

PRACTICING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER WITH YOUR KIDS

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Our world values a busy pace. Full calendars, juggling activities, and managing responsibilities are often the norm. This can also be true for our children. This fast-paced living can even creep into our relationship with God. Devotions can feel rushed, and prayers often involve mostly talking, with little time for listening. While God wants to hear all the things in our hearts, he also desires for us to slow down and spend quiet, contemplative time with him.



Contemplative prayer is a way to spend quiet time with God. Instead of using many words about what we need or want, we rest and wait in his presence. There is a purposeful stillness, driven by a desire to feel God near. This practice uses a structure to help focus our attention and can be adapted for use at home with children. Here are some ways to help your child practice contemplative prayer:

- **Find a spot:** Help your child choose a quiet space for prayer, free from distractions. A blanket, pillow, or favorite stuffed animal can make it cozy.
- **Keep it short:** Build stamina gradually. Start with 30 seconds for young children and 2–3 minutes for older kids. A timer can help. With frequent practice, the time can be extended.
- **Focusing thoughts:** Choose a simple verse or word to focus attention, such as *“Peace,” “Be still and know,”* or *“You are God.”*
- **Sit together:** Especially at first, sitting with your child can help them feel calm and secure.
- **Talk after:** Ask how it felt to be still. What did they think about? What did their body feel like?
- **Set a goal:** Habits take time to form. Try a five-day family challenge and reflect together on the experience, noting both difficulties and positive moments.

Contemplative prayer is a spiritual discipline that grows with practice. Children notice more than we often realize. They learn from our example as much as from our words. By practicing contemplative prayer together, you are helping your child develop a rhythm of pausing, listening, and connecting with God. These quiet moments teach them that prayer isn't just about asking for things; it's about being present with God, trusting his love, and experiencing his peace. Over time, these small daily practices can grow into a lifelong habit of turning to God, not only in the busy moments, but also in the stillness of their hearts.

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