

Teaching your children to pray

Home school families have already committed time and energy to teach and train their children. Most importantly how parents live 24/7 before the ever watchful eyes of their children is paramount to their children's perception of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Children need to see that their parent's relationship with God affects their daily life. Living, working and studying side by side will soon reveal less than perfect character traits as parents lose patience, say the wrong things, or are discouraged. However, as fathers and mothers pray for wisdom and help, humble themselves and apologize for their failings, their attitude shows that their relationship to Jesus Christ matters.

The most important component in teaching your children to pray is by your own example. If you pray regularly for your family and the needs of others your children will find it easier to weave prayer into their own lives.

The fact that you pray aloud and bring needs and burdens to the Lord is the first and most essential way to teach your children to pray. However, it does not stop there. Prayer is more than bringing requests to our gracious Father. Prayer is a way of living out our dependence upon Jesus Christ. One practical way for you to model your dependence on God for your children is by praying for them and aloud with them.

Parents can do this while putting their children to bed. Sit on the bedside, lay your hands on them and ask God to bless, guide and protect them. This teaches your children that God is personal, caring and present. Anyone can speak to Him about anything that matters.

Another way to teach them the importance of prayer is by going off to pray at moments of tension or conflict. Stop that intense argument (if it has heated its not going the right way anyway) and tell your children that you need to go and pray about this issue. The message is sent that God is your help, and is relevant and active in your life.

Finally, pray together as a family on a regular basis. Keep your family prayer times short with young children and encourage them to voice their requests and concerns. Blessing the food before a meal, a short prayer before you start a trip or head out the door, prayers before bed or morning prayers, pray at all times and about everything!