

AN ILLUSTRATED READING & DISCUSSION GUIDE

YEAR OF THE DAD

365 small invitations to show up, learn, laugh, and love

BOOK CLUB KIT

Presence | Partnership | Faith | Humor | Legacy

Based on the book by Michael D. Young

WELCOME

A Year Made of Ordinary Days

Year of the Dad is built from 365 compact reflections, practical lessons, quotations, family activities, scriptural meditations, and comic observations. The form is part of the message: fatherhood is shaped less by one grand gesture than by what happens again tomorrow.



This guide treats the collection as a conversation companion rather than a test of perfect parenting. Participants can read the whole year, follow one theme at a time, or select entries that speak directly to their present season of family life.

Who can use it? Fathers, prospective fathers, grandfathers, mentors, spouses, adult children, and other caregivers. The manuscript often speaks directly to married fathers, but the central questions - presence, patience, responsibility, faith, and love - can be adapted to many family structures.

A useful posture

Read autobiographical counsel as an invitation to examine your own life, not as a universal verdict on someone else's family.

Current-care note

The collection originated in 2013-2014. Medical, developmental, product, and safety entries should prompt conversation, not replace current advice from qualified professionals or updated authoritative guidance.

CHOOSE A ROUTE

Four Ways Through 365 Entries

There is no wrong way to read a book designed one day at a time. Choose the pace that keeps reflection active and guilt low.

THE FULL YEAR

Read one numbered entry each day. Write one sentence: What will I notice or try today? Meet monthly to compare patterns.

TWELVE MONTHS

Use the challenge calendar on page 15. Each month combines selected entries with one small family practice.

SEVEN SESSIONS

Read the entry clusters on pages 6-12. This route moves from presence and caregiving to partnership, teaching, humor, and legacy.

ONE EVENING

Read Days 1, 15, 25, 84, 141, 209, 220, 227, 314, 349, 354, and 365. Use the question bank on page 14.

A simple 75-minute meeting

15 min	Close reading	Read two short passages aloud and notice tone, tension, and assumptions.
30 min	Discussion	Choose four or five questions; follow the energy rather than finishing the list.
15 min	Practice	Complete the session activity or select one family experiment.
5 min	Close	Name one idea to carry into the coming week.

ORIENTATION

The Seven Recurring Shelves

The entries repeatedly return to seven kinds of fatherhood work. Tracking these strands makes the collection feel less like miscellany and more like a deliberately varied year.

PRESENCE	Time, attention, technology, priorities, and the difference between providing for a family and being available to it.	Days 1, 7, 15, 209, 328
PRACTICAL CARE	Diapers, feeding, sleep, illness, emergencies, safety, and the humility of learning tasks in real time.	Days 3, 10, 31, 66, 122, 206
FAITH & FORMATION	Scripture, prayer, worship, mercy, service, and the image of divine fatherhood.	Days 8, 50, 84, 99, 113, 365
PARTNERSHIP	Marriage, listening, shared load, affection, trust, conflict, and protecting each other's growth.	Days 6, 41, 146, 265, 314, 349
TEACHING & RELEASE	Discipline, encouragement, chores, skills, school, independence, and letting children grow.	Days 18, 25, 57, 220, 339, 353
MODELS & STORIES	Biblical, historical, famous, and fictional fathers used as mirrors, warnings, and conversation starters.	Days 5, 47, 180, 229, 257, 320
HUMOR & MEMORY	Jokes, family rituals, mishaps, photographs, traditions, and the scraps of wisdom children remember.	Days 11, 84, 205, 335, 343, 354

Track the tension

As you read, notice when one shelf complicates another: work competes with presence; protection competes with independence; faith ideals meet exhausted family reality; humor relieves pressure but can also hide it.

START HERE

Before Advice, Tell the Truth

Use these questions before discussing any specific entry. They help the group name its assumptions and make room for different histories.



Opening questions

1. When you hear the word father, what emotion or image arrives first?
2. Which parts of parenting are learned by example, and which must be invented because no example fits?
3. What is the difference between being responsible for a child and trying to control a child's outcome?
4. Which ordinary family task carries more emotional meaning than outsiders would guess?
5. How do cultural, religious, and generational expectations shape the book's definition of a good dad?
6. When does parenting advice feel encouraging? When can it produce shame or defensiveness?
7. What kind of fatherhood work is most visible in public? What essential work is almost invisible?
8. What would make this discussion feel honest, useful, and safe for people with different family experiences?

Group covenant

Speak from your own experience. Avoid diagnosing absent family members. Participants may pass on any question. Curiosity is more useful than comparison.

SESSION 1

Presence Before Perfection

Days 1, 7, 15, 25, 209, 227, 328

The book repeatedly moves attention away from an idealized father and toward the father who notices, returns, and tries again.



Day 1 calls fatherhood "the most important work," while later entries ask what that claim means amid careers, fatigue, technology, and competing goals. The tension is not solved by unlimited time. It is negotiated through attention, boundaries, and small repeated choices.

Discuss

1. What does the book mean by making children a priority? Which forms of priority are sustainable?
2. Day 15 distinguishes earning money from meeting emotional needs. Where do these responsibilities reinforce each other, and where do they collide?
3. Day 25 compares children to plants that must grow for themselves. How does that image correct both neglect and overinvolvement?
4. How does Day 209 turn self-evaluation into growth rather than self-condemnation?
5. What is gained when the book values "high quality" moments? What might be lost if that phrase excuses chronic absence?

Attention audit

For one week, mark three daily moments: when you were fully present, when attention split, and when you repaired a missed connection. Discuss the pattern, not the score.

SESSION 2

Learning in the Hard Hours

Days 3, 10, 31, 45, 66, 101, 122, 136, 141, 164, 199, 206	Competence grows through care: the practical task and the emotional task are often inseparable.
---	---



The new-father entries honor tasks that rarely look heroic: feeding, bathing, packing, soothing, watching symptoms, and asking for help. Day 141 adds the emotional center - a father can feel unqualified and still become stronger through practice, prayer, partnership, and persistence.

Discuss

1. Why can a small caregiving skill feel like an "audible badge of honor" to a new parent?
2. Which is harder to admit: "I do not know how" or "I cannot do this alone"? Why?
3. How does the feeding-tube memory in Day 141 change the tone of the surrounding practical advice?
4. Where does calm help in a crisis, and where must calm be paired with quick professional help?
5. How can a family divide specialized care without allowing one adult to become the default expert and invisible manager?

Care map

List the recurring physical, emotional, logistical, and medical tasks in one family season. Mark who notices, plans, performs, and follows up. Choose one imbalance to discuss without blame.

SESSION 3

Faith in Ordinary Family Life

Days 2, 8, 50, 78, 84, 99, 113, 128, 148, 183, 204, 260, 365

Faith is presented less as perfect performance than as mercy, ritual, service, and a love that remains.



Day 84 is a comic turning point. It dismantles the fantasy of a flawless family devotional and replaces it with popcorn, mess, tantrums, a drive, and a modest spiritual experience. The entry asks whether a practice brings people closer, not whether it photographs well.

Discuss

1. Why is the exaggerated "picture-perfect" family evening funny? What pressure does the humor release?
2. How does the book connect earthly fatherhood with divine fatherhood? When is that comparison comforting or difficult?
3. Day 50 frames forgiveness as compassion received and then passed on. What does that pattern require after real harm?
4. In the lighthouse image of Day 99, parents and children serve together. How does shared service change family hierarchy?
5. Day 365 says nothing should separate children from a parent's love. How do boundaries, accountability, and enduring love coexist?

Redesign a ritual

Choose one family practice that creates stress. Preserve its purpose, remove one perfectionistic expectation, and add one element that makes connection more likely.

SESSION 4

Marriage as a Parenting Practice

Days 6, 13, 27, 41, 90, 118, 146, 160, 193, 202, 244, 265, 272, 300, 307, 314, 349, 356

The spouse-focused entries argue that fatherhood includes the climate adults create with and for one another.



The manuscript links kindness between spouses to children's security and example. Its strongest partnership entries move beyond romance toward listening, shared strain, recovery, trust, and protecting each person's interests and rest.

Discuss

1. What is persuasive about the claim that a healthy marriage benefits children? What qualifications does that claim need?
2. Day 265 distinguishes helping from listening. Why do problem-solving instincts sometimes block intimacy?
3. How do Days 41 and 272 frame a spouse's goals as a family concern rather than a private hobby?
4. Day 314 calls trust greater than love. Is trust a feeling, an accumulated history, a practice, or all three?
5. How can the Golden Rule of Day 349 help conflict? Where might "treat others as you wish" need to become "learn how they wish to be treated"?

Listening experiment

For ten minutes, one partner describes a current pressure. The listener may ask clarifying questions but may not solve it. End by asking: "Would support, brainstorming, or action help most?"

SESSION 5

Teach, Encourage, Release

Days 18, 25, 57, 64, 109, 157, 209, 220, 227, 339, 345, 353

Good teaching gradually transfers agency; good discipline keeps dignity intact while skills are still forming.



Day 220 offers the clearest developmental pattern in the book: begin with support, then reduce it until the child can carry the skill. Other entries apply the same principle to emotion, school, chores, faith, and decision-making.

Discuss

1. What is the difference between doing something for a child, doing it with a child, and coaching from nearby?
2. How does encouragement shape identity differently from praise focused only on results?
3. Which parental fears make it hardest to reduce support at the right time?
4. Day 353 recommends admitting when a parent does not know an answer. What does that model about learning and authority?
5. How can consequences teach without humiliation? What forms of repair should follow a parent's own overreaction?

Scaffolding ladder

Choose one skill a child is learning. Write four rungs: I demonstrate; we do it together; I prompt from nearby; you do it and reflect. Decide what evidence signals readiness for the next rung.

SESSION 6

The Fathers We Borrow From Stories

Days 5, 19, 47, 68, 75, 103, 117, 124, 180, 187, 208, 222, 229, 236, 243, 250, 257, 264, 278, 285, 299, 320, 327, 334, 348, 355, 362

Historical and fictional fathers function as quick moral case studies - useful, selective, and open to challenge.



The book ranges freely from Adam and Noah to Bach, Jim Henson, Jean Valjean, Mufasa, Marlin, Geppetto, Jor-El, and Mr. Darling. These portraits reveal as much about the values being sought as they do about the figures themselves.

Discuss

1. What does a one-page father profile gain through focus? What complexity can it erase?
2. Which fictional father in the book offers the richest mixture of admirable and harmful choices?
3. Day 264 reads Aladdin through a missing father. What risks arise when a story explains hardship mainly through paternal absence?
4. How do the profiles define sacrifice? When can sacrifice become control, martyrdom, or emotional debt?
5. Which father from history, scripture, film, or your own life would you add - and what single tension would his profile explore?

Counter-profile

Choose one profile and write the missing paragraph: a limitation, context, another character's perspective, or a question the original interpretation leaves open.

SESSION 7

Memory, Legacy, and the Long View

Days 130, 137, 148, 155, 205, 227, 288, 309, 323, 333, 335, 340, 346, 347, 351, 354, 365

Legacy is made from repeated words and ordinary moments, while love learns to persist without possessing.



The final stretch looks backward and forward at once: photographs, traditions, lines from poems, skills passed down, departures, and the surprising scraps children remember. Day 354 supplies a key: formation often happens in odd moments when no one thinks a lesson is underway.

Discuss

1. What kinds of family memories does the book preserve most vividly - planned milestones or accidental details?
2. How does Day 335 use old photographs to deepen intimacy between spouses as well as preserve childhood?
3. What is the difference between leaving a legacy and scripting a child's future?
4. Day 346 treats departure as emotionally significant. What rituals help family members separate and reconnect?
5. How do Day 354's "little scraps of wisdom" challenge formal definitions of teaching?

Memory interview

Ask an adult child, parent, mentor, or sibling: "What small thing from our family life do you still carry?" Record the answer exactly, then discuss why that moment lasted.

PATTERNS

Themes and Motifs to Track

These themes recur across practical advice, humor, scripture, quotations, profiles, and personal memories. Use them to connect entries written months apart.

**PRESENCE
VS.
PROVISION**

A paycheck sustains a household, but attention sustains relationship. The book keeps asking how to honor both.

**PERFECTION
VS.
PRACTICE**

The ideal father is repeatedly displaced by the learning father: unqualified, tired, repentant, and still becoming.

**PROTECTION
VS. AGENCY**

Children need safety and structure, but also room to choose, fail, learn, and become distinct people.

**AUTHORITY
VS. SERVICE**

Strong fatherhood is most persuasive when power becomes care, teaching, repair, and example rather than dominance.

FAITH VS. PERFORMANCE

Spiritual life is located in mercy and connection more often than flawless ritual.

**HUMOR VS.
SHAME**

Jokes normalize chaos and inadequacy. Discuss when humor frees a family and when it evades pain.

**MEMORY VS.
CONTROL**

Photos, traditions, and stories preserve connection; legacy becomes unhealthy when it demands a predetermined future.

FLEXIBLE FORMAT

One-Night Question Bank

Select six questions: two personal, two interpretive, one challenging, and one forward-looking. Do not try to finish the page.

1. Which entry made you feel most seen?	9. Which quotation gains new meaning beside the author's experience?
2. Which entry made you resist or argue back?	10. How do faith and family practice shape one another?
3. What practical task taught you something emotional?	11. When does protection become overprotection?
4. Where does the book confuse an ideal with a universal rule?	12. How should parents respond when a child's path differs from their hopes?
5. Which definition of fatherhood is broadest? Which is narrowest?	13. Which invisible form of care deserves more recognition?
6. What role does repentance or repair play in being a good parent?	14. What advice would change for a single, adoptive, foster, or noncustodial father?
7. Where does humor carry the argument better than instruction?	15. Which entry most clearly shows love as an action?
8. What does the book understand especially well about exhaustion?	16. What one practice is worth trying for seven days?

Strong closing prompt

Complete this sentence without explaining it away: "The kind of fatherhood I want to practice is..."

PRACTICE

A Twelve-Month Year of the Dad

Each month pairs a reading focus with one small experiment. Begin anywhere; the calendar is cyclical, not a pass-fail program.

JAN NOTICE Read: Days 1, 7, 15 Try: Protect one recurring 20-minute window of undivided attention.	FEB PARTNER Read: Days 6, 41, 265 Try: Ask what support would feel most useful this week.
MAR LEARN Read: Days 3, 31, 220 Try: Learn or teach one care skill side by side.	APR PLAY Read: Days 9, 72, 142 Try: Let a child choose a simple family activity.
MAY REMEMBER Read: Days 135, 227, 335 Try: Record one ordinary family story with names and details.	JUN GO OUT Read: Days 65, 93, 331 Try: Plan one low-cost outdoor outing and leave phones away.
JUL SERVE Read: Days 50, 99, 310 Try: Choose a small act of service the family can do together.	AUG TEACH Read: Days 57, 157, 353 Try: Use a four-rung scaffolding plan for one school or life skill.
SEP LISTEN Read: Days 146, 193, 265 Try: Hold one ten-minute conversation without offering a solution.	OCT LAUGH Read: Days 11, 84, 343 Try: Write down the family mishap everyone can safely laugh about.
NOV THANK Read: Days 254, 307, 333 Try: Name one specific contribution from each family member.	DEC RETURN Read: Days 84, 181, 365 Try: Simplify one tradition so connection matters more than display.

Keep it small

If a practice creates more strain than connection, shrink it. The book's best insight is that ordinary faithfulness counts.

WORKSHEET

The Fatherhood Inventory

Use privately first. The goal is not a score; it is to identify one relationship-strengthening next step.

Rate each statement: 1 = rarely true | 2 = sometimes | 3 = often | 4 = usually | 5 = consistently

I make room for a child's attention without multitasking.	1 2 3 4 5
I know the current interests, pressures, and joys of the people I care for.	1 2 3 4 5
I can admit that I do not know something and seek help.	1 2 3 4 5
I participate in repetitive physical and logistical care.	1 2 3 4 5
I support my spouse or co-parent's rest, goals, and separate identity.	1 2 3 4 5
I listen before deciding whether advice is wanted.	1 2 3 4 5
I correct behavior without attacking identity.	1 2 3 4 5
I gradually transfer skills and responsibility instead of holding control.	1 2 3 4 5
I apologize and repair after I lose patience or miss a need.	1 2 3 4 5
I make room for play, ritual, humor, and ordinary memory.	1 2 3 4 5
I communicate enduring love even when I must set a boundary.	1 2 3 4 5

One strength I want to protect: _____

One pattern I want to repair: _____

One person whose perspective I need: _____

My smallest next step: _____

ACTIVITY

Design an Imperfect Family Ritual

Inspired by Days 2 and 84: build a repeatable practice that fits the actual family rather than the imaginary one.



- 1 | PURPOSE** What relationship, value, memory, or spiritual need should this ritual serve?
- 2 | REALITY** What ages, schedules, abilities, energy limits, distances, or sensory needs shape participation?
- 3 | MINIMUM** What is the smallest version that still counts on a hard day?
- 4 | DELIGHT** What food, music, movement, game, place, or joke would make people want to return?
- 5 | OWNERSHIP** How can children or other family members choose, lead, adapt, or opt into a role?
- 6 | REPAIR** If the ritual goes badly, how will the family reset without abandoning its purpose?

Our ritual: _____

We will try it on: _____ **and review it after:** _____

FOR THE HOST

Facilitating with Care

Fatherhood touches belonging, grief, abuse, disability, divorce, faith, and regret. Make room for complexity without turning the group into therapy or debate court.

INVITE, DO NOT REQUIRE

Let participants pass. Do not assume everyone had a safe father or wants children.

NAME THE BOOK'S LOCATION

The manuscript reflects a Christian, Latter-day Saint, married-father perspective from 2013-2014. Treat that location as context, not a universal template.

KEEP MEDICAL MATERIAL CURRENT

Do not use older health or safety entries as instructions. Encourage current professional or authoritative guidance for seizures, autism, medication, feeding, car seats, illness, and emergencies.

SEPARATE IDEALS FROM WEAPONS

An ideal can inspire self-reflection; it should not be used to shame a spouse, parent, child, or absent group member.

ASK FOR EXAMPLES

Move from slogans such as "family first" to concrete choices, costs, tradeoffs, and repair.

END WITH A SMALL PRACTICE

Choose an action that is specific, voluntary, and realistic within one week.

WHEN TALK STALLS

Try: "What part feels true? What needs qualification?" or "What would this look like on an exhausted Tuesday?"

CLOSING REFLECTION

What Will Remain?

Allow two quiet minutes before anyone speaks. Participants may write, share, or simply keep the answer.



The manuscript begins by calling fatherhood the most important work and ends with a love that refuses separation. Between those claims lie hundreds of ordinary acts: a diaper, a meal, a prayer, a joke, a hard conversation, a lesson repeated, a photograph saved, an apology offered, a hand released at the right moment.

1 | REMEMBER

Name one small act of care from your past that still shapes you.

2 | REPAIR

Name one relationship in which love needs a more concrete form.

3 | RELEASE

Name one outcome you cannot control, but can meet with integrity and presence.

4 | RETURN

Name one ordinary practice you are willing to begin again tomorrow.

"Nothing should separate our children from our love."

Final question

What do you hope the people you love will remember from the odd moments when you did not know you were teaching?

Prepared from Year of the Dad by Michael D. Young.