup of coffee just aren't enough. Offering more than a rush of caffeine, best-selling author Paul David Tripp wants to energize you with the most potent encouragement imaginable: the gospel. Tripp knows that what we really need is an encounter with the living God. Then we'll be prepared to trust in God's goodness, rely on his grace, and live for his glory each and every day. **Cost: \$19.54**

“Non-traditional” Family Devotions

A “non-traditional” family devotion is more “organic,” and less structured. A “non-traditional” approach utilizes the 4 “sensitive times” identified in the Shema. This approach requires the parent to be aware of the “timing” and “tools” that are happening in “real time” all around them. This approach uses the technique of conversation, as Jesus did, to guide the child’s thoughts back to God, which is what the Shema challenges parents to do.

1. “*When you sit in your house...*” (inside times)

- Enjoy meals together
- Play games together
- Watch shows together
- Cooking together
- Arts / crafts together



2. “*When you walk along the road...*” (outside times)

- Enjoy meals in the car
- Walking around house, at the mall, etc.
- Sharing lunch together during school lunch time
- Going on “dates” together
- Watching movies together
- Enjoying hobbies together
- Going on field trips together



3. “*When you lie down...*” (bed time)

- Cuddle together
- Complimenting your child
- Reading stories together
- Talk about the day
- Praying together
- Singing together
- Laughing together



4. “*When you rise up...*” (morning time)

- Adjusting the morning schedule
- Cuddling together
- Complimenting your child
- Talk about dreams/hopes for the day
- Praying together
- Eating together



“Funtastic Devotions”

Directions:

1. Divide into groups of 2, 3, or 4.
2. Brainstorm creative “Timings” and “Tools” for family devotions, and see how many squares you can fill in on the chart below.
3. Consult the “Timings” and “Tools” below to stir your creative thinking.
4. Share your ideas for “Funtastic Devotions.”

Timing: When is the best time to teach on this topic?

- “When you sit in the house...” (*inside times*)
- “When you walk along the road...” (*outside times*)
- “When you lie down...” (*bed time*)
- “When you rise up...” (*morning time*)



Tools: Planned Activities that open up conversations* about spiritual truth?

Stories: Bible story, secular story, TV show, video game, puppets, skits, scrapbooks, songs, sound-effects

Art: Pictures, maps/charts, timelines, displays, crafts, sewing, sculpture, posters, murals, woodwork

Toys: Legos, dolls, role-plays, dress-up, puppet shows, trucks, action-figures, bubbles, puzzles, etc.

Chores: Caring for animals, cleaning up, dumping trash, washing dishes, setting table, yard work

Errands: Around town: grocery store, post office, dentist, doctor, gas station, cleaners

Destinations: Library, police station, fire station, zoo, park, fast food, restaurants, movies, “dates,” field trips, the mall

School: Travel to/from school, homework, projects, teachers, calendars, “To Do” lists.

Sports: Practice, conflicts, coaches, uniforms, skills, discipline, stress, teamwork, competition, envy

Friends: Trust, fun, secrets, shared likes/dislikes, past-times, feelings, anger, betrayal, values, bullies

Activities: Object lessons, bike riding, building, secular games & memory verse games, baking, service projects

Meal Times: At home, cooked by kids, on the road, on a “date,” as a treat, picnics, surprise packed in a lunch



*See “50 Questions To Ask Your Kids After School Instead of ‘How Was Your Day?’” in the APPENDIX visit: HerViewFromHome.com

Topic

What are we talking about?

Timing

When is the right time?

Tools

How can we best teach it?

Truth

How does this express a child's love for God?

1. Confessing our sins	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p>“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” <i>(1st John 1:9)</i></p>
2. Selfishness	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p>“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <u>4</u>not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” <i>(Phil. 2:3,4)</i></p>
3. Worry	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p>Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <i>(Phil. 4:6,7)</i></p>
4. Stealing	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p>“You shall not steal.” <i>(Exodus 20:15)</i></p>
5. Prayer; talking to God	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p>“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.” <i>(1 John 5:14, 15)</i></p>
6. Treasures	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p>“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” <i>(Mt. 6:21)</i></p>

7. Thankfulness	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.” (Ps. 107:1)</i>
8. Fear	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“Do not be afraid, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Is. 41:10)</i>
9. God’s Power: The Holy Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13)</i>
10. Work	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” (Col. 3:23)</i>
11. Friendship	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls.” (Ecc. 4:9,10)</i>
12.Direction / guidance	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.” (Prov. 3:6)</i>
13. Physical Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.” (1st Cor. 9:24)</i>
14. Loneliness	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<i>“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, ^h neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38,39.)</i>

15. Troubles	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p>“God causes all things to work together for good to those who loves God and are called according to His purposes. (Romans 8:28)</p>
16. Creation: The World we live in.	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p><i>The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (Ps. 19:1)</i></p>
17. Identify	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p><i>“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)</i></p>
18. Fights/strife	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p><i>What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ² You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)</i></p>
19. Peace-making	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p><i>“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.” (Matt. 5:9)</i></p>
20. Lying	<input type="checkbox"/> In your house <input type="checkbox"/> Along the road <input type="checkbox"/> Lie Down <input type="checkbox"/> Rise Up		<p><i>“The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.” (Prov. 12:22)</i></p>

APPENDIX

“Walk Along The Road” Ideas

Errand	Topic	Scripture	Discussion Prompt
1. Cleaners	Confessing Repentance Forgiveness	1 John 1:9 Ps. 51:10	Isn't it great to feel “clean” in the Lord? Is there anything that you feel God needs to clean in you?
2. Post Office	Prayer Talking to God “Hearing” God	Mt. 7:7-11	When you pray, what do you think happens?
3. Bank	“Treasures” Values Trust in God	Mt. 6:19-21 Mt. 6:25-33	What is valuable to you? What are your “treasures”?
4. Grocery Store	God's provision God's care God's blessings God's creation	Phil. 4:19 Ps. 23:1	Are we “rich” or “poor”? Why do you think God made food taste so good?
5. Dentist / Doctor	Trust in God Faith in God God's presence God's strength	Psalms 139 Prov. 3:5-7 Isa. 41:10	Are you scared? Do you think God will be with you at the doctors/dentists?
6. Gas Station	God's power Presence of Holy Sp.	Acts 1:8	How can we stay strong in God's power?
7. Coffee Shop	Feeling good w/God Peace of God Love for God Love for others Contentment	Col. 3:15 Phil. 4:6, 7 Mt. 6:25, 26	Isn't it great that God wants us to have His peace? What makes you content, or not content?
8. Going To School	Do all as unto God Gain wisdom Follow the Lord God's power God's wisdom Acknowledge God	Prov. 3:5-7, 13 Col. 3:23	Is getting smarter easy or hard? How can I pray for you today at school? What are you looking forward to today?
9. Fast Food	Thankfulness God's provision What “feeds” us Spiritual health	1 Peter 2:2 Mt. 5:6	Do you think that going to church just once a week is good enough?
10. Sports Practice/Game	Godly character Discipline Value of work “Run the race” Perseverance	Heb. 12:1-3	Does God like hard work? What is difficult about sports for you?

50 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR KIDS AFTER SCHOOL INSTEAD OF “HOW WAS YOUR DAY?”

1. What made you smile today?
2. Can you tell me an example of kindness you saw/showed?
3. Was there an example of unkindness? How did you respond?
4. Does everyone have a friend at recess?
5. What was the book about that your teacher read?
6. What's the word of the week?
7. Did anyone do anything silly to make you laugh?
8. Did anyone cry?
9. What did you do that was creative?
10. What is the most popular game at recess?
11. What was the best thing that happened today?
12. Did you help anyone today?
13. Did you tell anyone “thank you?”
14. Who did you sit with at lunch?
15. What made you laugh?
16. Did you learn something you didn't understand?
17. Who inspired you today?
18. What was the peak and the pit?
19. What was your least favorite part of the day?
20. Was anyone in your class gone today?
21. Did you ever feel unsafe?
22. What is something you heard that surprised you?
23. What is something you saw that made you think?
24. Who did you play with today?
25. Tell me something you know today that you didn't know yesterday.
26. What is something that challenged you?
27. How did someone fill your bucket today? Whose bucket did you fill?
28. Did you like your lunch?
29. Rate your day on a scale from 1-10.
30. Did anyone get in trouble today?
31. How were you brave today?
32. What questions did you ask at school today?
33. Tell us your top two things from the day (before you can be excused from the dinner table!).
34. What are you looking forward to tomorrow?
35. What are you reading?
36. What was the hardest rule to follow today?
37. Teach me something I don't know.
38. If you could change one thing about your day, what would it be?
39. (For older kids): Do you feel prepared for your history test?” or, “Is there anything on your mind that you'd like to talk about?” (In my opinion, the key is not only the way a question is phrased but responding in a supportive way.)
40. Who did you share your snacks with at lunch?
41. What made your teacher smile? What made her frown?
42. What kind of person were you today?
43. What made you feel happy?
44. What made you feel proud?
45. What made you feel loved?
46. Did you learn any new words today?
47. What do you hope to do before school is out for the year?
48. If you could switch seats with anyone in class, who would it be? And why?
49. What is your least favorite part of the school building? And favorite?
50. If you switched places with your teacher tomorrow, what would you teach the class?

From: Leslie Means at herviewfromhome.com