



The Gift of Prayer, part 2 of 2—

Involving the Children in Prayer

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We who minister through Christian education know it's not enough to observe others praying; children need to experience for themselves the power of prayer. To facilitate this we need good planning and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Our objective is to provide opportunities for children to enter into prayer during Sunday School and children's church. However, it's important to remember that prayer is a matter of the heart. We can require respect and cooperation during prayer times, but we must rely on the Holy Spirit to change hearts and give boys and girls the desire to pray.

Here are some ways to involve children actively in prayer:

▼ Ask volunteers to lead the class in prayer.

▼ Provide time for students to give praise reports of answered prayers. Make a class praise book with a page for each child to draw or write about something he or she is thankful for.

▼ Break up into small groups for a discussion on how God answers prayer. Shy children will be more likely to ask questions in this setting. Follow this up with small group prayer.

▼ Keep a class record of prayer requests and answers to

prayer. Be sensitive to requests of a more personal nature that should not be recorded. Pray for the requests during the week.

▼ Have children make individual prayer journals in class. Then provide time each week for them to record their individual requests and answers to prayer. The journals can be sent home at the end of the quarter and serve as a permanent reminder of God's working in their lives.

▼ Challenge your class to memorize key verses of Scripture on prayer, using a variety of teaching methods that involve active participation. Make sure the children understand the meaning of the verses. Use these during prayer times to reinforce the application of the verse.

▼ Use a globe or world map when praying for missionaries to increase an awareness of worldwide missions and compassion for people in other parts of the world. Have a child hold the globe as you pray.

▼ Invite children with special requests to come for prayer during your praise and worship time. In a large class you can have other teachers pray with children individually while the main teacher continues to lead the rest of the group in worship. This can also be done at the

The Lord's Prayer

We can help children grow in their understanding of prayer by using The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) as a model. Here are some principles you can explain in class discussions:

- ◆ God wants His children to approach Him as their heavenly Father.
- ◆ God's name is holy.
- ◆ We should pray for God's will (His plan for everyone) to be done on earth.
- ◆ God wants us to ask Him for the things we need each day. He cares for us.
- ◆ We need to ask God to forgive us for the wrong things we do and to help us to forgive others.
- ◆ We should ask God to keep us from things that tempt us.
- ◆ We can ask God to deliver (rescue) us from evil.

close of the lesson. Allow time for the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of the children; be sensitive to His leading.

▼ When a child requests prayer for a significant event such as a family move or surgery, invite your class to pray for the child by forming a circle, joining hands and praying as a group or individually around the circle.

Finally, in all our planning, let's not forget one of the most important things we can do for the children. We should take time every week in class to pray for God's blessing on each one

of them—just as Jesus did. The young lives entrusted to our care need to feel loved and blessed by the touch of Jesus each week as they leave our classrooms. Assurance of His

presence will give them the security they need as they face life's challenges in the week ahead.

Questions For Further Study—

1. What do children need to do in order to become effective in prayer?
2. How might the use of prayer journals reinforce your children's understanding of prayer?
3. Name some ways you can involve the children in your congregation in prayer.