



tips for youth workers

JANUARY 2017

CREATIVE WAYS TO PRAY WITH CHILDREN

One of the greatest things we can do for the young people we minister to is to teach them how to talk with God. When putting together a time of worship for children it is important to make sure prayer has a prominent place. Below are a dozen different ways to make prayer an important part of worship. Try the ideas as suggested or feel free to add your own twist to them.

1. **Sentence Prayers:** Begin a sentence and have different children complete it, one thought at a time. For example, "God, we thank you for...", "God please help..." Responses can be audible or silent.
2. **Singing Prayers:** Talk to God, not about God. Lead children in worship songs that use personal pronouns. As children sing, add verbs to the ones already known. For example, "Jesus, I adore you and I lay my life before you", "Jesus I love (thank, praise) you", or "I love you, Lord and I lift my voice", "I (thank, praise) you, Lord."
3. **Litany Prayers:** Read a series of sentences on a particular topic. Following each phrase, have the children respond in unison with something such as "God is good, God's love is forever." Psalm 136 is a good example of this type of prayer.
4. **Scripture Prayers:** Use a small portion of scripture from a children's translation as a prayer. Try Psalm 9:1,2; 17:6, 7; 19:14; or 1 Chronicles 29:10-11.
5. **Position Prayers:** Children can experience prayer sitting, standing, kneeling or lying down. For a prayer of thanks have the children stand or sit with their heads bowed. For a prayer of confession, have kids kneel or sit on the floor and hug their knees. For a prayer of praise, have the children stand with arms raised. Get the children to think of their own prayer postures and encourage individual expression.
6. **Prayers in Motion:** Young children are interested in things their bodies can do. Stretching, bending, smiling, breathing, and flexing actions can be prayers. Children can stretch as they say Thank You to God for growing.
7. **Signed Prayers:** Sign language can enhance the spoken word and create a profound experience when children become familiar with some of the symbols. Check out a sign language book or find someone who can teach basic signs to the children. Some worship music books have signing instructions included as a resource.
8. **Colour Prayers:** Play an instrumental version of Christian music the children know and while the songs are playing have children colour a prayer. Encourage children to move their crayon in time to the music. When the music finishes have the children share their picture as a prayer.
9. **Letters to God:** Have children write letters to God and share them as prayers, audibly or silently.
10. **Group Prayers:** Divide children into small groups to share sentence prayers.
11. **Praying Hands:** Make plaster hands. Imprint the child's hand inside an adult's hand. Remind children that their names are written on God's hand; therefore he does not forget them and will hear their prayer.
12. **Prayer Requests:** Have children share prayer requests and record them in a journal. Keep track of answers too. Teach children how God answers prayer.

