

Family Take-Away



Praying with your children

Everyday Opportunities

Making prayer a part of the natural rhythm of your days will help your kids to develop their own prayer life. Giving thanks at the tea table is an easy way to do this, and a time where kids can practice taking turns, but don't stop there. Heading off on a journey? Take a moment to pray for God's protection. Starting the new school year? Send your kids out the door with a prayer and blessing. Heard someone is sick or had an accident? Pray for them together. And don't forget the sweet night time prayers. Listen to their daily "highs" and "lows". Share yours, too, and then pray about all of them together.

The Lord's Prayer

The familiarity of a poem prayer or The Lord's Prayer can be comforting and strengthening when you are not sure what to say. Talk about the different aspects in the prayer Jesus taught us and use it as a starting point. Here's the Message version:

Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best— as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.

Sentence prayers

Young children sometimes need help knowing what to pray, and scripted prayers can lose their meaning and become repetitive. Stop just short of a script by starting a sentence and prompting them to finish it. This method provides the combination of structure and freedom that children need. Use sentences like:

"God, thank you for ..."
"God, help my friend ..."

"God, forgive me for ..."
"God, help me let go of ..."

"God, help me be more ..."
"God, give me the courage to ..."

Some Prayer Ideas:

- Family Prayer Album: Get one of those cheap photo albums and put photos of your family and friends, sponsored child or others you want to remember. After dinner let the children take turns choosing someone to pray for. Do it every night or a couple of times a week.
- Try praying with your senses - take turns thanking God for something you can see, taste, smell, hear or touch
- Draw your prayers - everyone draw something they are thankful for and keep it on the fridge or noticeboard for the week as a reminder.
- Use scripture as a prayer. Pick a Psalm or pray Daniel's prayer from Daniel 2:20 - 23
- Use favourite worship songs or hymns as a prayer.
- Pray our National Anthem – maybe a different verse of it each day for a week.
- Pass the prayer. Ask everyone to think of a friend or neighbour they'd like to pray for and show God's love to. Write the name on the card and pass it to someone else in the family. Make time each day to pray for these people and check in at the end of the week.
- Prayer Walk – pray for your neighbours as you walk around the block, or pray before you go and ask your children to say a silent prayer for the people in each house as they pass by and then pray again as you get home.