

# TALKING WITH GOD



**A Book of Prayer for Little  
Christians & Their Families**

# Prayers for Kids and Families:

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JESUS PRAYING BEFORE  
HIS ARREST AND CRUCIFIXION.

*“Father, the glory that you have given me I have given my followers, so that they may be one, as we are one--I in them and you in me--that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*

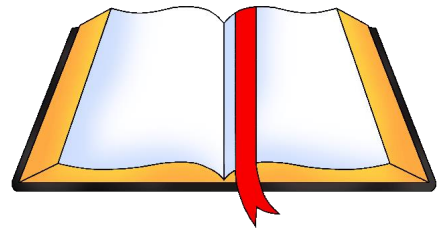
JOHN 17:21-23

# THE LORD'S PRAYER



Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.



***From  
Matthew 6:9-13  
and Luke 11:2-4***

# IN THE MORNING



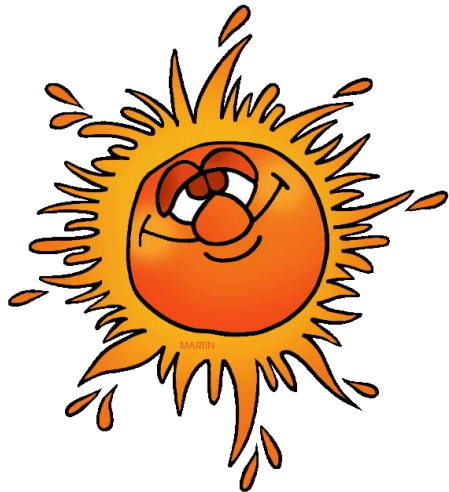
God in heaven, hear my prayer,  
keep me in your loving care.  
Be my guide in all I do,  
Bless all those who love me, too.  
Amen.

Heavenly Shepherd,  
Hear our prayer,  
Keep us in Your loving care.  
Guard us through the livelong day  
In our work and in our play.  
Keep us pure and sweet and true  
In everything we say and do. Amen.



Father, we thank You for the night  
And for the pleasant morning light,  
For rest and food and loving care,  
And all that makes the day so fair.  
Help us to do the things we should  
To be to others kind and good,  
In all we do, in all we say,  
To grow more loving every day.  
Amen.

-- Rebecca Weston



# REMEMBERING BAPTISM

## BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY

Gracious God, we thank you for the new life you give us through holy baptism.

Especially, we ask you to bless name on the anniversary of her/his baptism. Continue to

strengthen name with the Holy Spirit, and increase in her/him your gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. -- *Washed and Welcome* © 2010 Augsburg Fortress.

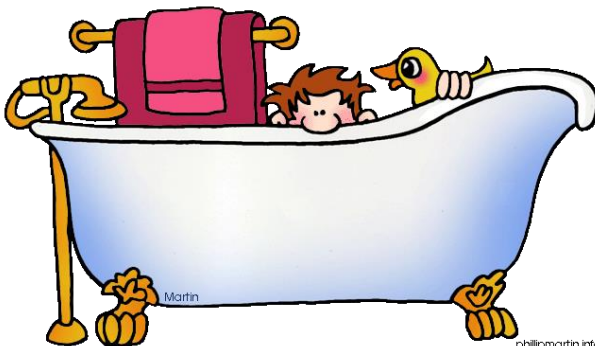
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## IN THE BATH

Lord, as I enter the water to bathe,  
I remember my baptism.  
Wash me by your grace.  
Fill me with your Spirit.  
Renew my soul.  
I pray that I might live  
as your child and  
honor you in all that I do.  
Amen.



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# BEFORE MEALS



God is great, God is good.  
Let us thank God for our food.  
By God's hand we must be fed,  
Give us Lord, our daily bread.  
Amen.

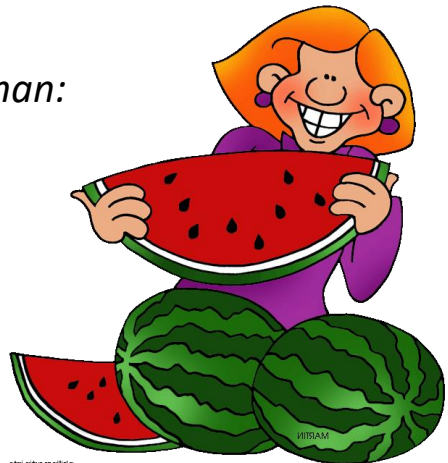
Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest,  
And let this food\* to us be blessed. Amen.

*\*Alternate: And let your gifts to us be blessed.*



Jesus, bless what you have given,  
Feed our souls with bread from heaven;  
Guide and lead us all the way  
In all what we may do and say.  
Amen.

*Sung to the theme music from Superman:*  
Thank you, God, for giving us food.  
Thank you, God, for giving us food.  
For the food that we eat,  
And the friends that we meet.  
Thank you God . . .  
For giving us food.  
Amen!





Father, for this food we share,  
We give you thanks and say a prayer.  
That health and strength we'll surely find,  
to feed our hearts, our soul and mind. Amen.

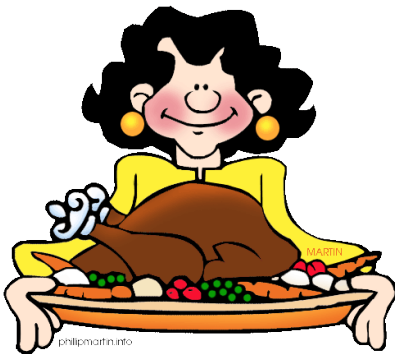
Thank you for the world so sweet,  
Thank you for the food we eat.  
Thank you for the birds that sing,  
Thank you God for everything.

-- E. Rutter Leatham



We thank You for this food  
And for Your loving care,  
Father of children everywhere.  
We have so much, dear Father,  
We ask a chance to share  
Our many, many blessings  
With children everywhere. Amen.

Thank you, God,  
for food and care,  
Teach us how to  
love and share.  
Amen.



Be present at our table, Lord,  
Be here and everywhere adored.  
These mercies bless and grant that we  
May strengthened for thy service be.  
Amen.

# AT BEDTIME

Now I lay me  
down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord  
my soul to keep,  
Your love be with me  
through the night,  
and wake me with  
the morning light.  
Amen.

Now the light has gone away,  
Father listen while I pray,  
Asking you to watch and keep,  
And to send me quiet sleep.  
Amen.



The day is done, O God the Son,  
Look down upon your little one!  
O Light of Light, keep me this night  
And shed round me your presence bright.  
I need not fear when you are near;  
You are my Savior kind and dear. Amen.



All praise to you, my God, this night  
For all the blessings of the night;  
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,  
Beneath your own almighty wings.  
Amen.

Lord, behold our family here assembled.  
We thank you for this place in which we dwell,  
for the love that unites us,  
for the peace accorded to us this day,  
for the hope with which  
    we expect the morrow;  
for the health, the work,  
the food and the bright skies  
that make our lives delightful;  
for our friends in all parts of the earth.  
Amen.      -- Robert Louis Stevenson



I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ,  
your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day;  
and I pray that you would forgive me all my sins where  
I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night.  
For into your hands I commend myself,  
my body and soul, and all things.  
Let your holy angel be with me,  
that the wicked foe may have  
no power over me. Amen.

-- Martin Luther



# GIVING THANKS AND PRAISE

For each new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food, For love and friends,  
For everything your goodness sends.  
Thank you, God. Amen.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

All the people that I love  
are blessed by Jesus up above.  
My neighbors, friends and family  
are special gifts God gave to me. Amen.



God, thank you for the night,  
Thank you for the day,  
For the chance to do some work,  
And for the chance to play.  
Thank you for my family,  
Father, Mother too,  
And for all my playmates,  
But most of all for You. Amen.



God made the sun, and God made the trees,  
God made the mountains, and God made me.  
Thank you O God, for the sun and the trees,  
For making the mountains, and for making me.





Oh, the Lord is good to me,  
and so I thank the Lord,  
for giving me the things I need--  
the sun and the rain  
and the apple seed.  
The Lord is good to me.  
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

*-- Attributed to John Chapman,  
Planter of orchards*

If I were a butterfly, I'd thank you Lord for giving me wings.  
If I were a robin in a tree, I'd thank you Lord that I could sing.  
If I were a fish in the sea, I'd wiggle my tail and I'd giggle with glee;  
But I just thank you Father for making me, me.

*For you gave me a heart and you gave me a smile;  
You gave me Jesus and you made me your child;  
And I just thank you, Father, for making me, me.*



If I were an elephant, I'd thank you Lord by raising my trunk.  
If I were a kangaroo, you know I'd hop right up to you.  
If I were an octopus, I'd thank you Lord for my fine looks.  
But I just thank you, Father for making me, me. CHORUS

If I were a wiggly worm I'd thank you Lord that I could squirm.  
If I were a fuzzy, wuzzy bear I'd thank you Lord for my fuzzy, wuzzy hair.  
If I were a crocodile I'd thank you Lord for my great smile.  
But I just thank you Father for making me, me. CHORUS

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# ON A BIRTHDAY

Lamb of God, I look to you;  
Be my sure example, too;  
You are gentle, meek, and mild,  
You were once a little child.

Make me gracious as you are:  
Place in me your servant heart.  
You are merciful and kind:  
Let me have your loving mind.

I shall then show forth your praise,  
Serve you all my happy days;  
Then the world shall always see  
Christ, the Holy Child, in me.

Amen.



God bless you today.  
God bless you today.  
God bless you and keep you.  
God bless you we pray.

*Sung to the tune of Happy Birthday,  
following the first verse*



Holy Jesus, be my light, shine upon my way;  
Through this tempting, changing life,  
Lead me day to day. Amen.



Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay,  
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children  
in your tender care,  
And fit us for heaven  
to live with you there.

-- Martin Luther



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O Lord, you have searched me and known me.  
For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

In your book were written all the days  
that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

I try to count them--  
they are more than the sand;

I come to the end-- I am still with you.  
Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my thoughts.

-- Psalm 139, excerpt



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# WHEN LIFE BEGINS

Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,  
With light and comfort from above.  
Be our Guardian, be our Guide,  
Stay close by this little child's side.  
Amen.



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Dear Father in Heaven,  
Thank you for my new baby brother/sister.  
Teach me to love him/her as you love me.  
Make him/her grow strong and kind.  
And help me be a good example. Amen.



O God, fill this child with your Holy Spirit:  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and reverence,  
the spirit of wonder and joy  
in Your presence. Amen.

-- From the Sacrament of Holy Baptism



# WHEN WE'RE BLUE

Jesus, when my heart is blue,  
My eyes can look right up to you.  
I see you in my Daddy's face  
And feel you in my Mom's embrace;  
Your love is with me everywhere.  
Thank you for your gentle care.

Amen.

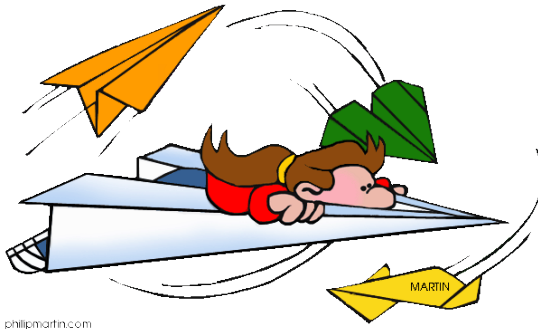


Dear Jesus, I am so sad.  
I don't know what words to say.  
I don't know what things to do.  
I don't know what feelings to feel.

I just know I don't want to feel this way anymore.  
Fill me with your Spirit, and help me feel more like me.

Amen.

# WHEN WE'RE IMPATIENT



God, I want what I want,  
and I want it right now.  
But it's taking too long,  
and I'm having a cow.  
I don't want things late,  
But help me to wait,  
Give me as much patience  
as you will allow. Amen.

# WHEN WE DON'T GET OUR WAY

Help us God each day,  
To follow You along the way.  
Teach us to be kind like you,  
In everything we say and do.  
Amen.



You have given me so much to me,  
Give one thing more--a grateful heart;  
Not thankful when it pleases me,  
As if your blessings had spare days,  
But such a heart whose pulse  
may be your praise.

-- George Herbert



God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time;  
enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,  
not as I would have it;  
Trusting that God will make all things  
right if I surrender to God's Will;  
That I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with God forever in the next. Amen.

-- Reinhold Niebuhr



# WHEN WE FIGHT

Dear God, teach me to share my toys,  
With other little girls and boys.  
Even when I'm sure I'm right,  
Lead me not to fuss and fight.  
When I'm wrong and start to stray,  
Please help me find my way. Amen.



Help me Father to be good and true,  
Help me to be kind to others too,  
At times if I get weak and I sin,  
Help me God to be strong again. Amen.

# WHEN WE'RE JEALOUS

Please give me what I ask, dear Lord,  
if you'd be glad about it.  
But if you think it's not for me,  
Please help me do without it. Amen.



Please give us hearts to thank you  
For every blessing sent,  
And with everything You send us  
Let us be content. Amen.

# ASKING FORGIVENESS

Loving Father, put away  
All the wrong I've done today;  
Make me sorry, true, and good;  
Make me love you as I should;  
Make me feel by day and night  
I am ever in thy sight. Amen.



Forgive me if I have this day  
Done any wrong in work or play;  
Oh, help me always to do right,  
And bless me every day and night. Amen.

I got mad and I forgot  
To use my words, as I was taught.  
Please forgive me, God, I'm glad  
You love me even when I'm mad. Amen.



Most merciful God, I confess that I am captive to sin and cannot free myself. I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what I have done and by what I have left undone. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved my neighbors as myself. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Forgive me, renew me, and lead me, so that I may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

*Be confident that God DOES forgive you, just as God promised.  
Parents, you can voice God's forgiveness to your child. [John 20:22-23]*

# FOR PEACE AND STILLNESS

Breathing in, I say your name: J - E - S - U - S.

Breathing out, your Spirit comes: P - E - A - C - E.

*Repeat until calm. If movement is helpful, raise arms as you breathe in and lower them as you breathe out, or touch one finger with each letter.*



God, the world is too loud right now.  
Wrap me in your loving arms,  
And shield me from all harms. Amen.

## MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love,

Where there is injury, pardon

Where there is doubt, faith,

Where there is despair, hope,

Where there is darkness, light,

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much

seek to be consoled as to console,

not so much to be understood as to understand,

not so much to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

it is in dying that we awake to eternal life.



-- Attributed to  
St. Francis of Assisi

# WHEN WE'RE AFRAID

*Sung to the tune of "We're Going on a Bear Hunt"*

I'm going through a tough time, it's gonna be a big one.

What a terrible day. I'm so scared!

Uh oh. Insert fear.

I can't go over it. I can't go under it.

Oh no! I gotta go right through it.

Ugh, slug. Ugh, slug. Ugh, slug.

*Repeat with other fears, then:*

I'm going through a tough time, it's gonna be a big one.

God's a wonderful help. I'm not scared!!!



God, I'm worried. I'm afraid. I'm scared.  
Will it hurt? Will I be alone? Will I be okay?

I don't know what's going to happen.

So stay close beside me.

You can be strong for me.

And bring me safely through it.

I know you can. Amen.

O God, help me believe what Saint Paul says:

"I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels,  
nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,  
nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus."

Amen.

-- Romans 8:38-39

# GOING SOMEPLACE NEW



Lord God, you have called your servants  
to adventures of which we cannot see  
the ending, by paths as yet untrodden,  
through perils unknown. Give us faith to  
go out with good courage, not knowing  
where we go, but only that your hand is  
leading us and your love supporting us;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*-- From the Lutheran Book of Worship*

## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Blessed Lord, let your blessing go with me  
today and grant that I may be obedient  
to my teachers and may learn with  
pleasure whatever I am taught,  
to your great honor and glory. Amen.

Dear Jesus, Holy Teacher,  
Bless me as I start school.  
Make me curious about new  
things and eager to learn.  
Comfort me when I'm afraid,  
And surround me with loving friends.  
Give me lots to share and big hugs to give  
when I see my parent at the end. Amen.





# HELPING OTHERS

Jesus, help my eyes to see  
All the good you send to me.  
Jesus, help my ears to hear  
Call for help from far to near.  
Jesus, help my feet to go  
In the way that you would show.  
Jesus, help my hands to do  
All things loving, kind, and true.  
Jesus, may I helpful be,  
Growing every day like thee. Amen.



## FOR FRIENDS



Dear God, give me friends to play with,  
Give me buddies to bond with,  
Give me comrades to share with,  
Give me companions to cry with,  
And most of all, dear God, give me a heart,  
so I can give these things, too. Amen.

## WHEN A PET IS LOST

God made creatures great and small,  
Dogs that run and cats that crawl.  
Thank you, Lord, for furry friends,  
Be with them till we meet again. Amen.





# BEFORE WE TRAVEL



God, we're going on a journey.  
Please come with us.  
I'm excited and nervous at the same time.  
Give us good weather, safe travels,  
lots to do, and renewed energy.  
Calm us when we get cranky  
and help us grow closer together.  
Then, when the time is right,  
bring us back home again,  
But make the fun and family times  
never end. Amen.

# WHEN LOVED ONES ARE AWAY

God, please watch my Daddy/Mommy dear,  
Keep him/her safe when he/she's not here.  
Bless his/her work while he/she's away,  
And bring him/her safely home to play! Amen.

Loving Jesus, I miss name a lot.  
Thank you for all the fun  
and love we get to share  
when they are close by.  
For now, please give them  
a hug from me. Amen.



# WHEN WE ARE SICK



Tender Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look on me, a little child;  
Help me, if it is your will,  
To recover from all ill.

Amen.

Yuck! It's no fun to be sick.

I wish it would just go away.

Yuck! It's no fun to be sick.

I just want to go out and play!

God, please help me get better,

And make me grow healthy and strong.

As I rest and I pray, take the yuckies away,

so I'll be back to playing before long! Amen.



# WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS SICK

God of Healing, name is sick.

And I know it's no fun being sick.

Use doctors to help them get better soon.

Use me to help them feel better until then.

Amen.

Loving Jesus, name is really sick.

I'm scared they won't get better.

I wish that I could heal them,

Or at least that I had some words to say.

No matter what, help them know my love and your love,

And give them peace and comfort. Amen.



# WHEN SOMEONE DIES

I feel so sad, God.

Things just aren't the same anymore.

Name is with you,

But I really miss them;

My family does, too.

Thank you for the good times that we had together, like . . .

Thank you for everything that made Name special, like . . .

We love Name, and we know you do, too.

Give them a hug from us. Amen.



Dear Jesus, you cried when your friend Lazarus died.

My relation died, and it makes me want to cry, too.

Give me the strength to start each new day.

Help me remember what made them special.

Help me find new joy in the middle of my sorrow.

Lead me to be like my relation,

so that they will live on in me

as they do with you. Amen.



Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant.

Acknowledge, we humbly ask you, a sheep of your own fold,

a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming.

Receive him/her into the arms of your mercy,

into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,

and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

-- From the commendation at the end of the funeral service

# PSALMS

I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog,  
and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.  
He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God . . .  
Happy are those who make the LORD their trust,  
who do not turn to the proud, those who go astray after false gods.  
You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds  
and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you . . .  
Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,  
but you have given me an open ear . . .  
Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD,  
make haste to help me.

-- Psalm 40,  
excerpt

*The Psalms are the prayerbook of the Bible. They don't tell us what to think or do; they reflect the honest feelings of the writers struggling with life. Look through the psalms to put words to YOUR feelings.*

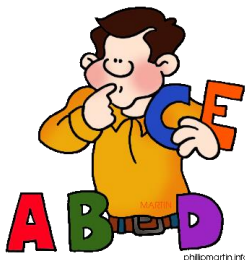
**Psalm 23 --**

The Lord is my shepherd, I need not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
and leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff--they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life, and I will live in  
the house of the Lord my whole life long.



# ABC PRAYER

**A**lmighty God                      **B**less my family and me  
**C**omfort me                      **D**raw me to you in prayer  
**E**nlighten me                      **F**orgive my sins  
**G**ive me good friends              **H**elp me do your will  
**I** am your servant                  **J**oyful are my days with you  
**K**eep me from harm              **L**ead me to follow you  
**M**ake me into your hands          **N**ature is your masterpiece  
**O**pen new doors for me          **P**lease grant me peace  
**Q**uench my thirst for knowledge   **R**eside with me always  
**S**hield me from danger              **T**each me to love unconditionally  
**U**se me to inspire others          **V**isit me in when I'm alone  
**W**hen I fail lift me up              **X**OXO I praise you with my love  
**Y**our love fills me with gratitude   **Z**estfully I thank you  
**A**men.



*“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.’” ~ LUKE 18:16*

# PLAYFUL WAYS TO PRAY

## HAND PRAYER

Use your fingers to bring to mind different things to pray for. (You can modify this prayer by using various body parts similar ways. For example, use shoulders to pray for people who bear heavy loads).



**THUMB** - This is the strongest digit on your hand. Give thanks for all the strong things in your life, like home and family, relationships that support and sustain you.

**INDEX FINGER** - This is the pointing finger. Pray for all those people and things in your life who guide and help you: friends, teachers, doctors, nurses, emergency services and so on.

**MIDDLE FINGER** - This is the tallest finger. Pray for all the important people who have power in the world, like world leaders and their governments.

**RING FINGER** - This is the weakest finger on your hand. It can not do much by itself. Remember the poor, the weak, the helpless, the hungry, the sick, the ill and the bereaved.

**LITTLE FINGER** - This is the smallest and the last finger on your hand. Pray for yourself.

## REFRIGERATOR PRAYERS

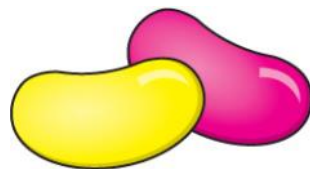
Place a pad of sticky notes beside your refrigerator. Every time one of your family members has a prayer request they can write it down on a note and post it on the fridge for the family to see and include in their prayers. If you have pictures on your fridge, remember to pray for the people in them. This is an especially great tool for a parent who has to miss prayer time to leave messages and still be a part of the ritual (“Don’t forget mommy/daddy wanted us to pray for. . .”). If you’re gone a lot, make it a habit every day to leave something for your child to pray about.

## ROOM-BY-ROOM PRAYER

Every room in your home can be a place to pray. Pray for your family’s health in the bathroom, thank God for your many blessings in the kitchen, and for your friends in the living room. Flashlights can make this even more fun for a kid.

## JELLY BEAN PRAYER

Have a snack and pray the following:



**GREEN** is for the plants God made. **RED** is for the blood Christ gave.

**PURPLE** is for Jesus’ hour of sorrow. **PINK** is for a new tomorrow.

**YELLOW** is for the sun so bright. **ORANGE** is for the edge of night.

**BLACK** is for the sins we made. **WHITE** is for the grace God gave.

A handful of jelly beans, colorful and sweet,

Is a prayer, a promise, and a loved one’s treat!



# WRITE YOUR OWN

**OUR  
SPECIAL  
PRAYERS**

MARTIN

phillipmartin.com



# PRAYERS HERE . . .

# THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

Amen.



[phillipmartin.com](http://phillipmartin.com)

*AT THE BAPTISM OF YOUR CHILD, WE SAID:*

*As you bring your children to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:  
to live with them among God's faithful people,  
bring them to the word of God and the holy supper,  
teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed,  
and the Ten Commandments,  
place in their hands the holy scriptures,  
and nurture them in faith and prayer.*

*All of these things are gifts to your children so that:  
they may learn to trust God,  
proclaim Christ through word and deed,  
care for others and the world God made,  
and work for justice and peace.*

*Do you promise to help your children  
grow in the Christian faith and life?*



**AND YOU SAID:** *We do.*

# SHARING THE FAITH

THANK YOU for your commitment to your child's faith. As much as we love being with them in worship and Sunday school, these few hours don't compare to the opportunity *you* have to shape their faith.

That might feel intimidating. But know that you do not have to be the "perfect Christian." There is no such thing. If that's your expectation of yourself, either you'll skip saying anything, or your child will never be able to live up to the perfection you try to convey.

Know also that you are not alone. We're here to offer you resources like this book, education for you and your child, and conversation with the pastors and fellow parents.

*"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise."*

DEUTERONOMY 6:5-7

Most of all, don't forget that God is there for you. It's by the grace of God that we succeed at anything as parents. God is there to support and equip you for all the blessings and challenges of parenthood. Never forget that God has specifically called *you* to be a parent.

## WHAT PRAYER IS

Simply put, prayer is the time we spend with God.

Often it takes the form of talking and listening--though we, along with our kids, are still working on the listening part. Prayer is like any other relationship in our lives. If we don't spend time together, we grow distant. It's the same with God.

Prayer helps children learn that God cares about what is going on in their lives and is approachable. It helps them recognize that God rejoices and sympathizes with them. It helps them know that God provides for them, stands by them, and acts in real and powerful ways.

At this stage of life, kids learn and relate through play. Prayer can be playful. After all, God *loves* to play (see Genesis 2:4b-25). Be creative with your child. Experiment together. Practice together. Have FUN praying.



Know also that play can be prayer, too. Simply playing with a nativity set or Sunday School crafts connects children with God and God's story. Encourage this as much as possible. In the end, we hope that prayer will feel as comfortable to kids as playing does.

## PRAYING WITH KIDS

### A few pointers for praying with your children . . .

*(you probably already do many of these instinctively)*

- **Pray when the time is right.** It's good to pray regularly, such as at meals or before bedtime. But don't limit prayer to those times. Stop, drop, and pray anytime. It's good to tell God about something great that just happened (like when you come in from having a great time outside), or when something bad happens (like a bad boo boo).
- **Prayer doesn't have to be perfect.** No one will grade your prayers, not even God. Just be honest. Use the language you use with your children. Some of the prayers or formulations we use in prayer are beautiful and meaningful, but not always necessary.

- **Pray with your kids, but let them pray, too.** Your words will serve as an example, but lead them to think they're not old enough to talk to God. Take cues from your kids about how much they are ready to do.
- **Offer affirmation, not correction.** Your child might be uncertain what to say. It's okay to be affirming. However, don't make it all about their performance. Silly prayers can be appropriate sometimes. God loves your goofy child for who they are, just as you do.
- **Pick a helpful posture.** We're used to folding our hands because it helps little kids focus and be still. However, you might also try looking up or down. You might have them give themselves a hug or wrap your arms around your child. Do whatever helps them focus on God.
- **Pray for things your child can relate to.** Give thanks for the everyday blessings your kids enjoy--things like wheels on the bus, ice cream, noses that drip down instead of up, sunshine or snow. Focus on your child's experiences--new siblings, visits to the doctor, fights with friends, missing pets, scary things, and birthdays.
- **Include things you are praying for.** Pray for Aunt Judy who is sick, or the child sitting next to you. You don't have to shelter your child by making every prayer about happy things. We give kids the wrong message if we let them feel they can't be honest with God.
- **Finish with an AMEN!** Teach your child that "amen" simply means "Yes, that's what I meant." Give a loud "amen" when your child finishes, and have them do the same when you pray.
- **Point out answered prayers.** Help kids notice answered prayers. Give thanks when a grumpy kid laughs or the day an illness disappears.
- **Give kids visuals.** Children do not think abstractly. Pictures in books magazines, and photo albums can help them think more concretely of things to pray about. Go outside to look for things to thank God for.

# USING THIS BOOK

This book is meant to be a tool in your toolbox. Read prayers for your child, have them repeat lines after you, or work to memorize them.

## IF YOU DON'T PRAY MUCH NOW . . .

Pick one prayer from the book for meals or for bedtime. Read it for now, but try to learn it by heart so you don't need the book.

Make a commitment to do this one prayer at the same time every day.



## IF YOU ALREADY PRAY TOGETHER . . .

If your standby prayer feels stale or rote, pick a new one to learn. After you learn several, let your child pick which one to say each time.

## PICK A PRAYER FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION . . .

Sometimes it's hard to know what to say. Maybe your child is sick, you're going on vacation, it's raining, or today's their birthday.

If something big is happening, look through the prayers in this book and pick one to pray together. It's not bad to pray when your child makes mistakes ("Help my friend feel better because I made a mistake and hit him"), but avoid the temptation of using prayer as discipline.



## READ IT LIKE ANY OTHER BOOK . . .

Some of the prayers are just fun, like the ones you can sing. Some are great for quiet time. Some of the longer ones make great conversation starters about who we want to be. Sit down and read through it together like it's any other book. This is quality time between you, your child, and God!

# USING YOUR WORDS

Repetition is good for helping children learn and develop habits. That's why we use memorized prayers. It's also nice to have something to go with when we don't know what to say. Don't feel bad about using pre-written prayers. Just make sure you're not taking the easy way out.

When the time is right, get more personal. God wants to hear what's on *our* hearts, not just the hearts of the people who wrote the prayers. Even if most of your prayers are pre-written, make sure that some of them are off the cuff. If you can't think of what to say, tell God what you'd tell your best friend (or what your child would tell *their* best friend--you). Remember, God isn't looking for the perfect prayers with the perfect words. Just be honest.

*"The Lord is near.  
Do not worry about  
anything, but in everything  
by prayer and supplication  
with thanksgiving let your  
requests be made known to  
God. And the peace of God,  
which surpasses all  
understanding, will  
guard your hearts  
and your minds  
in Christ Jesus."*

PHILIPPIANS 4:5-7

## CHECK-IN & PRAY

One way to get more personal is to pair your prayer time with an end-of-the-day check-in at the dinner table or before bed. Not only will it be good for your prayer-life, it will strengthen your relationship with your child and help you both focus on blessings of the day.

Begin by asking your child the following questions:

- 1) What they are thankful for today? OR What's the most fun thing that happened today? (It might be off the wall--try to go with it).
- 2) What do you need to say sorry for? OR What do you want God to help with tomorrow?



- 3) Is there someone special you'd like us to pray for (such as someone who is sick)? You might offer suggestions.

Then pray:

- 1) Give thanks for what was named.
- 2) Confess the mistakes made and ask for God's help. This isn't the time to reinforce guilt, but to seek God's grace and forgiveness, confident that God gives them.
- 3) Pray for the special person.
- 4) End with "We love you God. Amen."

At the beginning, you may offer the prayer on behalf of your child. As they get used to prayer, let them repeat after you. When they become pros, let them offer the prayer themselves. Remember to add your own enthusiastic "Amen" at the end.

You can follow up prayers from the heart with the meaningful prayers you've memorized. Help your child memorize prayers by beginning a line and having them finish the line. As they get better, give them more of each line. Later on, switch parts so they begin and you finish. When they become pros, let them take over the whole prayer.

## USING PRAYER DICE

It's hard to decide pick which prayer to say. Some siblings even argue over it. Kids like being hands on.

Roll the dice to spice up your prayer life. You can always follow up with a personal prayer of your own.

If these prayers get tired, write your own prayers on slips of paper and draw from a hat each time.



# PRAYING PARENTS

Your children learn from you. They repeat the words you wish they hadn't heard, but they also imitate you. Let them see you talk to God.

The best tool for teaching prayer is to practice it yourself. As busy parents, it's easy to neglect our spiritual lives. Don't forget to spend time with God yourself, even if it's only a few minutes here and there, and even if it's thanking God for the strength to deal with a grumpy kid.

*"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

And remember . . . the same things about prayer that you want to teach your child apply to you, too: honesty is more important than perfection.

## SOME THOUGHTS FOR YOU . . .

**Pray when you can.** Pray while you're driving (don't close your eyes or fold your hands!). Pray while you wait to pick up a kid. Pray in one of the last child-free places you (hopefully) have: the shower.

**Pick up a devotional book.** Published quarterly, these books give a brief bit of the Bible to read, offer a reflection to tie God's Word to life, and provide a short prayer. They are available for free in the gathering space.

**Read through the Bible.** Don't just start at the beginning. Many Bibles have a reading plan in the back. You can also follow the Essential 100 Challenge (<http://e100challenge.com>), the daily lectionary (search at <http://elca.org>), or the scriptures we use in worship on Sunday.

**Regularly Attend Worship.** It can be hard to sit through worship with small children. You might feel like you don't "get anything out of it." However, some of the best moments we have with loved ones are the moments we spend together doing nothing. The same goes with God.

# PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

Here are a few extra prayers just for you . . .

## Parent's Prayer for Safekeeping

May Christ Jesus watch and keep you  
safe and far from any harms,

May the Spirit guide and guard you  
'til you're safely in my arms.

Holy Father, you have given

Name(s) into my care,

Now I trust that you are with him/her  
every moment, everywhere.

Amen.



## A Bedtime Lullaby

*Sung to the tune of "Go, My Children, with My Blessing"*

Sleep my child and peace attend thee,  
all through the night

Guardian angels God will send thee,  
all through the night

Soft the drowsy hours are creeping  
Hill and vale in slumber steeping,  
I my loving vigil keeping,  
all through the night.

-- Sir Harold Boulton



## For Stressed Out Parents

Lord, give me grace to live each day as the kind of person

I want my child to grow up to become:

Kind . . .

Patient . . .

Slow to anger . . .

And abounding in steadfast love.

As I breathe, fill me with your Spirit.

Give me peace.

Strengthen me for the trying times.

Open my eyes to all the ways my child is a blessing.

Help me to forgive him/her when he/she falls short,

And most of all, help me to forgive myself when I fail.

Thank you for your mercies,  
which are new every morning.

You are faithful,  
and I know that no matter how tough it gets,  
I am never alone.

Thank you, Father, that you love me,  
With more love than I can give my own kids. Amen.



**Use any of the prayers from this book  
for yourself even when your child  
isn't around. You're God's child, too!**

*"Make Me an Instrument" on page 21  
is especially great for parents.*



*The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face to shine on you  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor,  
And give you peace.  
Amen.*

**NUMBERS 6:24-26**

# WORSHIP FOR HOME & VACATION

## GATHERING

Set up the space with cushions, a cross, and other signs of worship. Light a candle.

Ring a bell when you're ready to start. Invite your kids to read parts of the service.

Say these words while everyone makes the sign of the cross on their body:

**We are gathered in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## SONG - Enjoy a favorite hymn or song:

Play piano or sing out of a hymnal if you have one (there's an index in the back).

OR: Blast a song from your music player and listen, sing, or dance along. If you don't have a recording, you can probably find it online on YouTube. If singing or dancing isn't for you, watch the pictures on YouTube.

OR: Sing without accompaniment. Choose simple songs like *Jesus Loves Me*, *This Little Light of Mine*, and *The B-I-B-L-E*. Teach your kids your favorite songs.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Just as Jesus greeted the disciples huddled in the upper room, exchange the peace of God by embracing each other and saying: **The peace of Christ be with you.**

Pray together: **Almighty God, your generous goodness comes to us new every day.**

**By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## SCRIPTURE - Read a passage from the Bible or a storybook Bible:

See what we would read in worship this week at [lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu](http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu).

OR: Choose your own passage. The Gospels are always a great place to turn.

## REFLECT

Discuss the scripture with these or other questions:

- Who are the characters and what are they doing? How are they like us?
- What is the writer trying to communicate? How does this affect your life?
- Is there a word of peace, strength, liberation, or direction for you?

OR: Imagine and discuss the scene. Draw it together on paper or act out the story.

OR: Celebrate that God's love is personal by remembering your baptism. Dip your finger in water and make the sign of the cross on each other's forehead, saying:  
**Child of God, you have been claimed by God, sealed with the Holy Spirit, and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Amen.**

**SONG** - Choose another favorite hymn to play, sing, listen, or dance to.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Pray using your own words for what you feel right now. Consider the following:

- Things you are thankful for that God has done
- The church and its ministry, including how God might be calling you to follow
- Ongoing issues troubling the world and our community
- People you know who suffer in body, mind, or spirit

OR: Open a photo album or pull up social media, and pray for the people you see.

OR: Use the following prayer:

**Gracious and loving God, sustain us and all people throughout the world with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever. Amen.**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** - Say the Lord's Prayer together (see page 5)

**SONG** - Choose another favorite hymn to play, sing, listen, or dance to.

## BLESSING

Bless each other with the following words.

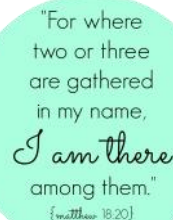
**The Lord bless you and keep you.**

**The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.**

**The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Amen.**

Go and serve the Lord by doing something to bless others:

Write a letter or call family/friends to tell them what a blessing they are; make a craft or bake food to give away; or create a fun inspirational message (such as in the snow) and then text it to friends or post it online.



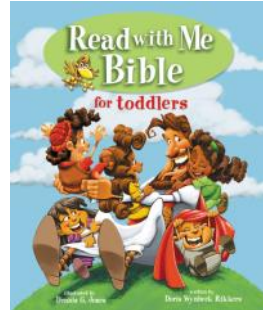
"For where  
two or three  
are gathered  
in my name,  
*I am there*  
among them."  
{matthew 18:20}

# OTHER BOOKS & RESOURCES

## CHILDREN'S BIBLES

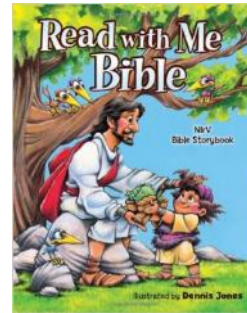
### **Read with Me Bible for Toddlers**

by Doris Rikkers, illustrated by Dennis Jones  
Zonderkidz (2009) - ISBN: 978-0310718772  
*Best for 1-4 year olds, this is a perfect story Bible for young ones who love pictures and need simple stories that keep moving.*



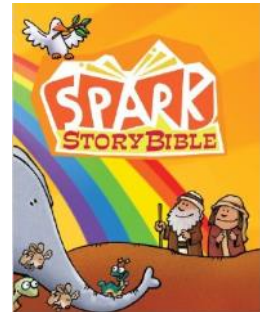
### **Read with Me Bible**

by Doris Rikkers, illustrated by Dennis Jones  
Zonderkidz (2000) - ISBN: 978-0310920083  
*Best for 3-5 year olds, this story Bible is great for preschoolers ready for more and deeper stories that still keep moving with plenty of pictures.*



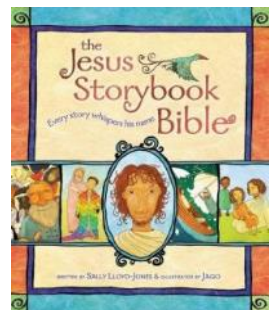
### **Spark Story Bible**

by Patti Thisted Arthur  
Augsburg Fortress (2009) - ISBN: 978-0806670492  
*Best for 5-9 year olds, this is the story Bible that we use with the younger kids in Sunday school. It covers a LOT of stories with greater depth.*



### **The Jesus Storybook Bible**

by Sally Lloyd-Jones, illustrated by Jago  
Zonderkidz (2007) - ISBN: 978-0310708254  
*Best for 5-10 year olds, this story Bible uses beautiful words and connects each story to the bigger picture of God's love. It's a great devotional for adults, too, and for reading to newborns who don't need to follow along.*



*\*All of these Bibles are in the church office and available for purchase.*



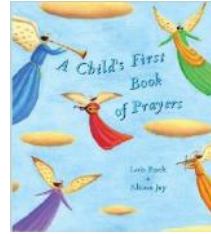
## OTHER BOOKS

### **My Very First Prayers**

by Lois Rock, illustrated by Alison Jay

Lion Hudson (2012) - ISBN: 978-0745944746

*Filled with simple prayers for all occasions in life.*

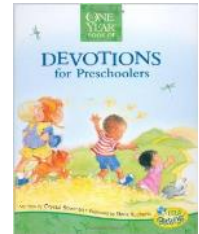


### **The One Year Devotions for Preschoolers (Little Blessings)**

by Crystal Bowman, illustrated by Elena Kucharik

Tyndale Kids (2004) - ISBN: 978-0842389402

*365 short lessons about God and life for ages 3-6.*

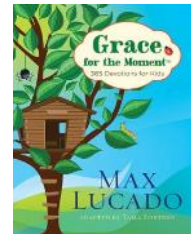


### **Grace for the Moment: 365 Devotions for Kids**

by Max Lucado

Thomas Nelson (2012) - ISBN: 978-1400320349

*Daily reminders about God's grace, with short Bible verses and faith practice tips. Best for ages 5-10.*

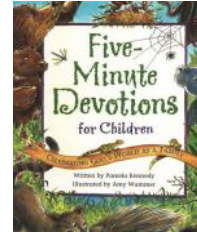


### **Five-Minute Devotions for Children: Celebrating God's World as a Family**

by Pamela Kennedy

Guideposts Books (2014) - ISBN: 978-0824954857

*Short lessons about how God made us to be, with preschool-friendly questions.*



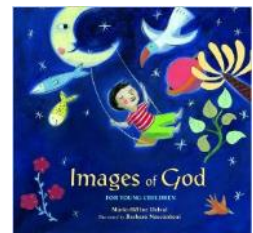
### **Images of God for Young Children**

by Marie-Helene Delval, illustrated by B. Nascimbeni

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (2010)

ISBN: 978-0802853912

*A great book for imaging what God is like.*

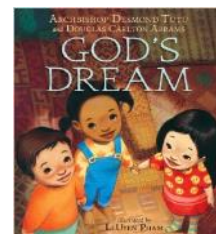


### **God's Dream**

by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Candlewick (2008) - ISBN: 978-0763633882

*A vision of God's dream, of people who reach out and hold hands even when hurt and angry.*



## ONLINE RESOURCES

### FREE Resources for Busy Families!



VibrantFaith@Home offers a variety of free resources to help you build better connected, stronger, more faith-focused families. Every season they publish more than 60 brand new faith-forming activities to equip and empower families of all ages and stages to: talk about their faith, pray together in comfortable and comforting ways, ritualize important moments, and reach out in service and support.

Visit [vibrantfaithathome.org](http://vibrantfaithathome.org) for unlimited online access to the FUN, FREE and FANTASTIC family resources or download the VibrantFaith@Home app from iTunes and the Android Google Play market by scanning the QR code.



Visit [enterthebible.org](http://enterthebible.org) for a wealth of resources to help adults grow in their faith, add depth to their Bible studies and truly discover the people, places and events of the Bible.

## LIVING LUTHERAN

Visit [livinglutheran.org](http://livinglutheran.org) for a lively engagement in faith and life for adults. Read inspiring stories, watch videos, and view answers to frank questions about how we understand the intersection of faith with real life.



**PRINTED COPIES  
of this book are also available  
in the church office.**

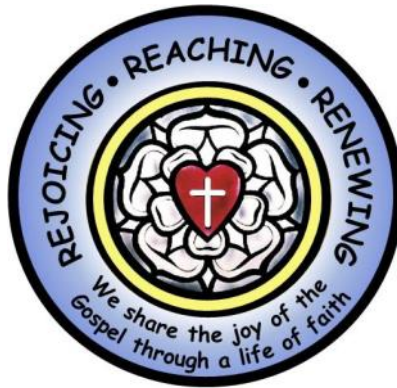
## Dear Parent

Your child is growing fast . . . faster than you can believe.

They're getting better at talking and listening (most of the time), discovering a wider range of experiences and emotions (sometimes loudly at very public times), and becoming more aware of God.

We hope this book will help deepen your own understanding of prayer, help you nurture your child's faith, and foster a deeper connection with God and each other.

*Your brothers and sisters in Christ of Zion Lutheran Church*



**Produced by  
ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
in Albion, Nebraska**

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