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**Praying with children**

Praying with our children is an amazing thing to do! Getting children used to praying themselves is a really important part of them growing up with God.

There are four ideas to help you do it at different times of day. You don’t have to do all four – in fact, it might be best to pick one let your child(ren) get used to it, before thinking about another one.

All include space for children to say what they would like to pray for. It is important we take what they say seriously – if it is important to them then that’s important to God.

These are only suggestions. You know you’re children best, so feel free to mix things up! The important thing is just to give it a go.

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**Praying in the morning**

Many Christians say grace before a meal. It is a way of remembering that everything we have comes from God and saying ‘thank you.’ It is a great prayer to do with children because there is something they can see in front of them!

You could introduce saying grace at any meal, but breakfast is great because it means that you can start the day with God as a family.

So before you eat, pause for a moment with your child(ren) and thank God for what you have to eat and drink. You might like to ask them if there is anything they would like to thank God for.

Saying ‘thank you’ often means we think of others. Why not finish your grace by asking God to help those who are hungry or thirsty.

*You might like to use this prayer*

Loving God, thank you for this food and those we share it with. Please help everyone in this world to have enough. Amen.

Praying often means we want to do something. It is great to include children in that. You could bake as a family and give away what you make to brighten someone’s day. Or what about asking your child(ren) if they would like to choose something to give to the Foodbank?

You could use a website such as BBC Newsround to help your child(ren) understand more about people in need.

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**Praying during the day**

Days with children can be very busy! But you don’t need to be at home to pray. ‘I spy’ prayers are a way of praying whilst you are out and about. It isn’t about guessing, but about praising God for all the amazing things we see around us.

You can do this on the way to school, whilst you’re at the shops, in the car or on the bus – wherever and whenever works for you.

Take it in turns to spy something out to praise God for and say “I spy with my little eye…” And after each one say “Thank you God!”

If you have a bit of time, spend a minute with your child(ren) looking around first. Ask them to think of the things they would like to praise God for – nature, people, things that help us, things that make us smile – and then start to play.

You could use different senses too, like “I hear with my little ear…”

**Praying about the day**

Drawing or colouring can be a brilliant way to pray with children because it allows them to be creative and have fun when they pray.

Get some blank paper, some pens, pencils and colours. Let you child(ren) use them to draw or write something they would like to say to God – it can be a mixture of words, pictures and patterns.

You can use this to help your child(ren) reflect on their day in prayer.

Ask them to think about the things that have made them happy. What would they like say to God?

What about the things that have made them sad, worried or angry? What would they like to tell God about them?

Finally, ask them to think about anything they wished they hadn’t done or are sorry for? Can they draw something to represent those things?

This can last for a couple of minutes or much longer. You could put some music on in the background – why not see if you can find a song from church on YouTube, Spotify or something similar?

With younger children it can be best to work together to create a prayer page. Older children might prefer to do it by themselves. Either way, it is good to remind them that no matter what has happened during the day God loves them.

*You might like to use this prayer*

Thank you God that you always love us and you are always with us.

Please help us with the things we find hard.

**Praying before bed**

Praying with your child before they go to bed can be a great habit to get into. It can be a time of peace and calm when they are tired and it reminds them (and us!) that God is with them through the night.

You can use this as an opportunity to talk about your child’s day. Maybe ask them what they would like to thank God for. Is there anyone they would like to ask God to help?

If you’re praying with an older child, maybe think about where God has been in their day.

You might like to use this prayer

*Jesus, friend of children, be a friend to me.*

*Take my hand, and ever keep me, close to you.*

Or you could say the Lord’s Prayer together

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

*your kingdom come, your will be done,*

*on earth as in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.*

*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.*

*Amen.*

Or pray for your child using this blessing from the Bible

*May the Lord bless you and keep you*

*May the Lord make his face shine upon you*

*May the Lord be gracious to you and give you peace.*