Top Tips from the Toddler Project

Top Tips for Prayer

*At its simplest, prayer is communicating with God. There isn’t a right or wrong way to pray – and it doesn’t just need to include words. But many people find prayer intimidating – they assume you must be super-spiritual, or know a special form of words. Church based Toddler groups can help children and adults become comfortable with a variety of ways of praying – using words, actions, symbols and song.*

*We asked church based Toddler Group leaders for their top tips on using prayer in toddler groups.*

**We pray as a team** – We try to find a few minutes before Toddler Group begins to pray together and ask for God’s presence, help and wisdom during your session. Sometimes we even find time to pray afterwards as well.

**We use a Prayer Tree** – We have a prayer tree. People can write or draw prayers on leaf-shaped paper and hang them on the tree. [One way to make a Prayer Tree](https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/content/get_involved/prayer_tree/how-to-make-a-prayer-tree.pdf)

**We use candles** – We give each family an unlit tea-light. They are invited to bring it forward, place it on a candle tray and mention someone or something for prayer. We only light the candles after everyone has brought them forward (and we make sure they are out of the reach of little ones).

**We sing our prayers** – We found that children remember what they sing, so we have started singing a simple Grace before our snack time.

**We pray at the start** – Our group starts by lighting a candle and saying a simple prayer. It’s a reminder that Jesus is with us.

**We use action prayers** – Children like to move and stretch and wriggle, so we have actions to match our prayers – reaching up to praise/thank God for good things, reaching out to pray for our community or the world, hugging ourselves to remember that God loves us. [Actions to go with The Lord’s Prayer](http://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/acting-out-the-lords-prayer/)

**We ask for prayer requests** – Our group has started asking parents/carers if they want us to pray for something. They can write their requests down and leave them in our prayer box. We make sure that someone has the responsibility for praying for these requests.

**We use our hands** – We encourage adults and toddlers to hold their fingers in turn as we give thanks for good things (thumb), pray for people who point the right way to go (pointing finger), people with big/important responsibilities (middle finger), people who care for us and for whom we care (ring finger), people who need God’s special help because they are sad, or ill, or lonely, or worried (little finger). [Another version of the Hand Prayer.](http://ministry-to-children.com/five-finger-prayer/)

**We say the same prayer again and again** – We have a few prayers that stay the same and we use them regularly so that the children get to know them. We also try to use The Lord’s Prayer every week.

**We print out prayers** – Some of our families said they would like to use the prayers at home with their children, so we have printed a few out for them to take a copy home. We include The Lord’s Prayer, a simple Grace and a prayer that can be used at bedtime.

For more ideas and links to resources, go to: <http://www.going4growth.com/growth_in_faith_and_worship/early_years>

