

# Praying for others — Christian ed at home

Adapted from an article by JOELLE BRUMMIT-YALE in the Presbyterian Outlook



**Scripture:** John 17:6-19

**Optional Scripture Translation:** download today's scripture from The Message on the Bible Gateway website (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/>)

**Optional Materials:** paper and pens/pencils/markers

Prayer is a cornerstone of Christian life. Children pick up on this fairly quickly. As they learn what it means to worship God and to be disciples of Christ, one of the first practices children adopt is prayer. They see and hear adults around them praying. Some families even introduce children to prayer at mealtime before they have ever set foot in a worship service. In this week's lesson, your children will explore one of Jesus' prayers for his disciples and will offer prayers asking for God to help those they know and love.

## Introduce

Begin the time with your children by praying together.

- Tell your children that you will start the prayer, but then they should add in anything they would like to pray for.
- Remind them that God wants to hear everything that they have to say, so there are no topics that are off-limits.
- After praying together, talk about what each person included in their prayers. Ask why these items were included. Note the variety of topics and people that were part of their prayer requests.

## **Prepare**

Prepare to read aloud the Scripture passage by explaining its context to your children.

- Tell them it is part of a prayer Jesus said to his Father/Creator.
- In it, he is asking things on behalf of his followers. Jesus knew that he was about to be arrested and crucified. He offers this prayer in front of his disciples so they hear his words as he says them to God.
- Tell your children to listen for the things that Jesus asks for God to do for his disciples.

## **Read**

Read aloud John 17:6-19. Note that this passage is fairly wordy and dense. It also doesn't appear in many children's Bibles. The Message, a Bible interpretation in contemporary language, is more accessible for children.

- As you read aloud the text, pause after every few verses and ask your children to share what they hear Jesus praying for in those lines.
- Breaking the text into smaller "chunks" will help them process and keep track of Jesus' message.

## **Wonder**

After reading and discussing the Scripture, draw your children back to the focus of the prayer.

- Ask them who Jesus prayed for. Note that he prayed for his closest friends.
- He was asking God to help them when he is no longer with them on earth.
- Explain that there are many different types of prayers we can offer to God, but they tend to fall into three main categories: help prayers, thank you prayers, and praise prayers.
- Jesus offers a help prayer for his disciples. We can and do offer the same for people in our lives.

## **Do**

Spend time creating and offering prayers for those near and dear to your family. You may choose to simply sit together and verbally say a prayer for someone. Or you may have your children draw or write prayers on sheets of paper.

- Encourage them to select a variety of different people from their lives to pray for.
- Remind them that there doesn't necessarily need to be something "wrong" in a person's life for us to pray for God to help that individual.

- You may even choose to share these prayers with the people they focus on, just as Jesus said his prayer in front of his disciples.



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