

KINDERGARTEN

God Loves Us



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Talking to God Is Good

We like to talk to those we love:

“Dad, I love you very much.”

“Look at the pretty
butterflies.”

“Thank you for letting
me play.”

“I’ll try to do my
best today.”



We can talk to God.

We can say, "I love you."

"Thank you, God."

"Please help me do my best today."

God always listens. **God loves us.**



Scripture

"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Based on 1 Samuel 3:10

When we talk to God,
we pray. **God bless . . .**



Try This



Finish the prayer. Draw a
circle around the people you
want to pray for.

Remember that you can talk to
God anytime.

You can pray to God in different ways.



Prayer in Families

The Lesson Your Child Learned

Through prayer we encounter God and converse with him as we would with a close friend. Prayer will become part of your child's life when it is an evident part of yours. In this chapter the children learned that prayer can include reflection, speech, gestures, music, song, and dance. They participated in a variety of prayer experiences.



Living the Lesson

Probably the most powerful lesson in prayer I ever received was looking out from the sacristy on my first day as an altar boy. I could see the people gathering for the 6:30 A.M. Mass, and in the front pew I saw my father with his head bowed, lost in prayer. Here the man I viewed as the most powerful guy in the world was on his knees before God. Growing up, I had no doubt that prayer was important to my parents, and as a result I grew up knowing I could always turn to God in every situation of my life. Realize that your example is a powerful way to influence your child's prayer life.

You don't have to be an expert to pray. Your prayer can be as simple as uttering the words, "God, help!" during a tough situation at work or "Thank you, God," when a sick child returns to health. "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God," says the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. So raise your heart and your mind regularly. God will be so happy to hear from you.

—Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids* (Loyola Press)

Bringing the Lesson Home

- Encourage your child to tell you about the different ways the class prayed to God. Read with your child the pages that were sent home.
- Let your child see you at prayer and hear you call upon God in times of joy and sorrow.
- Create a prayer jar so that family members can write their names or needs on slips of paper and put them in the jar. Then during the week each person takes out a slip of paper and prays for the other person's needs.
- Decide on a regular time for daily family prayer. Many find mealtimes and bedtime to be good times for family prayer.
- If you have family prayer in a designated prayer center, you might choose to light a candle during prayer.
- When a disaster is reported widely in the news, make a point of praying together as a family for those affected.



Growing Family Faith

The Power of Prayer

Few things are as essential to our health and well-being, yet carry as vast an assortment of experience (and therefore baggage), as prayer. Some of us were never taught how to pray. For others, what was taught wasn't meaningful, so we have placed prayers and praying in a box on a shelf in the back of the closet, to be taken out only on special occasions—at funerals, for example, or when a loved one is ill.

Many of us do use prayer more or less regularly, but we aren't sure what we're doing is right. As one parent lamented, "I keep thinking there must be something like a 'secret handshake' that would make my prayers more effective, but I don't know what it is—or how to find out."

Whatever your experience of prayer is or has been, consider this: Prayer is, at its heart, a remembering. We pray in order to remember who we are. We pray to remember God who is both our source and the eternal essence within each of us that is whole, perfect, and unchanging.

Whether we have been praying all our lives or are just taking the first few tentative steps toward remembering who we are, let us take encouragement from the Trappist monk Thomas Merton, who observed, "We do not want to be beginners, but let us be convinced that we will never be anything else but beginners all our life."

If prayer is not yet a part of your daily life, the good news is that it's never too late to begin! Here are a few old and new ideas to try alone or with your family:



Putting More Prayer in Your Day

- Create a regular time and a place to pray. Plan to wake up 30 minutes earlier every morning, or take 20 minutes of your lunch hour, or commit to a prayer time before you go to sleep each night. Experiment until you find the time and place that you are least likely to be interrupted.
- Find a book of prayers that you like and use it daily. There are hundreds of them on the market, or you may already have one at home.
- If you prayed as a child, revisit some of the prayers you prayed then. You have a different perspective now that you are a parent, and these prayers may resonate in ways they did not when you were younger. For example, see **The Practicing Catholic** on page 26. Pray these prayers with your child and tell why they mean so much to you.
- Create a simple ritual that you and your child could perform at the beginning or end of each day.

Putting More Prayer in Your Day *continued*

Try reading these two lines from Psalm 118:24 each morning:

Adult: *This is the day the Lord has made...*

Child: *Let us rejoice and be glad.*

- Before you begin any prayer, ask your child if there is anyone for whom he or she would like to pray. Then be sure to add your own intention. This simple exercise teaches children to think of others and reminds them that prayer benefits even those who are not present.



- Check out bookstores, the Internet, or your local library for a book of mealtime prayers to use each time you and your child share a meal together.
- Take your child to Mass with you each week. The Mass, of course, is *the* prayer, the great remembering of who we are and who we aspire to be. If your child reacts negatively, have your response ready: "This is who we are. This is what we do."
- Write your prayer in the form of a letter to God each prayer time. At first this might seem like an impossible undertaking, but the inspiration, peace, and comfort it provides make it an exercise that will become a joyful, life-giving habit. Try it, you'll like it!

The Practicing Catholic

During the Vietnam War, my father decided that our family would pray the Rosary together every night for three years while my brother was in the Marines. My brother came home safely, but by then I was pretty sure I never wanted to say another Rosary again! Recently though, I had the idea to time my morning stretching exercises by saying the Our Father and the Hail Mary instead of counting the seconds. After a week I realized I had an entire Rosary in my exercise routine. This simple change has transformed my experience of both prayer and exercise. It also connects me in a profound way to my father, who died over ten years ago.

—Ann O'Connor, author of *The Twelve Unbreakable Principles of Parenting*
(ACTA Publications)



We cannot find God in noise or agitation. Nature: trees, flowers, and grass grow in silence. The stars, the moon, and the sun move in silence. —Mother Teresa

