

INVITATION TO

PRAYER

TWO YEARS OLD

Crossroads Families
A ministry of Crossroads Church

Talk, talk, talk. Your child is at the age where they are communicating with you and others. You may have a child who is just beginning to speak and only uses a handful of words. Some of you may have a kid who never stops talking, or you might be somewhere in the middle. Wherever your little chatterbox is, you are realizing how important it is to be able to connect with them.

It's wonderful to be able to talk with your child. While you are teaching your child how to "use their words", it is crucial not to leave out the most important conversations we have: prayer.

It's not too early to teach your children to make prayer a priority. Prayers don't have to be elaborate and formal. God hears them all. It makes sense that we teach children to pray in terms that they understand. Keep it simple and on their level. Whether they speak with just a few words or full sentences, all those words can be directed toward God. After all, He is the most worthy of our words.

Making prayer a daily part of life is the easiest way to make it a priority for your family. This year's Family Experience is called "Invitation to Prayer." It is never too soon to begin your child's walk with God. It will be much harder to introduce prayer later on in life.

However, we cannot teach something that we ourselves don't understand! We will give you 3 Kick-starters that will help you build a foundation for you to begin this year's Family Experience. These Kick-starters are expounded upon in our Kick-starter Guide. They will cover the fundamental questions of 1. What is prayer? 2. Why do we pray at all? 3. What should we pray for our children? In the answer to this last question, we would refer you back to the Family

Experience for Year 1, "The Blessing." In it, you learned how to bless your child based on recognizing what personality the Father has already instilled in your child. We would encourage you to go back to that Family Experience and read about the blessing if you have not already. The key to praying for our children is recognizing and praying alongside what the Spirit of God is already doing in them.

Now that we have looked at the Kick-starter questions, we are ready to address the Family Experience for year 2. The Parent Guide will help you accomplish this by giving you step-by-step instruction. In this Family Experience, we want you to be able to create a prayer specifically for your child. In order to do this, choose attributes that your child was blessed with, and base your prayer off of them. Your prayer should be short and uncomplicated. If your child possesses a loving heart and is very helpful, your prayer may be as simple as, "Dear God, may John be a good friend and love others as you love us." Repeating this prayer in your child's life reinforces your wish for their character and teaches them to pray daily. As they grow older, they have heard these words spoken over them many times, and it is familiar.

Show them that prayer is a way we communicate with God, and that it is precious to God. Now that is something to talk about.

Invitation to Prayer

“Talk, talk, talk, all they seem to do is talk.” You’re either saying that OR, “I don’t know why they’re not talking more.” Between the ages of 2 and 3 kids’ vocabulary is EXPLODING. **Whether or not your child talks early or late, this year is one filled with words.** We want to capitalize on that time by helping you write a simple prayer that you can begin praying over your child daily. If your child has the words now, he/she can begin praying these words as well with you. If not, no fear, pray it anyway. Eventually, you’ll find your child praying this same prayer.

Kickstarter 1: What is Prayer?

Prayer is simply communication with God. Have you ever had a one sided conversation, ever known someone who talks so much you can’t get a word in edgewise? Are you ever THAT person to God? Yes, communication isn’t supposed to be one sided, so, technically, prayer is talking and LISTENING to God.

⁵ And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who

is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

PSALM 139:1-14

The two big ideas Jesus shares with us is that he doesn’t like us to pray for show or use meaningless words. Process that for a minute. What does it mean to pray just for show? What would it sound like if someone was using meaningless words when they prayed?

So the opposite of this is that Jesus wants prayer to be personal and intimate, and He wants us to be genuine and honest with what we say.

The best way to learn about prayer is to START and start with privately talking with God about what’s really going on in your life.

Kickstarter 2: Why do we pray?

Maybe you've heard the analogy that God isn't Santa Clause. He isn't just sitting in heaven on His throne waiting to hear what we want so that He can drop things from the sky for us. Prayer isn't a time to get what we want from God. It's a time for God to give us what He wants for us.

King David is called "a man after God's own heart." If you read Psalms, you see evidence of David's constant seeking to know God's heart. David often inquired of the Lord, and therefore, knew God's heart. The main goal of prayer is to build our personal relationship with God. We get to know His heart through prayer.

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

PSALM 4:8

When you look at these verses in John, you can see that John was communicating to those of us who'd read this that the only way we can accomplish anything of any significance is by abiding in Jesus, living life IN Him. The only way to do this is to know Him and the only way to know Him is to communicate with Him. We pray to be close to God. If you find yourself feeling distant from God, reconnect through prayer. In order to teach our children to pray, we need to know what prayer is and why we should do it.

Kickstarter 3: What do we pray for our child?

We want to help you figure out a couple things that you can specifically pray for your child so he/she knows exactly what you're praying for since they hear it over and over again. We can all easily get off track and off focus on our call to help our children know the love of God. Let's face it, it's easy to let life get in the way. Our desire is that this helping develop a prayer for your child will provide direction and focus as you parent.

Let's take a look at the sweet words Luke uses to describe Jesus in Luke 2:52, *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

This is a simple verse that illustrates the simplicity we should seek as we write a prayer for our child's life. A simple sentence that illustrates who Jesus was. It's what He was known for as He did ministry on Earth..

As you get ready to formulate a prayer for your child that you'll consistently pray over your child, take some time to consider what's most important to pray for. There are tons of options, but you know your child. You know how God has created him/her. You know their personality traits and what makes them tick. Process a few of these things as you consider a simple prayer that illustrates this?

Invitation to Prayer Family Experience

It's a beautiful thing to hear the words I love you from your child. Equally is beautiful as hearing your child pray to God. We go through lots of prayers with our kids; mealtime prayers, bedtime prayers, etc. This Family Experience is designed to help you write a life prayer for your child. A prayer that you'll begin praying out loud on a daily basis with your child. A prayer that your child will hear so often that he/she knows exactly what you want for him/her.

If you participated in the Birthday Blessing Family Experience, then you've identified a couple of personality traits that you want for your child. Maybe you were unable to participate in the Birthday Blessing. Regardless, the first step in completing this Invitation to Prayer Family Experience is to identify exactly what you want for your child. Be specific, identify a couple of characteristics you want for your child to exhibit as he/she grows up.

Next formulate this into a simple prayer that includes words your child will understand. For example, if you want your child to be compassionate, your prayer may change the wording to "kind to others." You want the words you choose to be understandable to your 2-3 year old. As they get older, you can use the larger words, but make sure you can explain what your words mean to your child.

Make the prayer a simple 1 or 2 sentence one, one that can be easily repeated, and one that your child will eventually be able to repeat. Begin praying this with your child every night at bedtime. Imagine the significance of praying this prayer over the life of your child as they hear you say your dreams for him/her.

It would be great to make a piece of artwork that includes this prayer that you can put in your child's room. You can consider painted canvas, etched wood, embossed fabric, engraved metal, printed paper, etc.

The point is to build the repetition and rhythm of this prayer into your family's life. It will be one that will be prayed repeatedly so make sure it encompasses what you really want for your child.

SAMPLE PRAYERS:

Dear God,
Give Kelyn the bravery to be a risk taker and help her to see others and love them like you do.
- Amen

Dear God,
Help Kozbi's compassionate heart be one that helps her change the world so others will know You and the hope You alone can bring.
- Amen

Dear God,
Thank you for Tristen's tender heart. Help him to be an encourager and a great friend.
- Amen

Dear God,
Anthony is a warrior. Help him fight for things in life that are worth fighting for.
- Amen

Dear God,
You have given Emma an amazing mind. Help her to use this gift to point others to You, and help her give you the credit.
- Amen

Dear God,
Thank you for making Sam so unique. We pray that she would know that she is a gift from you. Show her how to help others who are different so they, too, can see they are are wonderfully made.
- Amen

Physical

Gross Motor: Show coordination skills while moving around and engaging in play activities. Fling a ball in an attempt to throw it towards target; pushes friend on riding toy; climb steps of slide; walk on broad balance beam or edge of walkway; imitate a variety of movements (runs, walks, gallops, jumps); jump with both feet.

Fine Motor: Demonstrate hand-eye coordination while manipulating and exploring objects. Poke, pound and build with play dough and other sculpting materials; scribble with a variety of instruments beginning to use thumb and fingertips grasp; use wrist rotation to fit puzzle piece into puzzle; unscrew lids to pour from one container to another; pull apart pop beads or connecting blocks with ease.

Social and Emotional

Self Concept: Shows an emerging sense of self. Has growing sense of separateness; seek and find pride in developing skills that encourage independence (washing own hands, putting on own coat); realize reflection in the mirror is his.

Self Control: Demonstrate increased skill in identifying and expressing feelings. Verbally state wants and needs (“I want that”, “mine”, “I’m thirsty”); begin to understand behaviors that hurt self or others (exclaims “no” when another child attempts to hit or bite).

Cooperation: Begin to gain a sense of mastery and achievement. Try new experiences; repeat a newly gained skill and seek positive response for achievements from adult (looks at caregiver after completion of task to see response).

Relational Spiritual

Around this age, children are old enough to understand simple things in the bible such as the theme God’s Creation. Take your children for walks and look at different things in nature and talk about them.

Start out with Genesis 1:1 and while walking look at all the things in nature. Then ask your child questions like; *Who made that tree? Did daddy make the tree? No. Did mommy make the tree? No. God made the tree. He is the creator. He is the only one who has power to make things live and who can make the world.*

Then sing songs relating to what you are talking about such as, In the Beginning God Made The Earth.

Our hope is that during the past year, you have created a nightly prayer time where you pray over your child daily.

In order to encourage other parents, we would love to see or hear about the prayer you created about your toddler and how that prayer has impacted your relationship with God and your toddler.

Feel free to send us an email, make a video, or send us a copy of your story, Bible verse, song, or prayer so that we can better encourage other parents. Thank you for taking this journey with us and we pray that God continues to work in your life and the life of your child.

SEND RESPONSES TO:

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