

Ideas for Praying with Kids

By Associate Pastor Matt

1) Scriptural

- Prayers are not for teaching! God doesn't need to be taught
- Model doctrinally sound, biblical prayers to your kids (praying straight up scripture is always a safe route just in case!)
- Don't always feel the need to comment or correct kids where the prayer is doctrinally off- you can do that later (especially could be embarrassing in front of siblings). Use discernment- you know your kids better than I do! If you are constantly correcting them, you might exasperate them and frustrate their zeal to pray (Ephesians 6:4)

Simple

- Make sure your language is relevant (kid appropriate with vocabulary)
- Try using normal words, not "churchy" language that makes God feel separate and disjointed from everyday life

Short

- Little kids: 1-5 minutes generally (length does not equal godliness)
 - Remember the danger of the Pharisees' long prayers!
 - Lord's Prayer is short
 - Expect them to be distracted- adults tune out too!

Reverent

- Trying to focus on giving God attention- show them how you respect God's Word and take joyful obedience very serious
- Teach your kids that they can talk to God (just like they would talk to mommy, daddy, a friend) about anything and prayer is always appropriate, always!

Spontaneous

- When a child comes with a need, address it there and then
- Like applying a band-aid or medicine when they're sick

Styles

- Popcorn (random turns- whoever wants to pray prays, with one person chosen to start and another to end)
- Take turns in a circle
- Take turns one person praying each session (or as the leader you pray for one person specifically each session, etc.)
- A simple model:
 - ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication
 - CHAT: Confess, Honor, Ask, Thank
 - I'm sorry, I love you, Please, Thank you
- Prayer Walks ("Eyes Open" Prayer)
 - Pray for business, houses, churches, etc.

What to pray for

- Praying for others:
 - Fellow Church Members
 - Family
 - Neighbors, Co-workers, and so on
 - Leaders (parents, teachers, pastors, politicians, etc.)
 - Sharing prayer requests together (parents can show appropriate vulnerability, teens sometimes harder to open up)
- Praying scripture
 - Direct passages
 - Using scripture as a launch pad (i.e. John chapter 3 or 4 to pray for a lost man or woman you know)

Engaging (especially for little or antsy kids)

- Kinesthetic Learning
 - Prayer "blow up" beach ball
 - Hold string/yarn to know who's turn it is
 - Vase with branches and leaves
- Using our bodies in prayer
 - Breathing exercises
 - Example (Psalm 56:3-4): When I am afraid/ I put my trust in you/ In God whose word I praise/ In God I trust/ I won't be afraid/ What can people do to me?

- Using body parts (feet, knees, tummy, hands, mouth, ears, eyes, head)
- Prayer in Song (Psalm 119:105)
- Daily Highs and Lows

Responding (thanking God for Answered Prayer)

- Remembering what God has done & cultivating thanks
 - Share with kids how God has answered prayer in your life
 - Examples: Psalm 136 (repeated “Thanks”)
 - “Open eye” prayers aren’t bad! Teaches kids to open eyes and thank God for all the things (toys, books etc) they have, for their health (hearing, sight, smell, etc), and so on
 - Basket with notes/drawings of what you’re praying/thankful for
- Keep a prayer journal with your kids
 - Opportunity to thank God for the prayers He has answered
 - Make it visual by using a binder, or use a whiteboard in a room in your house or paint a wall with chalk paint and keep track of it there
 - Help kids see the different ways God answers prayer (sometimes with a yes, sometimes a no)

Missions

- Younger children have a smaller world and sometimes only comprehend what’s in front of them (Missions is harder to grasp)
- Help them pray for a sick friend or thank God for a new pet or gift in a friend’s life
- Use an app to share more information (Joshua Project)
- Use globe/maps
- Prayer/Christmas cards/etc to make praying for missions/missionaries more concrete

Bless your children

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-do-i-bless-my-children-before-bed>