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Praying with toddlers...



**Where do you start?
Some suggestions and ideas**

Prayer with children is often led by adults. It can be easy to forget, even little children can pray and with nurture, can develop a positive relationship with Jesus.

This leaflet brings together several ideas that I have found in a variety of places that can be used with children especially children under 5 years.

! When thinking about prayer, it is important to remember that people pray in different ways. Some people are comfortable praying out loud or in writing, while others prefer to keep the prayers to themselves.

Ideas

tsp prayers



(photo from Flame:Creative Children's Ministry)

It is important to introduce children to the three types of prayer; thank you, sorry and please.

An easy way to do this is through teaspoon prayers (tsp).

Buy a pack of plastic teaspoons and write a t, s or p on each one. Place them all in a jar. Invite each child to take a spoon and use it for prayer.

Items such as

- * Shells, loofah, starfish
- * Fir cones, piece of wood, leaves
- * Globe or people
- * Shapes or wicker balls
- * Colourful items
- * Animals and birds

Useful websites

- * www.godventure.co.uk/category/prayer-activities/
- * www.going4growth.org.uk/growth_in_faith_and_worship/prayer
- * www.flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/prayer
- * www.faithinhomes.org.uk
- * www.1277.org.uk
- * www.engagetoday.org.uk/playtime
- * www.messychurch.org.uk
- * www.themothersunion.org
- * www.prayerspacesinschools.com/home
- * www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/ideas/#Prayer

Prayer areas

Create an area for the children (and adults) to use whenever they choose.

Use things like

- * Prayer tree with paper leaves
- * Washing line with paper clothing and pegs
- * Fishing net with paper fish
- * Paper stars on black paper

All these have the opportunity for the children to write, draw or just think their prayer on to the paper.

Other ways to collect prayers could be

- * Tie ribbons on to branches or a rope
- * Add stones to water or a pile
- * Paper chains

Create a special, quiet area for children to go to by placing a chair, cushions or a bean bag slightly away from the main play area.

Place a basket in the area with a variety of different items to hold and explore. The items should be tactile and appeal to different senses. Try to include items made from natural materials but most of all they need to be safe.

Sand prayers

Sand trays are great for prayers!

Invite the children to write or draw in the sand or stand in or place their hand in it to make an impression.

It is particularly effective for sorry prayers where the children can see there 'wrongs' wiped away..

You could also use black boards or dry-wipe white boards in the same way.



Waterlily prayers



Using 10cmx10cm squares of coloured paper and a large shallow tray of water create prayers which will inspire awe and wonder in the youngest of children.

Take a piece of the paper and fold each corner into the centre to create a smaller square. Open the corners back up and in the centre write, draw or whisper your prayer. Then fold the corners back down 'capturing' the prayer inside.

Place the paper (unfolded side down) on to the water. Spend a few moments watching as the waterlily opens to release the prayer.

Intercessional prayers

Create a box of items or pictures for the children to choose from. Include things like

- * A small globe
- * Transport like car, bus, lorry, tractor
- * People of all ages
- * Plants or trees
- * Rainbow or umbrella
- * Water
- * Food
- * Toys
- * Someone sad or crying and someone laughing

Use these items as the basis for prayer, invite the children, if they are happy to, to say why they picked it, it might be because they liked it!

Picture prayers

Similar to the prayers above, but instead of objects, walk around the local community and take a photograph of each place. Include anything you want from your community, it is an opportunity to think more about who is local to the group.

You could include photographs of the following ;

- * Shops
- * Offices or places of work like factories
- * Doctors surgery
- * Nursery and schools
- * Residential homes
- * Crossing patrol (lollipop person)
- * Park
- * Church and church hall
- * Village hall
- * Police station
- * Cenotaph

People prayers

(photo from Flame:Creative Children's Ministry)



Write a child's name on each stone and place into a basket. Either take each stone in turn or invite each child take one.

Ask God to bless the child named on the stone and encourage children to pray for one another.

You could also include the names of the adults too!