

4 Helpful Ideas On Prayer

Young children learn best through play, and these fun activities teach children how to pray and why prayer is an important part of their relationship with God. These methods can be developed at home or in a Sunday School class.

- 1. Before and After** Starting and ending each day with prayer is a great way to get children tuned into their special relationship with God without distractions. To use this method as a group activity in Sunday School, do the "before" prayer at the start of class, and the "after" prayer close to the time class ends.

At home, praying before leaving for school, day care, or to spend the day with a babysitter, can help children of all ages start the day off right. This is a great time to pray for teachers, friends, and for help with classes or peer relationships.

If your child is stressed or anxious about the day ahead, pray with them to give their cares up to God and to release their concerns so they can better focus on what the day will bring. Younger children sometimes have difficulty coming up with things to pray for. Bedtime is a good



prayer time for them because they can easily remember and pray about what happened during that day. Children can thank God for fun times or new friends and ask for help with correcting a poor choice they may have made during the day. Praying at the close of the day can be comforting and relaxing at any age.

- 2. Five Finger Prayer** This game and the following ACTS Prayer were recommended by Children's Pastor Julie Scheibe, who says that young children are accustomed to learning through games that help them remember facts and concepts. To do the Five Finger Prayer, have the kids hold their hands together in prayer, using each finger as a guide:
 - **Thumb:** Say a prayer for those closest to you.
 - **Pointer:** Say a prayer for school teachers and Sunday School teachers.
 - **Middle:** Say a prayer for the president.
 - **Ring:** Say a prayer for the sick.
 - **Pinky:** Say a prayer for yourself.

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- 3. ACTS Prayer for Children** The *Acts method of Prayer* involves four steps: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. When this method is used by adults, it results in a lengthier prayer time, as several moments are spent in reflection on Bible verses that support each part of the prayer.

Most young children won't understand what each letter of the ACTS acronym means, so instead, use it as a guide to take them through the prayer time as follows, pausing after each step for a minute or so to allow time for prayer. This is another activity that is easy to use at home or in Sunday School.

- **Adoration:** First, tell God how much you love him.
 - **Confession:** Then, tell God about what you have done wrong and tell him you are sorry. He will forgive you, but he asks that you don't do this thing again.
 - **Thanksgiving:** Think about all the good things in your life and thank God for these blessings.
 - **Supplication:** Pray for something you need help with, and for other people who need God's help.
- 4. Worship Music** This fun activity combines music and prayer, and is often useful as a bridge for moving kids from one activity to another. Use worship music with prayer regularly as an activity near the end of Sunday School to help children prepare to leave the classroom with their parents or other care givers.
- Because music is poetic and has repetition, it's a great way for children to learn about praying. Children love the energy in Christian Pop and Gospel music, and this helps them to remember the lyrics. After children listen and sing along with a song, discuss the theme of the song and how it is relevant to Gods Word. Use this activity as a springboard to pray about the concepts in the song lyrics.

Shelley Elmlad, a freelance writer and contributor for About.com, has worked in various capacities of Christian ministry. As a parent, her goal is to teach her daughter how to stay connected to her faith in today's world of conflicting values. Knowing the challenges of Christian parenting, Shelley hopes to share some of her experience with other parents who want to raise their children according to biblical principles.