

Teaching prayer

Faith & family: Growing together (August 2020)

By [Kimberly Knowle-Zeller](#)

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Focal verse

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

Reflection

Encouraging our kids to pray seems like one of our easier tasks as parents, yet often I feel as if I’m stumbling in my efforts to do so. Prayer has been a way for me to connect with God and others, and I desire this same connection for my children.

I want my children to know the beauty and power found in lifting our bodies, words and songs to God, but many times the daily realities of our lives push [prayer](#) to the back burner.

Over time I’ve learned that everything, from the rhythm of our days to the people we meet and the state of the world, are experiences we can use to offer prayers. When we hear a police siren, we can ask God to watch over those in need. If our patience seems to be fraying, we can ask God to still our hearts. If our child is sad, we can pray that they feel God’s presence. Small moments throughout the day give us the opportunity to speak to God.

Not long ago my daughter started coloring in my devotional adult coloring book. She chose the picture of a deer drinking water. Day by day she carefully filled in the legs and flowers.

“Color with me, Mama,” she recently implored, handing me a purple colored pencil.

“What a beautiful color,” I said. “Thank you, God, for purple, and deer, and all of God’s creation. How else can we thank God?”

“For sun!” Charlotte shouted.

“Yes,” I replied. “We say, ‘Thank you, God, for sun.’”

Above the deer we were coloring I noticed the words of Psalm 25 (NIV): “In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.” The words and the beautiful scroll of the letters drew me in as we worked together.

“In you, Lord my God, I put my trust,” I said, reciting the verse aloud for my daughter.

I let the words become our prayer.

Practices

Pick a verse as a family, perhaps a short one like “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Then write it out together. Display your creations on the refrigerator or above your mantle as a reminder of God’s word always speaking to us.

Find a coloring book of bible verses to color together, or use the book [Praying in Color, Kids Edition](#), to dig deeper into scripture and creatively engage in God’s Word.

Store your favorite books of prayers, poems and/or Bible stories near the dining table. During meals, reach over and grab one to share with your family.

Prayers

We pray for school administrators, teachers, staff and students who are preparing for a new year of learning.

We pray for those with heavy hearts and anxious minds.

We pray for meaningful conversations and the ability to listen.

We give thanks for state parks, walking trails, lakes and conservation areas that point to the beauty of God’s creation.

We give thanks for scripture and reading Bible stories together.

We give thanks for the experiences of summer: campfires, fireflies, playing catch and splashing in sprinklers.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

Service opportunity

Connect with the staff of a local service agency (animal shelter, food pantry, shelter for those who are homeless, etc.) and ask them how you can pray for the ones their agency serves. Collect prayer requests and incorporate them into family prayers. After a few weeks of praying the written prayers, listen for how God is calling you to action.



[Kimberly Knowle-Zeller](#)

Kimberly Knowle-Zeller is an ordained ELCA pastor, mother of two and spouse of an ELCA pastor. She lives with her family in Cole Camp, Mo. Her website is kimberlyknowlezeller.com.