



PRAYING *for*
YOUR CHILD

PRAYING FOR YOUR CHILD

the power of a praying parent

Congratulations on persevering through the first year of your child's life! If you're like most families, there were many ups and downs. You have learned to function with much less sleep than you ever thought possible, and you have probably already learned that you are not the perfect parent. These are important lessons! None of us are perfect, but God does nevertheless entrust us as parents with the spiritual formation of our families. As your church family, we will be with you every step of the way.

LAYING THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

"The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects" (James 5:16). Prayer is the fundamental element of the spiritual life. Even in these early developmental years, you can begin habits of prayer in your home that will blossom and grow along with your child. At this early stage, before your child has developed the capacity for language, the best thing that you can do as the parent is to pray for your child. There are many prayers from our tradition that can help you (see below). But you should always feel free to use your own words.

HOW TO PRAY?

Prayer should be simple, not complex. Prayer is about a relationship with Jesus Christ. It does not need to be "grandiose," it needs to be authentic. Talk to Jesus as if you are talking to a friend. He loves your child more than you know. Pray for more than mere safety and health for your child. Pray that God would form your child into the man or woman that he has created them to be. Pray that God would fill your home with his love and peace. Pray that your marriage would be strong and grow deeper through the challenges of parenthood.

Here are three great prayers that you can pray over your child. Even at the young age of one, your child will begin to internalize them. These three prayers are also printed on the FaithPath Bookmark included with this Guide. Keep it near your child's crib to remind you to pray.

- **THE JESUS PRAYER**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

- **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

- **THE COLLECT FOR PURITY**

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers that you have memorized from your own childhood, such as the Hail Mary, mealtime prayers, and others, are also great prayers to pray over your child.

WHEN SHOULD I PRAY?

Christians are told to “pray without ceasing.” This means that anytime is an appropriate time to pray. When you wake up in the morning, when you sit down to eat, and when you get ready for bed each night are perhaps the most obvious times. But you can take advantage of special occasions and scheduled events to pray in an intentional manner as well. The best place to start is probably a nightly routine of praying for your child when you lay him or her down to sleep. Remember as you pray that the love you have in your heart for your baby is only a spark of the eternal love of God for your child, which has been in his heart from the beginning of time.

INTENTIONAL FAITHPATH PLAN

CHILD'S NAME _____

How will you be intentional this next year?

- Pray daily for my child.
- Attend church regularly.
- _____

The next step on the FaithPath is *Family Time*, recommended at age two. You will receive an email during the month of your child's birthday, and the resource will be available for you with your child's name on it at the Bringing Faith Home Center, right outside the Incarnation Bookstore.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *Beginning to Pray* by Anthony Bloom is a great little book to deepen your prayer life.
- *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence is a very small but classic book on praying at all times.
- *Loyola Kids Book of Everyday Prayers*, by Margaret Savitskas and Catherine Odell.
- *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, by Jean-Pierre de Caussade is a book about growing spiritually even amidst all the various duties of our lives.
- See incarnation.org/faithpath for more resources.

INCARNATION'S CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

Bringing Faith Home: incarnation.org/bringing-faith-home

Children & Family Ministry: incarnation.org/grow/children