



Creative ways to pray in small groups with children

Below you will find many suggestions as to how you could pray with your children in a creative way. In the past children have really responded to something out of the ordinary. We would welcome your feedback on any of the suggestions that we have given and happy praying!

Prayer Circle of Light

Sit the children in a circle, hopefully each will have a torch. The children hold their torches switched off. Explain that we can pray for others. As a symbol of this when each person is prayed for, their torch will be lit. The leader starts by going over to one of the children, holds their torch and says a short prayer out loud. The torch is then lit. That child now goes to another child in the circle, takes hold of the torch, either saying a prayer out loud for that person or praying in their head. When the prayer is finished the torch is lit. The second child goes in turn to another child until the whole circle is lit. This should be done calmly.

Teaspoon Prayers

Take one teaspoon with you for this prayer session. With the children sitting in a circle, explain that the short way of writing the word teaspoon is tsp. Ask them if they can think of particular types of prayer that begin with tsp. Explain that they stand for Thank you, Sorry and Please. Pass the spoon around the circle three times, the first time each child is encouraged to thank God for something, the second time round they say sorry for something and the third they say please to God for something. They only speak when holding the spoon.

Prayer Web

For this session you will need a ball of string. This prayer method encourages children to pray for each others needs. First go around the circle asking the children what things they would like to have prayed for. Maybe fit this in with the theme of the day. The first challenge is for everyone to remember each others requests. The leader starts by holding the ball of string, they roll the ball to a child across the circle, making sure the leader keeps hold of the end of the string. The leader then prays for that person's particular need. That child then holds the string where it reaches them, then rolls the string to another person across from them in the circle, praying either out loud or in their head for that persons needs. Do this until everyone is holding some string. The final challenge is for the person holding the ball to wind the string back up again without any knots.

Bubble Prayers

You will need a bubble blowing bottle. The aim of this method is to encourage a calm atmosphere and to show the children that God hears all of our prayers even if it seems he hasn't answered them. In the circle encourage each child to say what they would like to say to God. The children should imagine their prayers inside the bubble. Pass the bubble kit around. The child should say their prayer out loud and then calmly blow through the bubble wand.

The Pebble Prayer

Take enough pebbles and pens for your group. Sat in a circle, give a pen and pebble to each child. Encourage them to write something in the world that they want to pray for on the stone. They should hold their stone in silence and pray for what is on their stone. You could try to keep this quiet for as long as possible or get them to pray out loud while still holding their stone. After this time of prayer ask them what has happened to their stone? Hopefully it has become warm. Tell them that they can each keep this stone and whenever they are holding it they should pray for that issue and pray long enough to make the pebble warm.

Messy Amen

For this session you will need a toilet roll. Sit the children in a circle. Explain that as we pray around the circle the toilet roll will be unrolled to each person praying, creating a ring of toilet paper. You only pray when you hold the roll. Explain that, only at the end will we say amen which means I agree and so should not be said in a dull way. So after all prayers have been said and the ring of toilet paper is complete, everyone should go Aaaaa-MEN! On the "men" part they tear the toilet paper and throw it up in the air. This needs to be tidied up as soon as possible!!

Prayer Hands

This session needs no additional equipment other than the hands of the children (be sensitive to any children who have any limbs or fingers missing ... Or extra ones!) The aim of this session is to show the children ways that they can think of things to pray for when they are on their own. In the circle get the children to look at one of their hands.

The Thumb – think of the thumbs up sign – and pray for all who encourage us.

The Index Finger – Think of pointing in suspicion, pray for places in the world where there is suspicion hate and war.

Middle Finger – Usually the tallest. Pray for people who are high up in authority leading the country.

Ring Finger on left hand – The finger where people wear rings to show love and marriage. Pray for families.

Little Finger – weakest finger. Pray for all those who are ill or weak. There are lots to do in this – you could do this over a couple of nights.

Adoration Alphabet

This session helps the children to think about how great God is. You could use a sheet of paper and a marker pen. Write down the alphabet down the side of the sheet and get the children to think of words, describing words to describe God. E.g. awesome, brilliant, caring ... be prepared to make suggestions, even obscure ones like xcellent!

Prayer Fishing

The aim of this prayer session is to get the children praying for others and encourage those who don't speak out loud to put their prayers into writing. You will need one fishing rod and enough card fish for the children to write prayers on and pens for each child. When the prayers have been written, put the fish into the middle and the children can in turn catch a fish and read the prayer. Be sensitive about writing and reading needs.

Graffiti Prayers

The aim of this way of praying is to encourage those who find praying out loud to voice their prayers non vocally. You will need a sheet of flip chart paper and a marker pen of different colours one for each member of the group. Explain that people sometimes use walls to voice worries and concerns and make their feelings known. The children are given pens and in their own time draw or write any prayers that they would like to pray for. At the end of the session write along the bottom of the paper "Lord hear our prayers".

Circles

The aim of this session is to encourage the children to pray for other people in the group. You will not need any resources for this. Get everyone in a circle standing up and all standing facing around the circle, ask them to put their hands on the person to the left of them back and shoulders and massage their shoulders, whilst doing this pray for them as the person you are praying for prays for the next person round at the same time. When all goes quiet turn to the opposite directions and do the same.

Prayer Consequences

The aim of this session is to encourage the children to think about and give thanks for the other people in their group and in doing so build them up and encourage them. For this you will need pieces of paper for each child and a pen. Give a piece of paper to each person and ask them to fold the paper as many times as there are people in the group. Ask them to put their name at the top of the sheet. Unfold the pieces again and pass the pieces of paper around the group asking each member to write down a talent, gift or something nice about the person named at the top of the piece of paper. Emphasise that all things should be positive. Fold down the top part and pass onto the next person etc until the paper gets back to the named person. Let them open the paper and read out what has been read and then place in the middle of the circle and pray together thanking God for who we are, our gifts, talents and asking for help in developing our talents. The children can keep their sheets of paper as an encouragement. This would probably work best towards the end of the week when the children know each other.