



July 2010



Important Riverside Kids info on page 3!

Help kids talk and listen to God

For Christians, prayer is a privilege. We have direct, 24/7 access to the God who created and saves us. But prayer isn't just for grown-ups. Jesus wants little children to come to him (Matthew 19:14) and to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Prayer is a powerful way to harness kids' love of words. Between the ages of 2 and 5, a child's vocabulary explodes from about 50 words to thousands. And who better to talk to than God? Yet even Jesus' disciples needed help learning how to pray (Luke 11:1). Keep these things in mind as you teach children to connect with God:

Prayer is an attitude. Praying constantly means we're always aware that God is here. We can sense God's presence with us no matter our circumstances. We can pray about anything and everything, including other people and their needs.



Prayer is a routine. Regular times with God help shape our prayer attitude. Help children establish "check in" times with God, not out of obligation but out of love.

Prayer is a first response. When troubles and tough decisions loom, we can turn to God before trying anything else. Prayer should be our first resort, not our last.

Prayer is listening to God. Prayer is a dialogue that involves letting God speak to us through everyday life. Because prayer is two-way communication, we also should practice listening to God.

Prayer is modeled. The best way to challenge your children to pray is by letting them see and hear you praying often. Regularly share with them how you see God at work through your prayers.

How Often Do You Pray?

In a survey, American adults reported praying:

- More than once a day—24%
- Every day—31%
- Several times a week—16%
- Several times a month—10%
- Several times a year—9%

(Lutheran Brotherhood/USA Today)

PowerSource



Ask God:

1. To help your family members stay in touch with God.
2. To show your children that prayer involves more than just making requests.
3. To keep your family members open to hearing God's voice.

Parenting Insights

Children's perceptions of communicating with God change as they grow:

Ages 2 to 3

Young children understand that Jesus is their friend. Say (or sing!) simple prayers that relate to children's lives.

Ages 4 to 6

Children this age become very aware of the world around them. Let kids know that God cares about everything that happens to them and other people.

Ages 7 to 9

These children feel a need for God's help and can verbally express thoughts. Help them look up Bible verses about prayer.

Ages 10 to 12

Preteens realize God is more personal. Let them understand that no prayers are insignificant to their heavenly Father.

OpenTheBook

**“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.”
Matthew 7:7**

God always hears and answers our prayers, though not always in the way we want or expect. Persistent prayer helps us build a deeper relationship with God, who longs to give us good gifts.

Teachable Moments

1. **Mix It Up**—Prayer is never inappropriate, so encourage children to pray whenever and wherever they want to. Try praying together in a variety of ways, including kneeling, standing, lying down, lifting your hands, and so on.



2. **Echo Each Other**—With young children, pray aloud one brief phrase at a time and teach them to echo you. As kids gain confidence, you can switch roles and they can lead.
3. **Lighten Up**—Show children it’s fun to talk to God. Allow prayer to be goofy at times. Try shouting or whispering a prayer. Use rhymes and motions to capture children’s attention. Let kids thank God for whatever is important to them—even if it’s a stuffed animal or video.



“So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are **ON THE ROAD, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.” Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT**

Start a discussion about the importance of talking and listening to God by asking children these questions:

1. Why do you think God wants us to pray to him? How often and how should we pray?
2. Does God hear and answer all your prayers? How do you know?
3. What does it mean to listen to God’s voice? In what ways does God speak to us today?
4. What things should we pray about together as a family? How can we add more prayer time to our daily lives?

Family Experience: Prayer Prompts

Use these prayer-related activities to help children become more comfortable with praying to God and hearing his answers.

- **On Target**—Using markers, have children draw a target with six circles. Then have them use pencils to fill in people and places to pray for. In the outer circle, they can write a country. In the next circle, they can write a family in their neighborhood. The rest of the circles can represent a friend, teacher, or family member. In the center, have children write something they’d like to pray for themselves. After a week, erase those requests and fill in new ones.
- **Rewind and Fast Forward**—Practice a prayer routine by having kids think back to the beginning of their day. Say: “Pantomime in fast motion all the things you did to get ready this morning. When I say ‘freeze,’ stand still and think about what was on your mind then.” Repeat the game, asking kids to act out what they’ll do to get ready for bed tonight. Say: “This time when I call ‘freeze,’ pray about something that happened today.” Encourage family members to talk to God about their day every morning and night.
- **Still Waters**—Have family members spread out and silently read Psalm 23. (Assist younger children.) Say: “Choose one verse to talk to God about. Then ask God a question and wait silently for him to speak. He may speak just one word or give you an image in your mind.” After five minutes, share what you each heard. Remind everyone that listening to God isn’t magical and takes practice.



Riverside Kids Info to Know

Computerized Check-In has finally launched! Yeah! We apologize to all of you for taking so long as we have been working out the bugs, but we thank you so much for your prayers and support as we have been working very hard at getting this system up and running. We ask for your continued prayers and patience as we know that there will be some more bugs to work as we are all learning this new system. In the big picture it will provide a much safer place for your children and a quicker check-in process. We hope you have already experienced some of that!

Check-in Times: Please remember that we do not start checking in children until 20 minutes prior to the start of the service. We also close our check-in at 20 minutes after the start of the service. It is important that you do not wait for the worship to end as sometimes it goes well over 20 minutes and you will miss our check-in cut off.

I haven't received my new check-in card yet...what do I do? Every child's family who was currently enrolled in Riverside Kids was mailed 2 barcoded check-in cards. Please make sure you check your mail carefully to see if you may have mistakenly put it in the "junk" pile. Believe me it has happened more than once! If you still cannot find it, please contact Trina Beall at the church office to let her know. Please make sure you leave your name, number and she will make sure she gets you taken care of.

How will I be paged now if my child needs me? We will no longer be using the digital screens in the corner of the room to page for parents. We will now be paging you by placing your child's name at the bottom of the main "worship" screens. (The digital screens will only be used to page for more volunteers).

Make an investment that makes a difference in the life of a child! Our numbers keep going up and to the right every week! As excited as we are that God is bringing more children into our classes we are just as concerned as we are struggling to accommodate them. We want Riverside Kids to be the very best hour of their week and in order to accomplish that we need many men and women involved who want to see these kids won for Christ. Please consider stepping up to invest into these children's lives. It will be one of the most important and rewarding things you will ever do.

Special Needs – Special Friends. We are so excited to see more families attending our church who have children with special needs. We want to reach out to these parents and provide a place for their children to love and be loved, know and be known. In order to help these children be able to do that we are looking for people who have a heart for special needs children to be one on one with them in the classroom. If you are interested in this beautiful ministry, contact Kelly Maxey at the church office.

When can my child move up to another class? Good question. If your child is in the Nursery, Toddler or Preschool room we move them up when they turn the age of the next class (Nursery is ages 0 to 17 months; Toddlers is ages 18 months to 35 months and Preschool is ages 3 to 5 years). We move all school-aged children (Kindergarten thru 5th grade) in the fall of the following year. For example if your child just finished 2nd grade this year and will be in 3rd grade this fall, they will not move to the 3rd -5th grade class until the fall. The same goes for children who just finished preschool and will be enrolled in Kindergarten in the fall.

**A copy of the monthly newsletter is available on our website.
www.riverside-church.com and click on the Riverside Kids logo.**



What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- Togetherville.com wants to introduce children to safe social networking. The free site is intended to be used with parents.
- The race is on to name the next generation, even though they're still in grade school. Ideas include Generation Z, Generation Net, iGen, and Homelanders.

Quick Stats

- A whopping 99% of parents reported that their children prefer playing with electronics to playing outside.
(Colorado State University)



- Boredom is healthy for kids. Author Kim John Payne says one-third of a child's life should be busy; one-third, creative time; and one-third, downtime.

(Simplicity Parenting)

- Forty-three percent of parents favor year-round schools.

(Parenting.com)

July 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
						Saturday Service 6:00 pm
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:30 am			Vertical 7:00 pm			Saturday Service 6:00 pm
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:30 am						Saturday Service 6:00 pm
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:30 am						Saturday Service 6:00 pm
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:30 am						Saturday Service 6:00 pm

Our mission:

To connect the next generation with Jesus Christ and teach them to be wholehearted followers of Him. The children's ministry is designed to minister to both parent and child. We want to connect the child with Jesus Christ and then equip them with the tools they will need to become followers of Him. We want to come along side the parents in their effort to lay down a spiritual foundation for their child, while allowing the parents to build on their own foundation through other ministries in the church.

Our classes run simultaneously with the services . We currently have 5 classrooms:

Nursery (ages 0-17 months)
 Toddlers (ages 18-35 months)
 Preschool (ages 3-5 years)
 K – 2nd Grade
 3rd—5th Grade

To contact Riverside Kids:

Kelly Maxey, Children's Ministry Director, 269-273-8723, ext. 16, kmaxey@riverside-church.com
 Trina Beall, Administrative Assistant, 269-273-8723, ext. 26, tbeall@riverside-church.com