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Praying with Babies...



Some suggestions and ideas

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Under 5's Adviser

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Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Mark 11:24

At first, it can feel strange and often difficult to know where to start.

This leaflet is designed to help you get started; giving you some practical ideas about how and when you and your baby can talk to God.

What is Prayer?

It is a way of talking to God. You don't have to use special words. It is a conversation; like talking to a friend.

Like all conversations, it is also important to listen too!

There are three main types of prayer; *thank you*, *sorry* and *please*. These may be for yourself or for other people, communities etc.

Words are not always needed. Sometimes it can be difficult to find the words to express yourself, and babies have not developed the art of speech yet.

Having time set aside is helpful; God will always hear what is on your heart regardless of your words.

***Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.***

Psalms 139:4

Some useful websites to purchase bibles, bible stories, prayer books, toys, crafts and C.D's;

eden.co.uk

123smartkids.co.uk

mustardseedkids.co.uk

GodVenture.co.uk

littlecraftybugs.co.uk

bakerross.co.uk

Bible apps;

The Beginners Bible

Bible For Kids

Children's Bible for Toddlers

Christian Music for Kids

Other sources;

Pinterest

Youtube

Facebook



“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

As well as prayer time together, spend time reading stories from the bible and chatting together. This could be something you do as a family or with older children.

Some useful websites for more information and resources;

churchofenglandchristenings.org

familyfaith.co.uk

careforthefamily.org.uk

GodVenture.co.uk

buildingfaith.org

flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk

faithinhomes.org.uk

rejesus.co.uk

faith-at-home.com

How do you pray?



Prayer can be a special time set aside, throughout the day or a bit of both.

Begin by looking for opportunities throughout the day, this can help it feel more natural. Though it may feel a bit strange at first.

It is important that you include your baby, encouraging them to join in. You could do this by sitting baby on your knee, holding hands, looking at one another, and saying Amen together.

It is important to find regular times in the day to take time together; getting up, meal times and bedtimes are perfect opportunities .

As your baby gets older, you can encourage them to join in in different ways; with their body, verbally or by thinking together about prayers.

Like all friendships; the more time you spend talking to God, the more the conversation flows!

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6,7

*So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*
Isaiah 41:10

Ideas

There are many ways to pray; spoken, written, movement, lighting a candle or by being crafty and creative.

Prayer should be part of everyday life; thanking God for what you have, others who are struggling, events and situations.



Begin in a morning as you pick baby up. Give them a cuddle, taking a moment to thank God for the start of a new day and to be with you through the day.

Remember as you hold baby, God holds you both.

As you put baby to bed, talk about what you have done together; the good things, the not so good things and things where you need God's help.

Finding prompts like actions or sounds can help;

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| * Getting dressed | * When outside |
| * Getting washed | * Turning the taps on |
| * Brushing teeth | * Going for a walk |
| * While playing | * Going out in the car |
| * Meal times | * Hearing a siren or |
| * Nap time/bedtime | emergency vehicle |

Really...Anything that you do!!!

**Suggestions of
prayers when you
struggle to find
your own**

God be in my head and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking
God be at mine end, and at my departing

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands, no feet, on earth but yours.
yours are the eyes through which
He looks compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet with which
He walks to do good.
Yours are the hands with which
He blesses all the world.

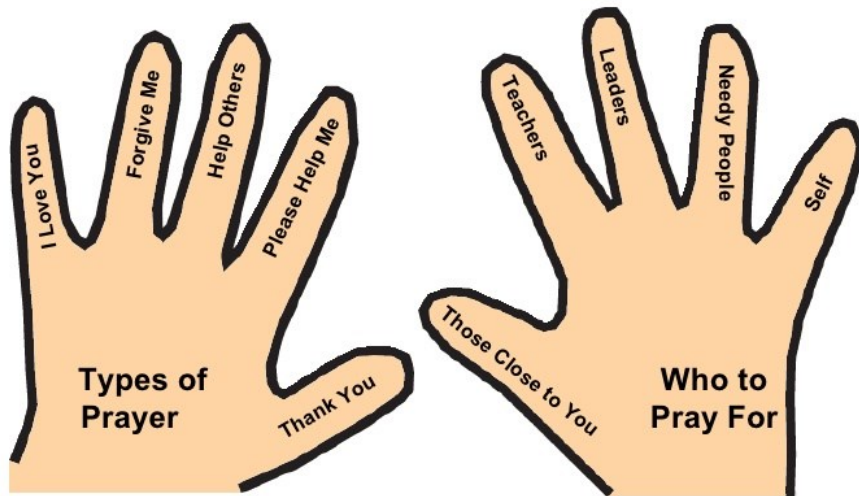
St. Teresa of Avila

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us
And lead us not in to temptation
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom
The power and the glory
Forever and ever
Amen

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in the every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me

St. Patrick.

Hands For Prayer



These hands use each finger as a theme for your prayers.

Choose one of the hands each time, you may prefer to use the same hand each time, or alternate them.

Take time to talk together about each theme and what you would like to pray for.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

Romans 8:26

Sometimes it is very difficult to find words for prayer, knowing what to say as you are too angry, too sad or in despair. However, words are not needed. God knows what is on our hearts; silence, shouting out, crying or groans are sometimes all you need!

When hearing a siren, ask God help the people who are rushing to an emergency, give them the strength and courage to face whatever they encounter.

And to be with the person or people needing help and their families, whatever they face.

When your baby is very small you will be praying on behalf of both of you. As baby grows, they can join in with you; using posture, bowing head, saying Amen, lighting a candle or with craft.

- * Running and jumping to thank God for having fun, being healthy and keeping still to think about people who cannot move
- * When outside, point to or collect objects
- * Use craft materials, modelling clay or junk materials to make pictures or models
- * Dancing or singing to praise God



It is also important to say sorry...

for things you have done wrong and for the things that you haven't done and maybe should have...

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

When you can not find the words...

This section has ideas of structured prayer; for you and baby, especially if you cannot think of what to say.

This is an outline of an interactive prayer time, using the body as prompts.

Choose a time;

- * when baby is awake and alert
- * not too hungry or full
- * where you will not be interrupted

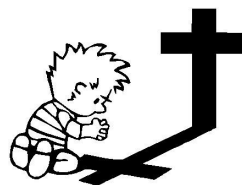
Make sure you are both warm and comfortable

Think about the environment and how it may help or hinder prayer...

- * Light or dimmed, music or quiet for example

An item or object may help your focus

- * A cross, a candle, a picture, statue or icon



You do not have to use all the sections in one go

Stop when baby becomes restless

Lie baby on your knee, so they can see your face. When they are too big for your knee lie them at the side of you or on the floor.

As they get older they may prefer to sit or stand facing you and join in more; pointing to, or using the parts of their body and thinking about things they would like to pray about too.



Thank God for making each one of us. We are all individuals; each with blemishes and areas we are not happy with but each one of us is created and loved by God. Think about the gifts God has given you and the challenges you face. Trust God and Know that he is with you always, holding you in the palm of his hand,

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.*

Psalm 139: 13, 14

Finish with a blessing;

*The Lord bless you, and keep you:
The Lord make his face
shine upon you, and be
gracious to you:
The Lord turn his face towards
you, and give you peace.*



Numbers 6:24-26

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.*

2 Corinthians 13:14

Move to baby's tummy

Think about saying thank you for the food we eat and those who don't have enough. Also give thanks for those who produce it; farmers, factory workers, truck drivers and shop staff.



Almighty God,

Thank you for the sun and the rain which helps our food to grow and for those who help to produce it; farmers, factory workers, truck drivers and all the shop staff. We remember those who struggle to find enough food to feed their families and those who have too much sun or too much rain meaning that crops do not grow and they do not have food to eat.

Amen



Hold baby's feet or lift them to standing

Think about where your feet may take you through life and ask God to be with you as you journey. Also ask for strength to stand strong through tough times.

Help us to follow you loving Jesus, guide as we journey with you. Give us strength and courage when the path becomes tough or uncertain. Help us to keep trusting and looking to you.

Amen

Begin by just sitting quietly for a few moments; aware of God's presence.

As you pray, use the following words
or some of your own

When you are both ready, start by stroking or cradling baby's head.

Whilst doing this look at your baby and talk to God about your hopes and dreams for your child as they grow up but also about your fears.

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of ... I pray that you are with them as they grow and journey through life. Help them to fulfil their potential; developing their gifts and talents. Fill them with courage to face each challenge and new day.

Amen

Or

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of eyes to see, ears to hear and lips to speak. Help ...to use their eyes to see the beauty in the world, both in the gifts of creation and in people. Help them to listen and hear the truth. May ...use their lips to speak the truth. Give them the courage to speak out for injustice and the confidence to share you're love through the things they do and say.

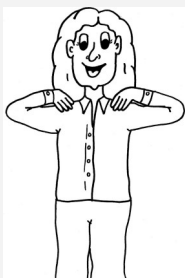
Amen

**For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.**

Isaiah 41:13

Next place your hands on baby's shoulders

Ask God to help them turn away from negativity and help them make positive choices through their life. Ask God to help you as baby grows; with the challenges of daily life.



Dear God,

Be with ..., may they trust in you and know you. Help them to turn away from doing wrong and towards you. Give them the strength to make positive choices in life and the courage to stand for what they believe.

Amen

Take hold of baby's hands

Begin by clapping the hands together and thanking God for the gifts of creation, especially your baby. Ask God to help them use their hands to look after others and all things created by God, especially those who are struggling or in need.

Almighty God, creator of all things,

Thank you for the gift of Help us to care for each other, our families and friends even when we fall out or disagree. Help us to be kind to people we don't know and look after your world.

Amen



Hands can also be used to praise God. Baby can clap hands while you sing or clap and sing together. You could also spend some time exploring what hands can do; waving, pointing, clasping, tapping or banging.

Place hands over baby's chest and heart

The heart is often associated with health and love. Talk to God about the people you love and about health and health issues. It is also important to think about broken relationships and say sorry for when you might have hurt people, though words, actions and things you have not done.

Loving God,

Thank you for our family and friends, for people who help us; doctors, nurses, police, teachers, ..., be with them in their work. Help us to be more like Jesus, coming close to people and helping others, both through our words and in what we do. Sorry for hurting others even if we don't mean to.

Amen

