



THE RADICAL BOOK FOR KIDS

by Champ Thornton

Review by Tim Challies
October 25, 2016

I'm glad to say that this book passed the kid test. I deliberately left it lying on the table before my kids got home from school. My ten-year-old walked in, dumped her shoes and knapsack in the middle of the floor (we're still working on that) and sauntered toward the kitchen. But she didn't get there because she saw the book and just had to explore it. That's a good sign.

It isn't surprising, though, because Champ Thornton's *The Radical Book for Kids* is eye-catching inside and out. In fact, I think it's one of the best-looking kids' books I've seen in a long time. (Props to Tim Green for the excellent cover design and Scot McDonald for the interior work.) Best of all, that good looking interior and exterior complements the interesting, important content. Thornton, father to three young children, says,

"It's my prayer that this book will be used by God to grow deep roots of faith in the children who read it. More than this, I hope it will also encourage young readers to keep on learning about his Word, his gospel, his church, and life in his world. If this book makes our children more curious and thirsty to know God and the good news of his Word, then it will have done its job."

RADICAL FIRST MEANT "GOING TO THE ROOT" AND THIS BOOK GOES TO THE VERY ROOTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

So what is *The Radical Book for Kids*? First, it is a book for children to read on their own, with kids between the ages of 8 and 14 as the target audience. Parents or teachers might also find it a helpful resource, but primarily it's for children to read to themselves. Second, it's a book that is radical according to a few different meanings of the word. Radical first meant "going to the root" and this book goes to the very roots of the Christian faith. Second, the word means "extreme" or "drastic," and the book teaches "about following Jesus and standing for him in the storms of life" while also teaching about some people who did that. Third, it offers some radical ("excellent, cool") fun—creating pottery, locating stars, and even building slingshots and catapults. By all of those definitions it's radical.

The book is comprised of 67 short chapters that together span about 250 pages. It begins with a couple of chapters on the Bible, then advances to God and the gospel. From there it turns to the Christian life, sin, obedience, creation, and so on. Yet it doesn't progress in a completely linear way. Rather, it circles back to important subjects, advancing them incrementally each time. It pauses for fun from time to time, or adds a biography of a key Christian figure. It offers help with friendship,

with loving parents, with understanding the big picture of the Bible. It provides slick comparisons of the 4 gospels and then immediately offers instruction on tying 3 different kinds of knots. All throughout it is stuffed full of pictures, illustrations, sidebars, quizzes, and little points to ponder. All throughout it is written in a tone that speaks well to the target audience.

AS CHILDREN READ THIS BOOK THEY WILL ENCOUNTER FAITH QUESTIONS: CAN YOU PROVE THAT GOD EXISTS? HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS TRUE?

Overall, as children read this book they will encounter faith questions (Can you prove that God exists? How do we know the Bible is true?), fun facts, historical information and vignettes, lessons on the person and work of God, challenges to live like Jesus, fun skills to learn (friendship, cleaning your room, memorizing anything, etc.), challenges to attempt (make a sling, make a sundial, etc.), and knowledge about the Bible. It's a great combination and one children will enjoy. Michael Horton says it well in his commendation: "It's not just about fun facts; it is a spark for discovery of God, his world, and our place in it."

We're living at a time when we have some exceptional children's books available to us, books to complement and supplement the precious truths we want our children to know and to believe. *The Radical Book for Kids* is just such a book. It is especially noteworthy in that it is meant to be read *by* children rather than *to* children and in its excellent design that will effectively draw and hold their attention. It's a book I recommend and one I will be encouraging my children to read.

Review by Tim Challies, <http://www.challies.com/book-reviews/the-radical-book-for-kids>

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