

TEACHING HOW TO LAMENT

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This world! This post-pandemic world—with international unrest and natural disasters, with injustice, inflation, and food insecurity, with wars and rumors of wars—sometimes this world feels unbearably heavy, doesn't it?

The worst part is that our kids feel that heaviness too. It is [well-documented](#) that nearly three-quarters of Gen Z kids deal with anxiety and depression. For the next generation (currently called Gen Alpha), these mental health concerns are likely to continue, with the added burden of post-COVID social anxiety and greater access to digital technology. Are you tired, Mom? Are you weary, Dad?



Thank God we are not supposed to carry these burdens. Jesus calls the tired and weary to him. “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Sometimes, though, like our kids, we need to cry out and share our feelings before we hand the burden over. That is okay with God. The book of Psalms is filled with these unburdening songs, passionate expressions of grief and sorrow, called laments.

Why should we lament? Isn't it disrespectful towards God?

Absolutely not. God wants to know our honest heart. It is necessary for our mental health that we knock at God's door with our heavy pack. We must model this unburdening to our children so they know it is also available to them.

If we study the book of Psalms, we see a pattern to a lament that we can practice and mirror for our kids.

1. The “I need you”—We can call out to God any time. With our kids, we can practice this by praying on the spot and at specific times, such as on the way to school or at bedtime when we tuck them in.
2. The lament—Naming our troubles together before God reminds our kids that it is okay to struggle with big emotions and to talk to God about them.
3. Trust—We should openly demonstrate trust in God and point out to our children when God answers our prayers.
4. The ask—Parents can model what it looks like to ask God for what we need and acknowledge that his will overrides our desires.
5. Praise—Practicing praise, even if we're not feeling it yet, teaches our children to praise God despite circumstances and demonstrates faith.

The next time your child struggles with something unfair—whether something minor, like a friend who acted unkindly or one of the world’s heavy burdens—pray a lament with them, walking them through the steps. And with expectation, wait. God will surely hurry and help.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Teaching Children to Pray Expectantly](#).

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