

8 WAYS TO PRAY WITH YOUR KIDS

“With good prayer modeling and good experiences of prayer, children can experience God just as surely as adults.” (Jean Marie Weber)

1. **Pray Always...** Prayer is something that can be done at all times, not just in church or at the dinner table: when you find out someone is sick, when you listen to the news, when you see God’s abundance all around, before a test or a ball game, and don’t forget to say a prayer of thanks when prayers are answered.
2. **Use Concrete Examples...** Use objects as reminders of our faith such as pictures, story books, a bible, a crucifix or things that are meaningful to the family member such as a candle, a rock, or a statue.
3. **Stick to a Routine...** Prayer can become an important part of everyone’s day: grace before meals, prayers before bedtime, blessings on special occasions, when you gather at home to go over the Take Home packets for GOF.
4. **Keep Things Moving...** Play upbeat gospel or Christian music (radio or CD player) and let children move and dance to the music, take a walk and pray a prayer of praise for creation, incorporate action into your quiet prayer by passing a candle or bible to each person or asking each person to read a line of a psalm.
5. **Go to Church...** From an early age, children recognize the importance of Mass in the life of the family. Bring religious picture books to Mass, practice the sign of peace at home, play “church” music at home or sing the songs from Mass, take a walking tour of church and talk about the statues and stained glass windows, even the stations of the cross, encourage the children to take part in the collection.
6. **Make Jesus the “In” Thing...** Read together stories of Jesus and the saints, allow children to arrange the Nativity set in your home (or purchase one just for them), borrow or purchase videos and DVDs with a Christian focus.
7. **Help Youth Pray, Too...** Invite them to set up your prayer space, encourage them with books and journals appropriate for their age (Chicken Soup for the Soul), give them a Catholic Youth Bible, allow them to choose the Mass time that better suits them.
8. **Be Flexible...** Help family members be respectful and reverent during prayer times, but also be flexible and patient. One family gathered for their annual Christmas tree blessing. A child took the vial of “holy water” and began to bless the tree with what was actually a small vial of bubbles. After that the tradition continued—they blessed the tree every year with “holy bubbles.”

