



PRAYER

STARTER KIT FOR FAMILIES

*living*stones
Building God's House of Prayer







TO OUR WOODDALE PARENTS

Families are the building blocks of God's Church. No matter what kind of family God has placed you in, He has a plan for you to thrive in this season. Prayer is a vital part of it.

Maybe your family already prays together regularly and sees answers to prayer. That's great! If your family could use some encouragement and practical help in growing in prayer, we're here for you. That's why we've put together this "Prayer Starter Kit."

May God move mightily through your prayers as you grow closer to Him and each other.

getting started

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Simply put, prayer is two-way communication with God. It's the main way we relate to Him. It's the lifeblood of our relationship, motivated by love.

HOW DO WE PRAY?

We pray to the one true living God who is one God in three "persons" (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Many people like to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus.

Our prayers are effective even when they're short, weak or poorly worded. We can pray the same way we talk with a friend. It's not about technique or eloquence. We simply pray according to God's will and promises, having confidence He hears us.

HOW DO WE KNOW GOD'S VOICE?

In your two-way conversation with God, His voice is:

- aligned with the Bible (He never contradicts His Word.)
- a reflection of His character and nature
- true and trustworthy
- loving, kind, gracious, merciful, confirming, affirming and sometimes convicting in a good way (It is never accusing or condemning.)
- wise and speaks what is best for our lives.

On the following pages, we've offered a number of ideas and suggestions. **The goal is to choose one or two—** whether in the morning, afternoon or evening. Discover what works best for your unique family situation.

IDEAS FOR MORNING *prayer*

Mornings can be hectic, especially with younger children. Taking a few minutes to pray together sets the tone for the whole day, puts the focus on God and models to your children the importance of prayer.

Choose an idea below or develop a way that works best for you.

- **At the breakfast table**, have each person briefly share a prayer request for that day. Then pray for the requests together, with each person praying at least once.
- **If you're driving your kids to school** or walking them to the bus stop, pray over them out loud before you arrive.
- **After brushing teeth**, gather your kids in a circle and have them each pray a short prayer for family members until all are prayed over.
- **Pray through a book of the Bible**, covering one verse or chapter per day. You might start with Psalms. Pray for God to reveal Himself through each one.

IDEAS FOR AFTERNOON *prayer*

Choose a way to pray after school or on weekend afternoons.

PRAYER WALKS

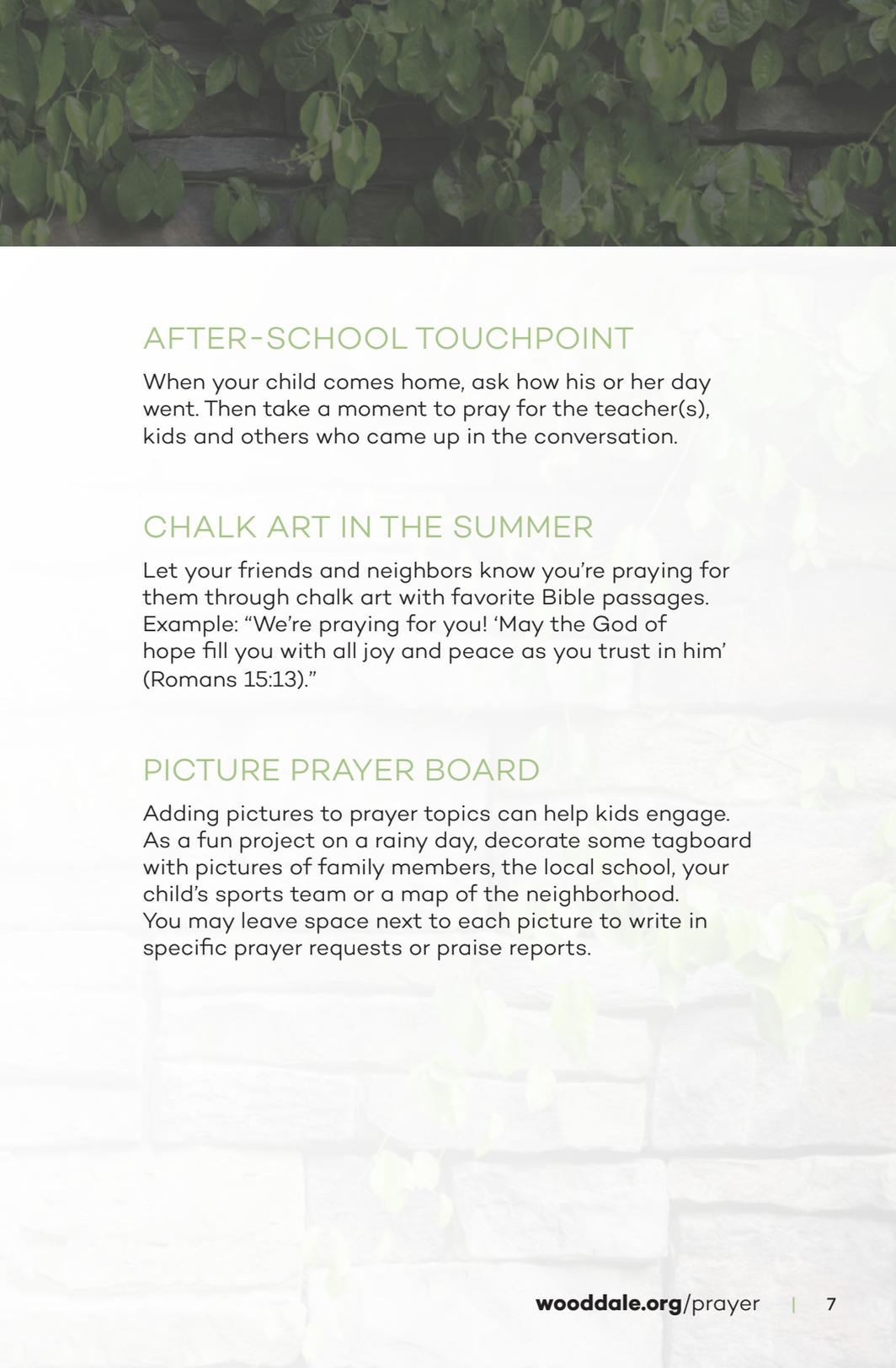
Get out and enjoy the sunshine together! Pray together while you walk through your neighborhood. Pray for your neighbors by name and praise God for the flowers and trees and things you are thankful for in this season.

Here are some tips to get started:

1. Involve your kids in planning the route. Pick places they enjoy.
2. Talk about it beforehand. Explain why prayer is important and what to pray about.
3. Keep it fun. You may include a stop at the local park on your walk.
4. Pray for topics of interest to your kids such as school and sports programs.

GLOBAL PRAYER

One way to teach kids a global perspective is to pray for people from other nations. You may choose a different nation each week and pray for the people there and issues they face. You can enlist your child in helping to learn about the country and how best to pray. Show them where it is on a globe or world map and make a list of three to five prayer points. Then chose a different nation the following week.



AFTER-SCHOOL TOUCHPOINT

When your child comes home, ask how his or her day went. Then take a moment to pray for the teacher(s), kids and others who came up in the conversation.

CHALK ART IN THE SUMMER

Let your friends and neighbors know you're praying for them through chalk art with favorite Bible passages. Example: "We're praying for you! 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him' (Romans 15:13)."

PICTURE PRAYER BOARD

Adding pictures to prayer topics can help kids engage. As a fun project on a rainy day, decorate some tagboard with pictures of family members, the local school, your child's sports team or a map of the neighborhood. You may leave space next to each picture to write in specific prayer requests or praise reports.

IDEAS FOR EVENING *prayer*

Choose a way to pray at dinner time:

- **Be thankful.** Go around the table and have each person share one thing they're thankful to God for that day.
- **Share praise reports** from the day and how God has answered prayers.
- **Make prayer a regular part of sharing meals** together by taking turns opening in a short prayer such as: "Father, thank you for this food and for the hands that prepared it. Bless it to our bodies in Jesus' name. Amen."



PRAYING AT BEDTIME

Here are a few ideas to choose from for praying at bedtime:

- **Pray for your neighborhood.** Think of the neighbors on each side of where you live and pray for them by name. If you don't know their names yet, pray for God to give you opportunities to build relationships with them.
- **Pray for a different part of the family each day** (for example: siblings on Monday, parents on Tuesday, grandparents on Wednesday, aunts and uncles on Thursday, cousins on Friday). Let them know how you prayed for them.
- **Pray for good rest and God-given dreams** and to wake up refreshed and ready for the next day and what God has planned.



TEACHING *Kids* TO PRAY

For younger children:

Ages 2-5

- Keep prayer time short (1-2 minutes). Build on this as your child is ready.
- Teach kids that prayer is just talking to God and sharing what's on their heart.
- Have them fold their hands or kneel to pray or sing simple songs to Jesus.
- Make prayer time joyful and fun.

Ages 6-11

- Choose a time in the day to facilitate prayer as part of their regular routine.
- Offer a Scripture verse or short passage to think about and talk to God about.
- Encourage “quiet time” for your child to be still and talk to God. Teach him or her to listen to God speaking. This time can be short and increase as your child gets older.
- Make space for your child to take a few minutes to share what's on his or her heart.

For older children:

Ages 12-18

Today many teenagers view prayer as boring. Sadly it has often been reduced to asking God to bless someone or something without really expecting God to act. Yet once they know prayer is a powerful, real, intimate way

to connect with the living God in all circumstances, their prayer life starts to thrive. As an adult of influence, what you model for them will impact their whole life.

You can encourage your older child to start his or her private conversation with these questions for God:

- [Fill in the blank] was the most hurtful time in my life.
- Where were You in the midst of that? What do You want me to know about it?
- Is there a lie I'm believing as a result of that? If so, what is it?
- What is the truth You want me to know instead?

He or she may also ask:

- How do You see me?
- What do You think about me?
- What is Your purpose for my life?
- How have You created me to serve You and others?

When some kids turn away from God, they don't understand why the walls of their hearts grow bigger and bigger. These walls are ways we hide our true feelings and try to keep from connecting with others so we don't get hurt anymore. You can encourage your teenager by affirming when he or she is honest and vulnerable with God and others in prayer, and reminding him or her how much God loves us no matter what.

You might want to **buy a special prayer journal** for your child with a lock on it where he or she can share what's on his or her heart with the living God who cares for us.

SAMPLE PRAYER *tools*

There are lots of great ways to model prayer. You may try teaching your child a simple tool to use in his or her personal prayer time, such as:

P.R.A.Y.

P**raise** God for who He is. Example: “I praise You for being our Helper.”

R**epent**: Confess areas of your life where you’ve fallen short and receive God’s mercy and forgiveness. Agree with God about sin in your life.

A**sk** God to answer your prayers. Example: “Please help [name] to remember what she studied on her test today.”

Y**ield** to God’s plans and purposes for your life, believing He knows what’s best for you.

PRAYING SCRIPTURE:

You may want to pray through passages in the Bible, such as these:

- Ephesians 1:17-19
- Ephesians 3:16-19
- Philippians 1:9-11
- Colossians 1:9-11
- Romans 15:5-6, 13
- 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5
- The Psalms

Sample prayer from Ephesians 3:16-19:

“Heavenly Father, I pray for our family that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. And I pray we would be rooted and established in love and grasp how wide and long and high and deep Your love is for us. May we know and express Your love to each other and to all those we encounter each day. Fill us afresh with Your Spirit that we would live to the full measure of what You have planned for us. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

Moms in Prayer

If you're a mom who has a heart to pray for local schools and students, you'll love Moms in Prayer! This international ministry covers kids from preschool to college with the power of prayer to transform lives. Learn more by visiting momsinprayer.org or emailing prayer@wooddale.org.

Dads in Prayer

If you'd like to connect with other guys to be equipped to lead your family in prayer and to pray for your kids, Dads in Prayer is for you! Learn more by emailing prayer@wooddale.org.

"Teach Us to Pray" is for groups, families or friends who want to know how God shaped them for prayer and overcome common obstacles to a thriving prayer life. In this six-session interactive class, you'll grow together and learn to help others grow in prayer too.

View sessions and print leader guides at wooddale.org/prayer.

“I’ve seen God answer the prayers of this anxious mama and my 9-year-old daughter in many ways. Before COVID, we prayed together every morning as I dropped her off for school. We prayed for her day, the staff and any concerns she had. Part of our routine was also picking out a classmate’s name tag, laying our hands on it and praying for that child.

In the midst of COVID, we sat in the car and prayed. The Lord answered our prayers by providing comfort, job security and creative ways to stay connected with friends through technology. He even carried us through eLearning – twice! When my daughter was struggling with math, God answered our prayers for a wonderful and passionate teacher. She has now passed the needed tests and is on par with her peers.

The biggest thing God has taught us is to pray continuously. No matter if we feel like it or not, God is there to hear our prayers. And He is faithful.” –AJ



Learn more about growing in prayer by visiting wooddale.org/prayer.



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