

STUDY GUIDE

MAMA BEAR

Apologetics[®]

HILLARY MORGAN FERRER



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Mama Bear Apologetics® Study Guide

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WELCOME, AND HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Welcome! We are thrilled you've chosen to use this study guide. Our sincere desire is that as you work through this guide, you will be gently challenged but not at all overwhelmed. With that in mind, we want to share some tips on how to make the most of your reading and this guide.

Before you read a chapter in the *Mama Bear Apologetics* book:

- We would love for you to have a four-color retractable click pen (flashback to high school!) on hand, but if you don't, grab four different colored pencils, pens, or highlighters and use a system similar to the one we are recommending below in **While you read**.
- Have a dictionary or dictionary app ready for reference.
- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth.
- Skim through the chapter title and bold-print subheads to get an idea of what you're going to read (this is a pre-reading strategy that helps get you excited to dig in).
- Think of a question or two you hope will be answered in the chapter.

While you read the chapter:

I have used this multicolor note-taking system for almost a decade. It has helped me to actively read and organize material so

that, even years later, I can go back and glance through the book for the main points and my favorite quotes. The strategy suggested here is a simplified version of my system, so you can tweak it for what works best for you. I find that color-coding is helpful for future reference purposes:

- Black ink—draw a box around unfamiliar words and draw a squiggly line under the definition *if* it appears within the text. (Squiggly lines will help you distinguish definitions from general notes.) If the word is not defined, record definitions in the margins or at the back of the book. We recommend looking up the word meanings right away!
- Blue ink—underline generally helpful passages for easy skimming. This will help you when you search through the book later for the main ideas.
- Green ink—use this color for content that you have questions about. (I also draw a question mark in the margin.)
- Red ink or highlight—save this for the true “Aha!” moments or ideas you want to remember. (This is especially helpful for finding key quotes and thoughts in the future.)

After you read the chapter:

- Quickly skim through the chapter to review all the words you’ve underlined, highlighted, and written in the margins. (Look at all those colors—this is your pat on the back for being an active reader!)
- Jump into the study guide material for that chapter.

In each chapter of the study guide you will find an introductory thought followed by six major sections. We want you to set your own pace, so we haven’t divided the lessons or sections into specific days, but you could choose to work through one section a day Monday through Friday. Here are the sections:

Active Reading Notes: Here you will record a few pre-, mid-, and post-reading thoughts, including vocabulary (see example and fuller explanation below).

Active Reading Notes (sample and explanations)

READING FOCUS:	MY RESPONSE:
Before you read:	
After skimming the chapter title and subheads, what is one question you would like to have answered in the chapter?	My question: Does protecting my kids mean sheltering them?
While you read:	
Vocabulary: Here you will list three words <i>you</i> found in the chapter, and we will add a few words we want to make sure you find.	My words: Here, write down words that are unfamiliar to you, and make your best attempt to briefly record the definition. Book words: Here, you'll find words that are defined in the book. Page numbers are given so that you can fill in the definitions in this space.
After you read:	
Answer: Did you find an answer to your pre-reading question? (We hope so.) If yes, write it here.	My answer: Protecting will involve some sheltering, but the best protection is teaching them how to discern for themselves.
"Aha!" Moments: List three things you highlighted or underlined in the chapter. This can be new information you learned or encouraging reinforcements of things you knew. Or just plain anything that popped out at you.	My "Aha!" moments: 1. 2. 3.

Empowering Words: Supplemental and significant vocabulary will be given here.

Empowering Thoughts: Supplemental or reinforcing thoughts will be included here.

Digging Deeper: Here we will ask some guiding questions to help you process what you've learned and further equip you to Roar Like a Mother. But be aware! Not all the questions are simple "regurgitate what the book said" kinds of questions. Many are intended to make you *think* through the material, drawing connections and wrestling through real-life scenarios. But don't worry! If you get stuck on a question, just move on until you feel more comfortable digging in. Or better yet, grab some girlfriends for coffee and discuss it! Whether or not you answer every single question, you *will* come away from this study guide with a much deeper grasp of what you're learning.

Key Scriptures: Here we've offered a few related scriptures that can help you reflect on what God says regarding some of the ideas presented in each chapter. We recommend journaling through each of them, evaluating *how* the passages reinforce or address the biblical perspective of the topic at hand.

Paws for Prayer: Here you will be guided in a sweet time of prayer—a time to take what you're learning to God and to intentionally involve the Holy Spirit in your journey. The PAWS for prayer section has four steps:

PRAISE—Identify the *attributes* of God that you have seen manifested lately. You may be thankful *for* a recent bonus, but you will want to *praise* God for being Jehovah Rapha, the God who provides. Or, maybe you didn't get the bonus and you don't know why. *Praise* God for His omniscience and how He knows what you need when you need it, even if you don't understand. Praising God for *who* He is rather than *what* He does will help you orient your heart toward Him, no matter what is going on in your life, good or bad. If you need a little help with this section, I recommend googling "attributes of God" or "names of God."

ADMIT—Acknowledge the areas where you have blown it. Maybe you didn't trust God, or you acted in anger with your kids or husband. Whatever your dirty laundry, bring it to God here. He already knows your heart and wants to be with you as you learn to navigate this thing called the Christian life.

WORSHIP through thanksgiving—Here is where you can thank God for specific things He has *done*. When you remember that all good things come from Him, you realize you have much to be thankful for.

SUPPLICATION (or SUBMIT your requests)—After you have praised God for who He is, admitted where you are struggling, and worshipped through thanksgiving, then present your requests to Him. Sometimes God doesn't give us what we ask for because we ask with wrong motives (James 4:3). Or sometimes what we want would thwart something that He—in His goodness and knowledge—is doing in our lives that couldn't be accomplished if He answered our specific wish. But He still wants us to ask, and we can know that however He chooses to answer, it is for our good. How awesome is that?



Part 1

RISE UP, MAMA BEARS

In Part 1, we learn what it means to be a Mama (or Papa) Bear and why our desire to empower our kids is so important and timely! We learn about the youth exodus—what it is, and why we should be concerned. We also gain clarity on what real discernment is while exposing one of the enemy's most confusing tactics: *linguistic theft*.

We hope the following pages will shed light on the cultural confusion you're likely experiencing on a daily basis *and* empower you to have God-honoring conversations with your friends, neighbors, and children. We want you to have tools that will help you think critically about the issues of our day. Critical thinking doesn't mean you are *criticizing* anything. Rather, it means that you are able to analyze information, evaluate its sources and content, and make reasonable judgments as to the pros and cons of the idea. This will give you the confidence to dignify secular worldviews while respectfully demonstrating how a biblical approach best addresses common concerns.

Are you ready to chew and spit and Roar Like a Mother? Let's go, Mama Bears!



LESSON 1

CALLING ALL MAMA BEARS

As parents—as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and guardians—one of our most important jobs is preparing kids for the real world. Our children are growing up in a society that is vastly different than the one in which we grew up. I loved memorizing Bible verses as a child, but I didn't have to deal with the culture telling me that the Bible was full of contradictions or that it was just a book of fairy tales. The trustworthiness of Scripture was presumed. That is not the case anymore. We can no longer rely on Western culture to reinforce our Christian beliefs, and we cannot ignore the fact that youth are leaving the church in droves. What many parents don't know is that some of the reasons for their departure are totally preventable.

Mama Bear Apologetics, page 22

ACTIVE READING NOTES

READING FOCUS:	MY RESPONSE:
Before you read:	
After skimming the chapter title and subheads, what is one question you would like to have answered in the chapter?	My question:

While you read:	
<i>Vocabulary:</i> Here you will list three words <i>you</i> found in the chapter and a few words we want to make sure you found.	My words: Book words: <i>Youth exodus</i> (page 27) —
After you read:	
<i>Answer:</i> Did you find an answer to your pre-reading question? (We hope so.) If yes, record it to the right.	My answer:
<i>“Aha!” Moments:</i> List three things you highlighted or underlined in the chapter. This can be new information you learned or encouraging reinforcements of things you knew. Or just plain anything that popped out at you.	My “Aha!” moments: 1. 2. 3.

EMPOWERING WORDS

- *Apologetics*—From the Greek term *apologia* (“answer/defense”). Means to give a reasoned answer for why one believes something to be true.
- *Agnosticism*—Belief that one doesn’t know or cannot know whether God exists. People who hold this view are called agnostics.
- *Moralistic therapeutic deism*—A general belief that God exists, but only to make you a happier, better (but not necessarily *holier*) person. The term is from Christian

Smith and Melinda Denton, *Soul Searching and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (2005).

- *Generation X*—People born between (roughly) 1965–1979.
- *Generation Z*—People born between (roughly) 1995–2010, mostly children of Gen Xers. This generation is also known as “digital natives” because they grew up with the Internet and smart phones. This group trends politically liberal and religiously “none” (no formal religious affiliation). Their interactions on social media play a huge role in their sense of self.
- *Skepticism*—A method, habit, or tendency to doubt. People who identify themselves as skeptics are usually referring to religious skepticism.

EMPOWERING THOUGHTS

When it comes to teaching children the difference between right and wrong thinking, there are basically three approaches parents use:

- Reactionary—you take action *after* a problem has arisen
- Responsive—you take action *while* the problem is taking place
- Anticipatory—you take action *before* the problem arises

Why do you think so many parents tend to default toward the reactionary approach?

While there is extra work involved in using the anticipatory approach, what are some advantages of taking this path?

Sometimes all we can do is take the reactionary approach (I mean, we can't foresee *all* possible problems before they arise). However, which of these approaches is best suited for children's spiritual growth?

DIGGING DEEPER

Why Apologetics Is So Important for Parents

1. How do *both* emotions and knowledge (i.e., head *and* heart) build a house of faith? Do you have a tendency to rely more heavily on one or the other (pages 23-26)? Why do you think that is?

2. Read the story of the Ferrers' pastor (pages 25-26). How did the pastor feel *before* he went to John's debate? How did he feel after? What changed his mind?

3. What did you think about apologetics before you read this chapter? Has your view changed after reading, and if so, how?

The Youth Exodus

4. In what ways have you personally experienced the youth exodus—either in your generation while growing up or in your children's generation?

5. Were the results of the Barna Survey listed on page 29 shocking to you? Which two statistics do you find to be the most troubling? Do you feel equipped to navigate doubts and struggles like this? (If not, no worries. You're in the right place!)

KEY SCRIPTURES

We encourage you to read the following verses in context (read at least the entire chapter), reflect on how they relate to what you're learning, and thank God for the hope and guidance found in His Word.

- *Colossians 2:8*—"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."
- *1 Timothy 6:20-21*—"Guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called 'knowledge,' for by professing it some have swerved from the faith."
- *Proverbs 22:6*—"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."



PAWS FOR PRAYER

In closing this chapter, reflect on what you learned in Lesson 1 and journal your prayer to God here.

Praise:

Admit:

Worship with thanksgiving:

Supplication (ask):