

Prayer Touchstone

There's a saying that, "the family that prays together, stays together." But with busy work agendas and social calendars, it can be difficult to find the time to engage in this simple, but meaningful practice. And the best part: it doesn't have to be a big production - there are many ways to incorporate prayer into your routine. Below are some traditional, and some not-so-traditional ways to pray with your kids, while teaching them how to pray.

Prayer Jar

You've probably heard of a swear jar before, but have you heard of a Prayer Jar? All you need is a large container, some paper, and a pen/pencil. As a family, sit down for a brainstorming session to write down things to pray for. Start with these prompts (or come up with your own) and write down what each person says:

1. What are you grateful for? Why?
2. Who are three people you really care about and what good thing do you wish for each?
3. Do you know anyone who is sick or hurt? What would help them heal?
4. Do you know anyone with a big life event coming up? Wedding? Baptism? Graduation?
5. What are three issues in the world today that concern you?

Once you have a list, write down each *answer* on an individual slip of paper. Then fold the paper and place in your jar/container. Each day, whenever it fits into your schedule (breakfast, dinner, bedtime?), pull out one slip of paper and pray for what is written down. Take turns leading the prayer. If you need some help, try using these guides:

"Dear Jesus/God, I am grateful for _____. Thank you for bringing him/her/it into my life, so that I can _____ Amen."

"Heavenly Father, we lift up _____ and ask that you let your light shine on him/her and heal them from _____. Amen."

"Today, we pray that you love and keep _____ as s/he embarks on this new life-journey of _____. Amen."

This can be as simple or creative as you want. You can decorate the jar, color code the slips of paper, create a regular schedule for who chooses the prayer each day of the week. Hold hands, fold hands, close your eyes, bow your head, lift your head – whatever you do, do it *together* and do it *consistently*.

Table Grace

I don't know about you, but this is a family favorite in our house! Table grace, or prayers, are a great way to demonstrate your faith and appreciation, while bringing a moment of calm and peace to your family before a meal. There are SO many table prayers out there, ranging from *The Lord's Prayer* to *Come Lord Jesus* to *Superman*. Use the doc below to learn and practice a different table grace at meal-time and/or snack-time every week for

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4 weeks (click on the links to hear and see them performed!). If you and your family know all of these, search the internet or check-out books from the library to find some new ones. Or, if you have one you and your kids love, please share and we will add it to the list. Once you have a favorite, record and share a video of you or your family saying grace to help others learn!

https://docs.google.com/document/d/122Uy-iFv_FnjDRgMN6C0iw5okMkhKaApIZDOh8S4HVY/edit?usp=sharing

Two Easy Prayer Formats

1. Pray the one of these two at bedtime for 4 weeks!
2. Record and share a video of yourself or your family praying the Finger Prayer.
3. Write prayers for church (the Prayers of the People) using one of these formats:

1. Use Your Hands to Pray:

- Thumb (nearest to you)** - Pray for those who are closest to you.
- Second or index finger (used for pointing)** - Pray for those who give you direction – parents, teachers, pastors, friends, etc.
- Third finger (the tallest)** - Pray for leaders in every sphere of life – national, local, school, church, home.
- Fourth or ring finger (the weakest, as every pianist knows)** - Pray for those who are in trouble or in pain.
- Little finger (the smallest and the least important)** - Pray for yourself.

2. The A.C.T.S. Prayer:

(A) Adoration or Acclamation (praise for who God is):

- Feel free to move your body to adore God, raise your hands in praise or stand completely still.
- Read Psalm 145
- Listen to the words David uses to acclaim God.
- Spend some time adoring God for who God is using your own words.

(C) Confession (confession of our sins and weaknesses):

- As you pray, feel free to move your body in a position of confession, bow your head, kneel or lie with your face down.
- Read David's Prayer from Psalm 51
- Listen to David's confession and repentant heart.
- In assurance of God's "steadfast love" and "abundant mercy" confess your sin and weakness before God.

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(T) Thanksgiving (thanking God for what God's done):

- As you thank God, feel free to jump in delight, lift your hands, bow in thanks, or smile.
- Read Mary's Prayer from Luke 1:46-55
- Listen to Mary's words of thanks.
- Meditate on God's word and reflect on what these words mean in your life. For example, in verse 49 Mary declares: "for the Mighty One has done great things for me." Don't let the prayer stop with Mary's delight; give thanks for the great things God has done in your world.

(S) Supplication (sharing our deepest needs for ourselves and others):

- Let your body move freely as you place your requests before God...hold out your hands, palms up, as you ask.
- Read Ephesians 3:14-21
- Listen to the words of expectant hope for what God can accomplish in our world. In that expectancy, pray for your needs, the needs of people in your community and the needs of the world.