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parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Help Children Harness the Power of Prayer

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To remind your family members to converse with him regularly.
2. To show your children that prayer involves more than just asking God for stuff.
3. To help you include listening to God as part of your prayer time.

Prayer is many things: a privilege, a command, a blessing, and an active way to build our faith with Jesus.

“Prayer is the conversation of life,” says Adam Stadtmiller, author of *Give Your Kids the Keys* (Regal). “Prayer is always available. Prayer is always the answer. Every issue in our life finds its solution and answer in prayer.”

Stadtmiller emphasizes that prayer is for all people, no matter their age. “There’s no difference between the importance of prayer in the life of a child and that of an adult,” he writes.

Although prayer should be natural, it might not come naturally to children. Even Jesus’ disciples needed to be taught how to pray; that’s why

Jesus gave them the Lord’s Prayer (see Matthew 6:9-13).

By modeling prayer in a variety of styles and settings, parents can teach children the following:

- Prayer involves ongoing conversational dialogue with our almighty yet approachable God.
- Prayer can be spontaneous or planned, short or long, loud or silent, for ourselves or for other people.
- Prayer involves praise, confession, and thanksgiving, not just requests.
- God is at work through our prayers and always answers them—though sometimes not how we want or after a long period of waiting.

Read on for practical ideas about putting prayer’s power to work in your family.

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Pray Without Ceasing

As children's communication skills develop and grow, so does their ability to pray. Toddlers begin to understand that Jesus is their friend, so pray to him in simple language that relates to children's daily lives. Preschoolers become more aware of the world around them, so remind children this age that Jesus cares about everything that happens to them and to other people. By ages 7 to 9, most kids feel a need for God's help and strength—and are able to verbally express their thoughts and desires. Look up Bible verses about prayer together. Preteens begin to focus on relationships, so remind them of their value to God and of the fact that no prayers are insignificant or unworthy.

Lord's Prayer Ribbon For every family member, you'll need 4-inch ribbon strands in the colors below. Read aloud Matthew 6:9-13. Say:

- "Blue is the color of fathers. (Hold your blue ribbon.) Our father in heaven."
- "White is for holiness. (Tie white to blue.) Holy is your name."
- "Purple is majestic. (Tie purple to white.) Your Kingdom come, your will be done."
- "Green is the color of the earth. (Tie green to purple.) On earth as it is in heaven."
- "Yellow reminds us of wheat. (Tie yellow to green.) Give us this day our daily bread."
- "Red reminds us of Jesus' blood and forgiveness. (Tie red to yellow.) And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
- "Orange is for the darkness of evil. (Tie orange to red.) And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
- "Gold reminds us of heaven. (Tie gold to orange.) For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

Give children each a white pillowcase and a fabric pen. Say: "This week at bedtime, let's pray for a different person each night."

Help kids each write a new name on their pillowcase nightly after they pray for that person.

Pop Up Prayers Create a prayer reminder using an empty 20-ounce bottle, plastic disposable plates, a permanent marker, glitter, corn syrup, and water. Cut six half-inch ovals from the plates. Write Family, Neighbors, Church, Our Government, World Problem, and Peace on the ovals, one per oval. Put the ovals and some glitter in the bottle. Fill it three-fourths full of corn syrup; top with water. Tighten the lid. Each day, shake the bottle and pray for what comes up first.

Anywhere Prayers Read aloud Jonah 2:1 and find unique places to pray as a family. Let each person find a spot (closet, car, treehouse, swing set). Then gather in those places for prayer, thanking God for always loving and listening to us—no matter where we are.

Spin the Prayer Bottle In this redemptive version of the game, the person spinning prays for whoever the bottle points to. After receiving prayer, that person spins the bottle and prays for the next person it points to. You also can play Spin the Prayer Person, where each player gets a turn being spun in a swivel chair!

**"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere."
—Ephesians 6:18, NLT**



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Prayers of Praise

You'll need a Bible, matches, a pillar candle, and small, individual candles with paper collars. In a darkened room, gather around a table that contains the pillar candle. Light it and say: **In Old Testament times, people prayed to God by giving him burnt offerings and sacrifices.**

Read aloud Hebrews 13:15. Say: **Now, instead of giving animals or grain to God, our sacrifices are our praises. God wants us to praise him by telling about the wonderful things he has done.**

Read aloud Psalm 66:1-5. Pick up a small candle, light it from the pillar candle, and complete this prayer: **God, I praise you for _____.** Invite others to take candles and do the same.

Say: **The Bible describes God's glory as shining.** Read aloud Luke 2:9. Say: **This room is glowing because we've praised God through our prayers.**

Say amen and extinguish the candles.

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MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *A Wrinkle in Time*

Genre: Adventure, Fantasy, Family

Rating: PG

Cast: Reese Witherspoon, Oprah Winfrey, Mindy Kaling, Chris Pine

Synopsis: This film adaptation of Madeleine L'Engle's classic 1962 novel features Meg, an awkward 13-year-old. When her scientist father disappears, Meg, her brother, and a friend go on a space-traveling "tesseract" quest to find him. Three magical beings—Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Which, and Mrs. Who—offer wisdom and clues along the way.

Our Take: This coming-of-age story emphasizes personal courage and the importance of family. Older kids and sci-fi fans will marvel at the imaginative adventures and unusual characters. The film contains elements of peril.



TV

Title: *The Gifted*

Network: Fox

Synopsis: When their son becomes a mutant, a family must flee their ordinary lives and go into hiding. The family eventually joins a group of mutants fighting to survive due to society's prejudice.

Our Take: Various episodes of this adventure-based series are rated between TV-PG and TV-14, making the show questionable for preteens. The violence and action-adventure also may be too scary for sensitive viewers. However, the program addresses prejudice and society's reaction to people's differences that may help families talk about how to show kindness and love to everyone. Preview *The Gifted* before deciding whether to watch it with your kids.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Hair 101 for Dads Fathers who need a crash course in little-girl hair care—and in bonding with their little girls—can attend free workshops through Daddy Daughter Hair Factory. A dad began this nonprofit in 2015 to encourage strong relationships. (daddydaughterhairfactory.com)

Boy Bands Are Back The days of 'N Sync and One Direction may be over, but a new wave of boy bands is vying for young listeners. Groups such as Why Don't We, BTS, PRETTYMUCH, BROCKHAMPTON, and CNCO cover the musical spectrum, from Latin and Korean pop to groovy a cappella. (time.com)

QUICK STATS

Slowing Abuse Long-term, growing awareness of sexual abuse has led to a 65% decrease in child-related cases over the past 25 years. (nytimes.com)

Aim for 100 Children who spend fewer than 100 minutes each day doing moderate-to-vigorous physical activity are considered to have a "sedentary" activity level. (pediatrics.aapublications.org)

Extended Families Ten percent of U.S. children (more than 7 million) live with adult relatives other than or in addition to their parents. (grandfamilies.org)

Games, Sites & Apps

Detective Pikachu

In this adventure puzzle game for the Nintendo 3DS, players try to solve mysteries in the city with a talking Pikachu. A live-action film adaptation of this game is slated to hit the big screen next spring, with Ryan Reynolds voicing the Pikachu character.

TweenTribune.com

This learning-based site from the Smithsonian offers free articles about news, science, history, art, and more. Articles are available in different "lexile" (or reading) levels, so students from kindergarten to high school can benefit. Spanish versions also are available.

Love You to Bits

Preteens who enjoy solving puzzles will be drawn to this award-winning sci-fi adventure game. Players search the universe for parts of the main character's robot girlfriend after she was destroyed. The story promotes kindness. It's an app now, but will be available for PC and Mac soon. Rated for 9+.

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