

PRAYER

GOAL: *To encourage parents to consider different ways they can incorporate prayer into everyday family life.*

Preparation:

- Whiteboard
- Prayer resources (see *Extra Resources* on website)
- Take home resources (see *Extra Resources* on website)

Morning tea: (10 min)

Start with morning tea so parents have time to connect with each other. Introduce any new parents. Alternatively you could allow some time for this at the end of your session.

Explain it: Why do we run these sessions for parents? (5 min)

Take a few minutes to reinforce to your parents the importance of their role in passing on faith to their children. Sell the vision by saying something like, 'You are the biggest influence in your children's lives and the church wants to partner with you to help make the most of these early formational years. Today is about helping and resourcing you so you can go home and easily incorporate prayer into your everyday life.'

Explain it: What is prayer and how do we do it at home? (10 min)

Discussion: Ask two questions for families to discuss with their children—what is prayer and why is it important?

Feedback: Ask parents and children to share their answers (you could write these on a whiteboard).

Two approaches to prayer: explain to the group that there are two main approaches to prayer with our children:

- Routine prayers, such as... (*Ask parents to give suggestions and write on board*)
... morning, bedtime and grace.
- Opportune prayers—praying as opportunities present themselves through your day... (*Ask parents to give suggestions and write on board*)
... when someone is hurt or sick, when you hear an ambulance, when you hear news about someone...

Inspire them: Share some stories (5 min)

Ask someone to come and share what this looked like for them and their family. You could ask someone who has older children or is a grandparent.

Practice and make it: Create and take home some resources (20 min)

Activity: Give families some time to make together two prayer resources that they can use at home.

Activity One—Make a prayer box

Give each family a plain cardboard box, big enough to hold the resources you are going to provide. Give instructions that they are to decorate the outside of the box with pens, stickers and cut-outs. (See *Extra Resources on website: prayer box stickers, prayer box label.*)

After 10 or so minutes, show them some resources they can put in their prayer box and give some ideas about how they can use this in their home. You could role model this or get them to practice using them. Some examples are: (see *Extra Resources on website*)

Pictures and photos of people, and things they are praying for.

Copies of favourite verses (file: Easy verse cards – set one and two)

Cards to write their own prayers (file: Easy verse cards – set one)

Prayer cards—open the door and see a photo of someone to pray for (file: prayer cards)

Prayer prompt cards—there are two versions (file: free-prayer-prompt-cards)

Distribute the resources and give families a few minutes to put some things in their box.

Activity Two—family prayer bag (file: family prayer bag)

Explain to the parents that children have different learning styles and love languages. Especially with young children, try to use a variety of different types of prayer to help them to focus and make prayer interesting.

Distribute the family prayer bags (maybe a paper bag or a woven kete)—which have the family prayer bag card in it and all the resources necessary to have a go at the types of prayer listed (e.g. bubbles, lego, a coin, cards, playdough...)

As a group, look at the sheet and have a go at praying together using one of the resources.

Conclude your time together with a final word of encouragement, a prayer and/or a personal story to inspire your parents. Thank them for coming and ask them to give you feedback and how they are using the resources provided at home.

Resources:

In addition to the resources they have made, families could also be given sheets of morning, bedtime and grace prayers. (See *Extra Resources on website: bedtime prayers, children's morning prayers, traditional dinner prayers.*)