

Different Ways to Pray

This is in no way a comprehensive list, just a few different ideas to try and get the ball rolling

Popcorn Prayer

Start the prayer, then say "popcorn (child's name)" then it is their turn to pray. When they're done, they say a different name until everyone has had a chance to pray.

You can also do this by just leaving a few quiet moments for people to start praying outloud if they want to-you don't have to do the 'popcorn' part.

Pair Prayer

Have kids group up in 2s or 3s have take turns praying. As they get more comfortable with this, you can begin having them pray for each other. Have them share their highs/lows or something they want prayer for with their small group, and then they take turns praying for that with each other.

Color Prayer

Each kid will think of something they want to pray for, and then spend some time in silence(or you could play some calm music) and the kids will draw/color what they're praying for. This is a way to work on focusing while praying, because we all know it is very easy to get distracted and have our minds wander. The motion and focus of coloring helps the kids to actually focus on what it is they're praying for.

Movement Prayer

This is a pre-written prayer that has some calm movements to help the kids connect what they're saying to action, and help them think more about what they're saying. Below is an example, but feel free to make your own as well.

(3 deep breaths)

God, you are above(reach toward the sky), below(touch your toes), inside (hands to heart) and all around (big arm circles). I worship you(arms stretched wide), and give my life to you(point up-stretching as high as you can). I love you (hands to heart) with all that I am (head, shoulders, knees, and toes).

(3 deep breaths) amen.

Five-Finger Prayer

This is an easy prayer to introduce to kids that they can do at any time. Each finger has a different focus to pray for.

Thumb- those who are closest to us (family, friends)

Pointer- Those who teach, instruct, and heal

Middle- (the tallest finger) is for our leaders/people with power

Right- (the weakest finger) is for the weak

Pinky- For yourself (always pray for the pinky last)

Conversation Prayer

This is a fill in the blank prayer. It is a good introductory one for those who aren't at all comfortable praying out loud (but it can be done with any age/all levels of comfort). Say a phrase with a fill in the blank like: "God is good, God is great. Thank you God for _____". And have the kids fill in what they're thankful for. Go around the room and have every kid do it. You can even have the whole class repeat the beginning part, and then just have one kid fill in the blank and go to the next one. Could be put to a rhythm or melody for younger kids to help them remember it.

Prayer Walk

Walk around the ed wing quietly and find different things for the class to pray for. This is hard inside, but if you feel comfortable-you can bring your group out to the prayer garden to do this. Have the kids point out things that remind them of God or something they want to pray for. Then take a second to pray for that thing. Encourage the kids to do the actual speaking-but don't force them if they don't want to do it.

Breathing Prayer

Come up with a phrase that has two parts. For example, "When I am afraid... I will trust You" or "Even when I fail... God loves me". Then have the kids take deep breaths, as they breath in you say the first part of the phrase, as they breath out say the second. Go through it at few times. Always do the same phrase during one 'session', don't change phrases in the same day. This is to be a contemplative, centering kind of prayer. I would probably not do it for kids younger than 3rd grade on a regular basis. But it can always be tried, and if it doesn't work-try something different next week!