



## PRAYER STRATEGY

### Creative Prayers

1} **Give Thanks** – A great way to get started in prayer is by giving thanks. Giving thanks is not just for the Thanksgiving holiday. We can give thanks all year round. Writing a thank you note, building a thankful tree, finding one thing to be thankful for that day. Giving thanks to God is a wonderful way to help get the words flowing when prayer seems difficult.

2} **Vocalize Needs** – Whether through writing down prayer requests, talking about people who are sick or friends who are going through a hard time or a neighbor who needs a job, we can bring our needs to God. The big stuff, the little stuff, the hard stuff, the impossible stuff, the easy stuff... all of it. We can tell God all about the needs around us. Every single day.

3} **Think of Others** – This goes along with vocalizing needs. Sometimes when we get talking about needs, we focus on our own needs. Making a purposeful effort to think of others and the needs of others helps us know how to pray not just for ourselves but for other people in our lives.

4} **Help** – This also goes with needs but maybe digs a little deeper. What do we need God's help with at school? with friends? with a sibling? at church? their health? How do we need God to step in and help us each day?

5} **Love** – This can take many forms. Thanking God for his love, acknowledging his love, asking for his love to be shown through us. Asking him to help us love others, love our family, love kids at school. It can be thinking through the day and going over our actions. Were we acting in loving ways? Were our words loving and kind? Maybe it is remembering to tell God we love him. Focusing on love is something kids will understand and a great way to give them words to pray and things to talk to God about on their own.

6} **Bible Verses** – Praying scripture is a beautiful way to communicate with God. Praying the Lord’s prayer, going through the beatitudes, putting on the armor of God, memorizing the Psalms, journaling a favorite verse, inserting their name in a passage, finding and then applying a verse to a situation... digging into God’s Word for things to pray about and pray for is a useful, valuable tool as they grow older in their walk with Jesus. Send a verse to school with them to pray at lunch. Talk about what verses mean and what they can learn about God. Print a list of verses to put by their bed or tape to the bathroom mirror. Filling our homes with Bible Verses that our kids can learn, pray and discover is beneficial and necessary.

7} **Praying in the Spirit** – For those moments when we don’t know what to pray, we must teach our kids to simply ask God what to pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through them, to give them the words, to bring to their minds the needs of others or highlight something in their day that God wants to help them with or maybe show them areas where they need to grow or things they need to work on in their heart, their character, or their relationships with others. Praying in the Spirit shines light on areas they need forgiveness or maybe need to forgive someone else. This is an important part of learning to pray.

8} **Art** – Drawing, coloring, creating, doodling, journaling, painting, listening to worship... giving kids a blank piece of paper and letting them draw or write their prayers is a really sweet way to help them work through feelings, understand their needs, express their hurts and share their love with God. Music is a powerful expression of communication to God. Writing songs, poems, and stories. We all can learn from using art as a way to communicate with God. It can truly be a precious way to connect with Jesus.

9} **Cares and Worries and Fears** – Our kids are like little bottles of a million emotions. Boys and girls alike carry the weight of fears and worries. The unknowns of the next day, new experiences, misunderstandings, family challenges, health issues, school stress... all of these things can be bottled up inside of them. We must help our kids present these things to God, tell God about each one, give them to him and leave them safely in his hands. Letting our hearts rest from the cares of this world, being still, waiting for God to move in situations, giving our problems to Him and not taking them back again is very important. Putting words to these emotions is healthy for our kids and showing them that God can handle their questions, their fears, their worries and their emotions is a freeing concept as they learn how to pray.

10} **Open Your Eyes** – When we teach kids to pray, we often teach prayer with “close your eyes and bow your heads”, right? Well, sometimes, we need to teach kids to open their eyes. WE need to open our eyes. What is happening right in the space around us? What do we see that we could pray for or thank God for or ask for His help? Who is around us? What are they going through? How can we pray for the kids playing in the neighborhood or the person sitting next to us? Learning to open our eyes, see the world around us and pray for things in that exact moment is a creative way to help kids pray.