



PRAYER MINISTRY with CHILDREN

INVITING CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN PRAYER MINISTRY--

- **Focus the children's hearts (mind, feelings, will).** This can be done by—
 - playing worshipful music
 - asking the children to close their eyes
 - quietly touching children who are inattentive
- **Be specific.** For example:
 - If you've never asked Jesus to take away your sins. . .
 - If you want to pray for a friend who does not know Jesus. . .
 - If you need God's help to break a wrong habit. . .
- **Motivate with the Word of God.**

As you ask the children to respond, speak the Word of God, which is the source of faith. For example:

 - The Bible says, "the blood of Jesus Christ. . .purifies us from all sin" (I John 1:7, NIV).
 - The Bible says that God wants everyone to "come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).
 - The Bible says we can do "all things through Christ" (Philippians 4:13). Will you come forward and ask Jesus to help you break this sinful habit?
- **Pray with the Children as a Group**

Before letting the children pray individually, I pray with them as a group. Sometimes I do this while they're at their seats. At other times, I do this after they have come forward. I lead them in a simple model pray which they repeat after me. This helps to prepare them to pray individually.

PREPARING YOURSELF TO DO PRAYER MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN

- **Know and memorize Scripture verses** related to salvation, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and needs relevant to children.
- **Cleanse yourself.** Confess any attitude, word, deed, or motive that is not pleasing to Christ.
- **Intercede** for the children before the Heavenly Father.

- **Depend on the Holy Spirit.** Invite Him to direct you to whom you should pray for, how you should pray, and the counsel you should give.

AS PRAYER MINISTRY BEGINS...

- **Pray quietly** asking God to direct you to the child that He would have you minister to.
- **Touch** the child appropriately and reassuringly.
- **Speak** in a gentle voice.
- **Use** the child's name.
- **Ask** the child to give you eye contact if he has not done so.
- **Ask** the child, "What do you want Jesus to do for you?" or "Why did you come to pray at the altar?"
- **Counsel** based upon the child's response.
- **Plan thought-provoking questions** to determine the child's thinking. As much as possible, avoid questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no".

MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN PRAYING WITH CHILDREN

- **Assuming Why the Child Responded**
No matter how specific the call to prayer, children often respond for a different reason. Therefore, it is important to always ask the responding child, "Why did you come to the altar?" or "What do you want Jesus to do for you?"
- **Not Taking a Child's Request Seriously**
Some of the children's requests may seem unimportant to us, but not to the child and not to God. I Peter 5:7 says, "Turn all your worries over to him. He cares about you" (NirV). If children learn how to give their simplest needs to God today, they will be more able to turn over complex needs over to Him in the future.
- **Using Religious Jargon**
Use simple and specific language when talking with children during prayer ministry. Avoid religious terms such as "born again," "saved," "redeemed," "sanctified" unless you have fully explained them in the gospel presentation made prior to the invitation.
- **Agreeing with a Misdirected Request**
Is the child's request in agreement with God's Word? If not, let's help him restate his request in such a way that is.

- **Not Letting the Child Pray**

It is our responsibility to encourage children to pray by offering them simple instructions and then praying with them. As the child prays, you might want to agree with them in prayer by whispering a simple prayer of agreement in her ear. For instance: “Jesus, thank You for hearing Mandy as she asks for You to help her . . .”

- **Expecting a Certain Response**

Some adults will question or even discredit a child’s spiritual experience if he or she doesn’t respond in an adult-like manner. What they forget is that Jesus never told children to become like adults in their manner of approaching Him. Instead, Jesus told His disciples they had to become like children to inherit the kingdom of heaven. As we pray with children, don’t question the faith and humility that enable them to take God at His Word.

- **Letting a Child Get Out of Control**

Outward actions such as crying, shouting, and lying prostrate are sometimes products of the Spirit’s working, and we never want to hinder that. At other times, however, such expressions are simply the child getting himself “hyped up”. We want to discourage that.

How can we tell the difference? First, we should pray for discernment. Second, we must quickly answer these questions:

Are the child’s actions bring glory to God or drawing attention to the child?

Are the child’s actions helping or hindering the prayers of others?

Are the child’s actions in keeping with the Spirit’s working in that service?

Are the child’s actions helping the child himself draw closer to God?

If you discern that a child needs guidance, go to him, help him calm down by quietly talking with him. Encourage him to tell you about God’s work in his life, pray a sentence prayer with him, and then have him return to his seat.

- **Failing to Follow Up**

Talk with each child you have prayed for after prayer ministry is finished. Encourage each child to tell his family about the spiritual decision he has made. Talk with him in the coming days and weeks about what God has done in his life.

COUNSELING CHILDREN TO RECEIVE THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Counseling for SALVATION

SALVATION is redemption from the power and consequences of sin by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Biblical basis: Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, John 1:12.

- *Use questions to—*

- 1) Determine WHY the child responded to the invitation.
What would you like Jesus to do for you right now?

- 2) Help the child understand his need.
 What is sin?
 Remind the child of Romans 3:23. Admit your sinfulness as well.
 What is God's punishment for sin?
 If the child needs further help, Romans 6:23 is a good verse to use.
 - 3) Help the child understand God's plan.
 God loves you so much He made a way for your sins to be forgiven. What did He send Jesus to do?
 Why is Jesus the only One who could die for your sin? Reinforce the truth that Christ never sinned (II Corinthians 5:21).
- *Explain one verse of Scripture.*
 Read a verse of Scripture that contains both God's condition and the promise of salvation. Scripture verses such as Acts 16:31, Romans 10:13, I John 1:9 are appropriate. Show the verse in your Bible and explain the verse. Ask questions such as—
 What must you do?
 What will God do?
 Do you want to admit your sins and ask God to forgive you?
 - *Encourage the child to pray.*
 "You can talk out loud to God just like you have been talking to me. Tell him about your sin and that you believe he died for you. Ask Him to save you from your sins right now." If the child does not feel he can pray alone, you may help him form a prayer, line by line.
 - *Leave the child with assurance of his salvation.*
 - 1) When the child finishes praying, avoid saying, "Now you're saved" or "Jesus just saved you." This assurance must come from the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. You can ask, "What did Jesus just do for you?"
 - 2) Use the same verse you showed him earlier so that the Word of God can assure him his sins are forgiven and that he has God's gift of eternal life. Put his name in the verse.
 - 3) Encourage the child to thank God for what He has done for him.
 - 4) Leave the child with Hebrews 13:5, a verse of assurance.
 - *Begin follow-up immediately.*
 - 1) Give the child a small devotional book, Bible or salvation tract.
 - 2) Go with him to tell someone about what has happened to him.
 - 3) Pray for him daily.
 - 4) Make sure that he is given the opportunity to attend church regularly.

Counseling for SANCTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION is an act of God's grace that purifies, consecrates, or "sets apart" the believer to live a Christ-like, holy life. The believer yields to God's sanctifying work through surrender and obedience. Sanctification is a lifelong process as the child

continually chooses to yield himself to God. Biblical basis: Romans 6:6; I Thessalonians 4:3, 4, 7, II Timothy 2:20, 21.

- *Ask the following questions--*
 - 1) Has Jesus taken away your sins? (Use a phrase that is familiar to the child.) If necessary, remind him of the requirements for salvation found in I John 1:9, Acts 16:13 or Romans 10:31. Make sure the child is assured of his salvation before leading him further.
 - 2) What does it mean to be sanctified? If the child has the appropriate understanding of sanctification, pray with him. If the child has the appropriate understanding of sanctification, pray with him. If not, explain using Romans 12:1. (The child offers himself to God, allowing God to work in his life to cleanse him and make him holy.)
- *Encourage the child to pray.* An appropriate prayer to pray with child after he has finished praying is,
 ““Heavenly Father, I want to fully give myself to you. I want to live a life that is set apart for You alone. Help me to live a life that is pleasing to you.”
- *When the child has finished praying ask, “What has Jesus done for you?”* Provide assurance using I Thessalonians 4:3a. Remind the child that each day he can choose to offer himself to God and allow God to make him holy and pleasing.

Counseling for the BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. . .

The BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT is a gift of God that empowers the believer to do the works of Christ. Biblical basis: Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:1-4, 39; Acts 10:44-48.

- *Ask the following questions--*
 - 1) Has Jesus taken away your sins? (Use a phrase that is familiar to the child.) If necessary, remind him of the requirements for salvation found in I John 1:9, Acts 16:13 or Romans 10:31. Make sure the child is assured of his salvation before leading him further.
 - 2) Have you been “set apart” for God’s use? If the child is unsure, ask him to give himself completely to God and allow God to remove anything in his life that isn’t pleasing to Him.
- *Encourage the child to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
 Ask God to give you the gift of the Holy Spirit and believe that He is going to do it (Matthew 7:7-11).
- *Encourage the child to respond to the presence of the Lord Jesus.*
 - 1) Close your eyes.
 - 2) Lift your face up toward heaven as if you are expecting to receive.

- 3) Begin praising Jesus for who He is and what He has done.
- 4) Stop thinking about what to say. Trust Jesus to give you the words to say.
- 5) Yield your lips to the Holy Spirit. Begin speaking as you feel the Spirit prompting you to speak. He will give you words to speak as you begin speaking.

- *As the child is seeking for the gift of the Holy Spirit, enter into praise. Speak in your heavenly language.*
- *Do not allow the child to become discouraged seeking.*
- *When the child has finished praying ask, "What has God done for you?" If he is unsure, read Acts 2:4, NIV with the child. Ask, "did you speak in a heavenly language?" If he says "yes," ask, "When the disciples spoke in a heavenly language, what had happened to them? What has happened to you?"*

Prepared by Kathryn H. Creasy. Some portions were taken from a lesson by Lance Colkmire entitled, "Altering Kids' Lives at the Altar."

COUNSELING RELATED TO A CHILD'S LIFE EXPERIENCES

Counseling Concerning Death...

Death of a friend or family member:

- Sadness is a natural reaction. Even Jesus wept when His friend Lazarus died (John 11:35).
- Jesus has prepared a special place for those who know Him to go when they die (John 14:1-3).
- Someday you will be with that special person in Heaven

Fear of death:

- Fear of death does not come from God (II Timothy 1:7).
- We do not have to fear because God is with us (Psalm 23:4).
- Only God knows the time of our death. Until it is that appointed time death cannot come to us (Psalm 31:15).

Counseling Concerning Family Conflict...

- Tell God about the problems in your family (I Peter 5:7).
- Ask Him to bring peace to your family (II Thessalonians 3:16).
- Ask Him to help you not to worry or be afraid (Philippians 4:6,7).

Counseling Concerning Fear...

- Fear does not come from God (II Timothy 1:7).
- The child's fear may have developed from a past experience or more often from violence and tragedies witnessed on television and video. If so, pray with the child

using (II Corinthians 10:5).

- Whenever I am afraid, I will choose to trust God who has all power (Psalm 56:4).

Counseling For Healing...

- God is our creator. He knows everything about our bodies (Psalm 139:15, 16).
- God is our healer. His name is Jehovah-rophe which means “the God who heals me” (Exodus 15:16).
- We are healed as we trust in Jesus as our healer (James 5:16).

Counseling Concerning Quarreling...

- Quarreling does not come from God (James 4:1).
- God desires for you to be at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18).
- What do you think God wants you to do to end this quarrel? God will help you be a peacemaker (Colossians 3:13, NIV).

Counseling for Suicide...

- Your life is precious to God (Luke 12:6,7).
- God has an appointed time for your life to begin and end (Psalm 139:15, 16; Psalm 31:15).
- Death will not solve your problem (Hebrews 9:27).
- God has the power to help you (I Peter 5:7).

Counseling for Temptation...

- Temptation is not sin (Hebrews 4:15).
- Temptation can lead to sin (James 1:14, 15).
- Temptation can be overcome (I Corinthians 10:13).
- If you sin, you can be forgiven (I John 2:1).

Counseling Concerning Unforgiveness...

- We forgive others because Christ forgave us (Ephesians 4:32).
- Encourage the child to confess his inability to forgive and repent for any bad feelings he holds toward anyone (I John 1:9).
- Remind the child that when we humble ourselves by confessing God gives us grace-the desire and power to do His will (I Peter 5:5b).