



## LEARNING TO PRAY

### Talking to God

During the preschool years your child is learning at a very fast rate. Before your eyes he or she changes physically and emotionally. Every day your little one develops a larger vocabulary, learns a new skill or makes a new discovery. It is important to remember that while all these other changes are taking place, your preschooler is also developing spiritually. At this age children develop a sense of self and become aware that they are separate individuals apart from their parents. As you help your child through this new stage of independence, become familiar with the spiritual concepts they are capable of understanding.

- I'm growing
- God made me special
- I know how to make right and wrong choices
- God made me to think, work and play
- I can talk to God
- I can do good things like Jesus did
- God loves me and always will
- God has a plan for me and for all people
- I can do what God wants me to do

With this level of spiritual understanding, your child is ready to learn about prayer. He already knows that God created him and loves him. If this is true, then God must be interested in what happens in his life each day and wants to hear from him.

### What are the Benefits?

Children need stability. When a young child understands that she can talk to God, this helps to anchor her and help her feel secure. Preschoolers are often fearful especially at night. Statements like, "You don't have to be afraid. God stays up all night watching you. Talk to Him and He will help you have good sleep." Tell your child he can talk to God anytime and anywhere about anything. He always hears.



## **Jumpstart 1 Learn a Verse About Prayer**

Use your Bible for this one. Open the Bible to Psalm 66:19. Preschoolers are not ready to learn long verses, so we use verse phrases. Say this verse together, “*God hears me when I talk to Him.*” (Psalm 66:19) Post the Bible phrase in a location where it will be seen often. Refer to many times throughout the year.

## **Jumpstart 2 Read Books about Prayer**

*Peter’s Perfect Prayer Place* – (By Steven and Alex Kendrick) This sweet book follows a little boy named Peter as he discovers that he can talk to God anywhere and anytime. Preschoolers need to understand that God is always available to hear what they have to say.

*God Knows My Name* – (By Debby Anderson) Your child is a unique creation of God. This book helps children to understand that because God created them, He is very interested in what goes on in their lives. He wants our kids to learn to talk with Him.

If the budget allows, purchase these books and have them on hand to read several times during year three of the preschool journey. If buying them is not an option, they are available in the church library.

## **Jumpstart 3 Make a Prayer Picture Book**

At the age of three, most children are not quite ready to read so picture books are the way to go. Find an inexpensive 1” 3 ring binder. Let your child decorate the cover and label it, “*Child’s Name --- I Can Talk to God*”. Find pictures of different things we can pray for. (Ex. family, church, pastor, friends, home etc.) Put just two to three pictures per page. Use copies of actual family photos where appropriate. Place the pages in the notebook.

In a second section, collect pictures of things your child can be thankful for. Label the first page – “*I Can Thank God for...*” and add picture pages behind it. (Ex. My family, sunshine, rain, pets, teachers etc. Again, real photos of people in this section will be very meaningful.

Magazine cut outs will be very helpful for this project.



## **Jumpstart 4 Night Time Prayers**

What time of day do you normally have your child's full attention? Bedtime, right? Help your little one settle into bed. Read him a book. Invite him to talk about his day. Encourage him to talk to God about whatever is on his mind. For the first few nights, you may need to model this for him. If he is afraid about anything, remind him that God never sleeps and will take care of him all through the night. Tell him that God gave him family to take care of him as well.

During the preschool years the goal is to build a spiritual foundation in the life of your child. At age three, we add to the foundation with the brick of prayer.