

Cultivating Prayer in Children



“When adults attempt to teach children to pray, they should encourage the children to keep doing what they do naturally: retain a simple, conversational approach to prayer.” Alvin Vander Griend

- **Encourage children to pray** - Teach them to pray short one-sentence prayers, especially the very young ones. Help them to understand that they are developing a deep love relationship with God.
- **Pray together as a family** - There are several good books for family devotions. Make sure that the children pray during these times. Encourage families to become lighthouses of prayer in their neighborhood, and make sure that the children are included.
- **Teach prayer through modeling** - Children learn by watching and observing. They grow in prayer by watching adults to see if they prioritize prayer. They copy everything. They learn from our attitudes and actions. They catch enthusiasm for prayer from our lives.
- **Teach children to pray together** - Help provide an accepting atmosphere in group prayer. Affirm their prayers. Let them see you pray for them.
- **Help children to learn to listen to God** - Help them to grow in silent prayer. Teach them to listen to the still, small voice of God.
- **Prayerwalk the neighborhood with your children** - They know the area and can often know how to pray for their friends and the families of their friends. Go on short prayerwalks with children. Realize that God may open up divine contacts through them.
- **Give children special prayer assignments** - Teach them to pray for their school, the sick, and unsaved friends. Let the children give testimonies of answered prayer.
- **Invite children to pray in church** - They can pray in the Sunday school classes and other prayer meetings. Let them participate, because children learn by involvement. It is good for church prayer meetings to become intergenerational. All ages should be included in praying in church.
- **Plan prayer events and include the children** - Children learn by doing. Let them experience prayer. They like to use their senses to see, touch, taste, feel, and hear.
- **Teach children to pray for the nations** - Be creative and use maps, pictures, etc. to help them see what they are praying for. Teach them to pray for missionaries and adopt countries as prayer assignments.

- **Pair the children with adults and young people** - They will learn so much about prayer in this way. Realize that adults learn so much from children in prayer as well. Let children be part of the prayer ministry in the church.
- **Teach children to read and pray God's Word out loud** - They learn the Bible and begin to pray what is on God's heart. They learn to pray biblical prayers.
- **Allow some fun during prayer** - Children can easily transition from serious prayer to fun and laughter. Prayer doesn't have to be all work. If you go on a prayerwalk, you may also stop by a playground and go on the swings or stop for some ice cream.
- **Teach children good prayer habits** - Show them variety in prayer such as folding your hands, kneeling, and lifting your hands in worship. Teach them to give all their attention to someone who is praying, teach them to close their eyes, etc.
- **Encourage children to talk about everything to God** - Show them that prayer is not just asking for things, but also praising and giving thanks. Teach them to confess their sins to God.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

“We will teach the best that which we love the most. We will teach nothing well that we do not love ourselves. Living waters can only come from ‘the innermost being’. The purpose of training our children is to ignite in them that which they were created to be - lovers and worshipers of God... Those who have a passion for Jesus, who are continuing learning about Him, drawing closer to Him, are the most contagious people in the world - they will infect everyone they touch with a passion for God, including their children.” Rick Joyner

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