

# Helping children to pray

Churches are encouraged to help children and young people to engage with Giving in Grace and this can include helping them to pray for the programme. This paper offers some simple ideas for churches to help children to pray.

God has given our children their lives, senses, talents, physical and mental abilities. God has also given them their parents, families, friends and teachers plus food to eat, air to breathe, water to drink, and nature to enjoy. Above all, God has given them his Son, Jesus Christ, to love them and give his life for them.

Helping our children to practise gratitude and know that we all have so much to thank God for helps children enter into the experience of prayer. These four simple activities will help adults and children to show our thanks by caring for all the gifts God has given us and by using the gifts in ways that make God happy.

*...go back home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how kind he has been to you.*  
(Mark 5:19)

## Forever blowing bubbles

### Items required

- Bubble blower – each child should have access to a bubble blower, taking care with the smallest children. Or use a bubble-blowing machine if one is available.

As the bubbles are blown, invite the children to follow the bubbles. As a bubble pops shout out a short thank you for something that God has given to you. It may be a thank you for a friend, a parent, a teacher, a holiday, food, drink, nature, a gift, etc. Every time you see bubbles, it can remind you to say thank you to God.

### Extending the idea

It may be possible to find the large bubble wands and special liquid that can create huge bubbles, some so big it is possible to create a bubble around a child. Use this idea to talk to the children about being surrounded by the good things of God and his love.

## Memory bracelets

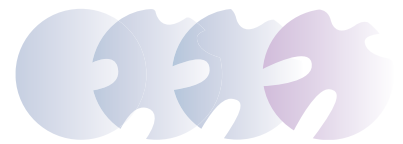
### Items required

- Beads (different colours)
- Thin plastic string

Take some string and thread on a bead that reminds you of a thing or a person that you want to say thank you to God for. The beads could represent a friend, parent, family member, pets, food, gifts, Jesus, flowers, etc.

Every time you wear the bracelet, it can remind you of the people and gifts you have been given and you can say thank you to God.





This exercise can also be done differently by using coloured sand and small jars, such as baby food jars. Coloured sand can be purchased, or created by rolling white sand with coloured chalks.

Choose a colour to say thank you to God for something and then pour it in the jar. Add in other colours until the jar is full and then seal the lid. The children now have a jar of thanks.

### Extending the idea

Ask the children to choose beads (or sands) of different colours that represent how they feel about things – different colours for different emotions.

## Time, talent and treasure

### Items required

- Paper and pens

*Time* – ask the children to think about what they did last week at home or school and write down or draw what they remember. Invite them to think about how they might be able to use their time differently, perhaps to share their toys, talk to Jesus, be more helpful around the house or watch less TV!

*Talents*– ask the children what they do that makes them happy and ask them to draw a picture of them doing this, for example baking, making gifts or writing a story, playing an instrument, dancing. Use the pictures to help the children think about how they are using the talents that God has given them.

They may like to see if they can make something during the week that can be sold at church the next week, maybe cakes, cards, decorations, etc. or ask them to be sponsored for a dance, song or play.

*Treasure* – ask the children to think about one thing they have that is really special to them. Explain to them that this is their treasure - and in fact everything that they have that is special to them (their pocket money, toys or other possessions) are all part of their treasure.

Ask them to write down what their treasure is and to think about how they can share it with others.

### Extending the idea

Think about using child sponsorship and the related resources that charities make available such as YouTube clips and games that help the children understand another part of the world and how people live. The children can practise generosity by giving a little each week to support another child and give of their time in writing or drawing to that child.



## Nature on our window ledge

### Items required

- Plastic cup
- Cotton wool
- Water
- Cress seeds

Put the damp cotton wool into the cup and sprinkle cress seeds on top. Ask each child to say a prayer of thanks to God for creation and nature and all that he gives to us to keep us alive. Ask them to take the seeds home and, as they care for the seeds over the week, they can watch them grow into plants that can be eaten. Ask the children to bring the cups with the fully grown cress seeds to church the next week and they can then either share them with their own family or with the church family.

Talk to the children about the tiny seeds that grew into all that cress. Talk about how, when we are generous with things and kind to people, that it may seem small but it makes a big difference.