

4. Teach Children to Pray By Themselves

Popcorn prayers:

Leader begins and ends the prayer. The children add a word or two to the prayer. This can be done by quickly going around the circle or by allowing the children to simply call out at random.

Dear God thank you for making... (adult) flowers (child 1) my toe (child 2) a beautiful world (child 3) ... Amen (adult)

Person of the week:

Select a child to be the person of the week (keep a record to ensure all children get a turn). Leader asks the child 3 questions so that the group can get to know them (i.e. What's the worst thing you've ever eaten? What's the thing you like doing the most? What have you learned about God recently?)

Each member of the group then prays a one-sentence prayer for that child.

Prayer buddies:

Pair older children with younger children and allow them time to talk and pray together.

Prayer triplets:

Children form groups of three (same sex groups). Give them a question to ask of each other (e.g. When do you find it hard to say sorry?)

The children then pray for one member of their group.

Prayer circle:

Sit in a circle. Pray around the circle. After each person prays, they squeeze the hand or tap the shoulder of the person beside them.

Prayer lucky dip:

Put a photograph of each member of the group or a picture from a magazine into a box. Children then select a photograph/picture and pray.

Provide children with scrapbooks and help them to create their own prayer diary. This can then be taken and used at home.

Prayer placemat:

Take a photograph of the children and leaders in their Children's Church group. Print one copy per child on A4 paper. On a second A4 sheet make a collage of a number of photographs about your church family (i.e. the missionary families supported by your church, church family camp). Make one copy per child of each page and then laminate the two sheets back to back to make a prayer place mat. Send the placemats home and encourage the children to pray for each other while they eat their breakfast, etc.

Note: you will need to ask permission from parents before taking photographs of children.

Prayer box:

Decorate a box with a lid (available at craft shops) and then have the children write prayers or prayer ideas on cards to place in the box. The children can then take the box home and use it to help them pray.

Regularly send home craft work (i.e. stencils, paintings, clay models, mobiles, posters..) that the children can use to remind them of what they have learnt and to pray about it during the week.

Make available a bookstall of quality Children's Bibles and Bible reading material that encourages the children to pray at the end of each reading.

Examples:

XTB (eXplore The Bible)
Suitable for 7-11 year olds.

Discover
Suitable for 9-14 year olds.

Available:

Matthias Media www.matthiasmedia.com.au or The Good Book Company, UK www.thegoodbook.co.uk

Talk to the children about what you've been praying about.

Teaching Children To Pray

Activities suitable for use in Children's Church
for children aged 7 to 11 years old

This resource was downloaded from:
www.kidswise.com.au

1. Teach Children to Pray Regularly

Pray at a set time each lesson (e.g. after the Bible story).

Pray regularly throughout the lesson:

Before you eat morning tea, at the beginning of the lesson, for the birthday person, at the end of a children's talk.

Model stopping to pray during your lesson when children share some news (the birth of a brother, mother in hospital, told friend about Jesus, an accident).

Stop and pray with children when they are experiencing difficulty (i.e. bullying, feeling left out, jealous, angry).

Prayer triggers:

The aim of prayer triggers is to help children to remember to pray throughout the day.

Prayer triggers are everyday events (like eating) that can help the child to remember to pray about a wide range of things.

Note: it's important that the children work out what the best triggers are for them. Introduce one trigger per week over a couple of weeks.

Examples:

- Cleaning teeth - praying for health (theirs, their families, their friends.)
- Sitting down to do homework - praying for their effort.
- School bell sounds - thanking God for their teachers, class mates.

2. Teach Children to Vary Their Prayers

Group prayer collage:

Collect photos or magazine pictures of significant people and things (pets, creation photos, holiday photos, church leaders...).

Make a group collage on a large notice board.

Hang the collage near where the group meets to pray.

Add to the collage every now and then.

Group prayer diary:

Each week ask two children in the group to fill in a page in the group's prayer diary, depicting in words and pictures what the group has learned that week.

When they have finished, ask them to bring it back to the group and use the page to help the group to pray.

Also, at the back of the diary, keep a list of things you are specifically praying for as a group.

Look back every now and then and thank God for answered prayers.

Direct children to pray in response to what they have learnt from the Bible (i.e. Dear God, thank you that you saved the Israelites. Thank you that you saved us. Amen). This is best done by the leader modelling a short prayer, then asking children to say their own prayer about what they have learned.

Prayer beginnings:

Introduce and use the following prayer beginnings, one at a time, to help the children vary what they pray about.

- Dear God, I'm sorry for... (confession)
- Thank you Lord for... (thankfulness)
- Loving Father, thank you for being ... (praise)
- Dear Jesus, please help me when I feel ... (tell God your pain, your laughter)
- Dear God, please help me ... (requests)
- Dear Father, please help _____ (name) ... (petition)

Psalms 75:1 Write extra verses to Colin Buchanan's version of Psalm 75:1 (Remember The Lord, CD). This song can then be sung to thank God for all the things mentioned in their version of the song.

Example 1:

- Thank you for the birds and bees. Thanks for birds and bees.

Example 2:

- Thank you God for saving me. Thanks for saving me.

Brainstorm before praying. (e.g. What has God given us that we can thank him for?)

Set up prayer stations whereby children move from station to station praying about the things they are shown at each station. For example, the stations could be different countries, different parts of the children's lives (home, school, sport, relatives), different ministries of the church, etc.

3. Teach Children to Pray Out Loud

Prayer card box:

Children can write out prayers using the different prayer beginnings. These prayers could then be kept in a box ready to be used when they can't think of something to pray for. They simply select a card and read out that prayer (good for those children who have never prayed out loud before).