



Milestone 3: Prayer (Age 5)

Establish family prayer times and teach your child how to pray.

It is amazing that we have the privilege of having a personal relationship with our God. We are blessed to be able to talk to Him directly through prayer. One of the greatest ways to help your child develop a relationship with God is to pray with them and to lead them to pray themselves. Their faith will begin to become personalized if they learn to develop the practice of talking directly with God through prayer.

Model It...

Be a person of prayer. Develop a real, ongoing relationship with God through prayer. Talk to God on a regular basis. Pray in good times and bad. Pray for thanksgiving and for forgiveness. Model prayers through set times, like meals and bedtime, but also in everyday life. Stop to give praise. Stop to ask God for help and wisdom. When bad news is presented, pause to pray for God to act. Pray for family, friends, and anyone who may be in need. Your kids will want to be like you. How awesome it would be if they wanted to be a prayer champion...because you are!

Prayers can take all kinds of forms. Just as there are many ways and styles to communicate with people, the same rings true with communication with God. Prayers can be long or short, formal or informal. They can be structured or scattered. They can be loud or soft. Prayers can be happy or sad. Prayers can be spoken or not. They can be written, typed, or recited from the heart. Prayers are simply our greatest form of communication with God. Anything goes!

Begin by leading your child in prayer times. Eventually, start including them in the actual speaking of the prayer. Have them say part or all of the mealtime or bedtime prayer. Below are some prayer starters. Use these ideas to help start prayer time with your child.

Sentence Prayers - Take turns allowing each person who is comfortable doing so to pray a very short, one-sentence prayer. It can be as simple as “Please heal Uncle Paul,” “Thank you for giving Troy and new friend,” or “I’m sorry for losing my temper with everyone earlier today.”

Fill-in-the-Blank Prayers - Use prewritten starters to guide and focus prayer times, such as the following starter lines.

“God, I love you because...”

“Thank you God for...”

“God, please help...”

“God, I’m sorry for...”

Prayer Board - Keep a dry erase board or chalk board in a high traffic area in your home, and use it to note items the family is praying for together.

Prayer Journal - Consider purchasing a new journal for your child to start recording prayers and how God answers them.

Mirror Prayers - Using a dry erase marker, write a list of prayer concerns on the child’s bathroom mirror so he or she remembers to pause and pray after brushing teeth.

Prayer Calendar - Purchase a calendar for your family to use as a prayer calendar. Each day that your child prays, have him or her put a mark or sticker on the date. Make this fun and encouraging. Soon, this calendar will not be needed, because prayer will become an everyday time of talking directly with God. Once this habit is started, it should last a lifetime.

Family Routine - Making prayer a regular part of your family culture will help make it a normal part of your child’s life. Consider incorporating some of the following in your family routine.

- Mealtime - Briefly give thanks before you eat, then wait until everyone has finished to have a longer time of prayer together.
- Bedtime - The first person in the family to go to bed (usually the youngest) alerts everyone else that it is time for an end-of-day prayer together.
- Drive-time - As you start the engine, pause for a brief prayer together, asking God to go with you. Invite everyone to pray a sentence prayer for any concern about the upcoming activities of the day. This is a great routine to begin as you drive to school in the morning.
- Walks - Taking a walk together is the ideal time to pray. Or pause at the end to pray about the matters discussed during your walk.

Have fun talking to God together and keep family members accountable in their personal relationship with God.

Next Steps in Your Faith @ Home Journey...

- Pray daily for your child.
- Bless your child daily.
- Consistently spend time in God's Word.
- Schedule and have regular family times.
- Help your child develop a daily discipline of prayer.

Recommended Reading...

Creative Family Prayer Times (by Mike and Amy Nappa)
What Happens When I Talk to God (by Stormie Omartian)