Portals of Prayer for Kids

DAILY DEVOTIONS

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Dear Parent,

Today's busy families are pressed to make time in their lives for all the necessary activities, let alone time for devotions and prayer together. Yet the practice of regular devotion time is an excellent way to strengthen the family bond and to lead children to Christ.

As the child's first faith teachers, parents are tasked with teaching faith principles, laying a foundation for faith, and instilling the habit of dedicated time in the study of God's Word and in prayer. This collection of devotions is offered as an easy-to-use resource families can utilize to achieve that task. It was written by pastors, teachers, parents, and others who call on their own experience and education to aid parents in involving their children, sparking conversation, and sowing seeds of faith.

May all who use it grow stronger in their faith and be blessed as the Holy Spirit works through these words.

To God be the glory.
All Aboard!

Today begins a new journey. Once again, the earth will travel around the sun. Since we live on the earth, we'll be going along. Are you ready? It's a long journey, but we'll be traveling at a good rate of speed. We'll be moving 365 days, 24 hours a day. The trip will take 8,760 hours.

Who knows what will occur in the weeks ahead? We don't know what might happen to our families or friends. Whatever happens, there is no need for God's children to worry.

Today's Bible verse praises the Lord, saying, “Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in Your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them” (v. 16). Before you were born, your heavenly Father knew exactly what you would experience every day of your life.

We have an all-powerful and all-knowing God. We also have a loving God, who sent His Son to die for our sins. He can take care of big problems like sin, death, and the devil. He can also take care of all our little problems. One day, He will care for us in His absolutely perfect heavenly home.

As you begin this new year, remember that the God who created the universe and knew you before you were formed will be with you each day. He will be your God during each test, practice, and doctor visit, during time with friends and family, and in every hour of the new year.

Journal: List three examples of God's love and care that you have already experienced on the first day of this new year's journey.

Pray: Father, I thank You for giving me a new year to serve in Your kingdom. Help me to trust Your guidance through each day of the journey. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen. H. W.
I have a blue blanket that’s really important to me. It’s made of simple cotton fabric. It’s getting old, and there are a couple of tears in it and it is getting thin. But a little tag in one corner makes it valuable. The tag says: “Made with love by Grandma.”

The blanket’s value for me doesn’t come from its fabric, color, or age. Instead, the blanket is valuable to me because my grandma made it. She has made a blanket like this for each of her twenty-three grandchildren. And because Grandma made it, it’s precious to me.

Psalm 139 says that you were knitted together (v. 13) by God in your mother’s womb. God created you carefully and beautifully, the same way my grandma sewed my blanket. And God is a master craftsman. So the psalm writer says you are “wonderfully made” (v. 14).

Sometimes, I don’t feel valuable. Sometimes, I feel like I can never be smart enough or talented enough or good enough. Do you ever feel like that?

The next time you don’t feel worth very much, remember that you are “Made with love by God.” In fact, you are so precious to God that He sent Jesus to save you when you were lost to sin and death. My blanket is precious because my grandma made it. Think about how much more precious you are because God Himself made you. Wonderful are His works indeed!

Journal: Draw a tag that says “Made with love by God.” Remember that a tag like this could be attached to you!

Pray: Dear God, thank You for making me. Help me remember that anything You make is wonderful. When I feel worthless, remind me that I have great value because I am Yours. Amen. E. B.
Oops! It Slipped Out Again!

Your best friend tells you the big news, and it slips out. You find out Mr. Hartman, the “drill sergeant,” is going to be your gym teacher, and it slips out. Your little sister colored all over your new book, and it slips out.

On TV, in the movies, on the radio, it is repeated. It’s such a common expression that there’s even an abbreviation for it: OMG! Are these words a harmless exclamation or something more serious?

The Second Commandment says, “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.” In the Small Catechism, Luther writes that this commandment teaches us to call upon God’s name “in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.”

God’s name is holy, and His holy name should be honored among us. In Old Testament times, God’s people refused to utter God’s name for fear of misusing it.

Today, we often throw God’s name around without giving it a second thought. In so doing, we misuse the precious name of our loving Creator, Savior, and Comforter.

God wants us to use His name rightly. He’s a Father longing for His children to come to Him in our need. So God’s name should be on our tongues often—in prayer, in trouble, in praise, in thanks.

God forgives sinners. Christ’s death on the cross paid for all of our sins, including sins against God’s name. As God’s love richly dwells in us, words sprinkled with grace will come from us too.

Journal: Think up some new expressions or exclamations that do not misuse God’s name, but rather are as unique and original as you are. A fun one might be “Jumpin’ monkeys!”

Pray: Dear God, Your name is holy. Guide me to call on You in every situation. Forgive my thoughtless and sinful use of Your name. Instead, lead me to use it in ways that honor You. Amen. J. S.
Shelby stumbled into the house. Just inside the door she dropped her book bag, her sports bag, her clarinet, and herself.

“You look loaded down,” her mom noticed.

“Volleyball practice ran late because we have a tournament on Saturday. My science project is due Friday, and my original story is due Thursday. My social studies test is Wednesday, and I have a whole page of math homework for tomorrow,” Shelby complained.

“That’s a lot,” Mom sympathized.

“And,” Shelby continued, “my band concert is Sunday, and Kelsey’s birthday party is after the tournament on Saturday.”

“Wow,” said Mom, “sounds as if you need some quiet time.”

“I don’t have time for quiet time,” Shelby moaned.

“The Bible shows us that whenever Jesus had a difficult job facing Him, He first went to a quiet place to pray.”

“Really?”

“Yes. He prayed before choosing the twelve disciples. He prayed before feeding the five thousand. He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was arrested and crucified. The Bible tells us to pray too.”

“Then I’m going to pray too,” said Shelby.

God commands and invites believers in Jesus Christ to pray. He promises to hear our prayers. You may pray for your own welfare and also for your neighbors’ welfare. You can also praise and thank God for who He is and what He has done. So, fold your hands. Bow your head. He’s listening.


**Pray:** Dear Jesus, sometimes there’s just too much to do. Thank You for showing me how to commit my tasks to prayer. Thank You for the peace that is mine because of Your death and resurrection for me. Amen. V. S.
He Is for All

The Bible tells us that there was nothing special about Jesus’ appearance (Isaiah 53:2). So when He was young, He probably looked like other infants—no surprise there. But something made Him unique, something surprising and startling. Early in His life, He had some amazing visitors who were led to Him by a bright star.

Matthew records this visit of the Wise Men. The account begins with the word *behold*, which grabs our attention. As we read the story, we behold the events. A bright star shone above the house where Jesus and His mother were staying! A toddler was called the King of the Jews! Travelers from the East fell down in worship before Him. They offered this Child gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

In the Old Testament, God chose one people, the children of Israel, to receive His covenant. They were the *only* ones who could enter the inner courts of the temple and worship God. The Gentiles were outsiders. But when the Wise Men, who were Gentiles, came to worship Jesus, God showed that all people have access to Him because Jesus is God in the flesh.

**Behold!** Tomorrow, Epiphany, we celebrate that Jesus is the promised Savior for all. This little boy we read about in Matthew 2 has come to be one of us, to bear our sin. God has revealed this to us. Seeing this child as our Savior is an “aha” moment, an epiphany, for us. We, too, bow down and worship Him.

**Journal:** Draw a star in your journal. Tell how God has led you to know that Jesus is your Savior from sin, death, and the devil.

**Pray:** Heavenly Father, there are so many wrong ideas in this world about how a person can be saved. Thank You for guiding me to believe that Jesus is Your Son and my Savior. In His name I pray. Amen. H. W.
Happy Epiphany

Epiphany is the day we remember that God led the Wise Men to see Jesus. You know the story of how they traveled many miles, stopped off to chat with King Herod and his wise men, and then continued to follow the star to the young Savior and King. When they saw Jesus, they honored Him with expensive gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Even if you forgot about Epiphany until you read this devotion, you can still do what God says in today’s Bible reading. You can “arise” and “shine”—even if you don’t feel like it—because the glory of the Lord is also shining on you. Even though you are a sinner, you have good reason to rejoice: Jesus is your Savior!

Who led you to Jesus? Perhaps your parents wanted you to be baptized. Maybe you first heard about Jesus from a teacher at Vacation Bible School or Sunday School. Thank God for that person. But to really see who Jesus is, the Holy Spirit gets involved. He works through God’s Word and Sacraments. He shines on Jesus, pointing out that He is God’s Son, our Lord and Savior.

Yes, when the Wise Men went home, they were different. They had survived a dangerous mission in foreign lands. They had knelt down before the King of all people. What a story to tell!

God’s people continue to spread the Good News that Jesus is the Savior of all people. So, arise! Shine! Happy Epiphany!

Journal: Draw a “Happy Epiphany” card, and show it to a friend.

Pray: Thank You, dear God, for leading me to Jesus in Baptism. As I journey through life, give me ways to show love to others and tell them that Jesus was born to be their Savior King. In His name I pray. Amen. E. G.
A Refuge

After the flood in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, thousands of people left New Orleans, Louisiana. They had no fresh water, food, or electricity. So they left. They became refugees.

A refugee is someone who has to flee in search of refuge. Sometimes, refugees leave their homes because of war. Sometimes, it’s because of a natural disaster.

Churches, relief groups, and government agencies in the surrounding area hosted these people. They gave these refugees places to stay as well as food, water, and medicine.

Jesus was a refugee. Sometime after Jesus’ birth, King Herod heard from the Wise Men that Jesus would be a future King. King Herod didn’t like the sound of that, so he tried to kill Jesus. Miraculously, an angel came to Joseph in a dream and told Joseph to flee with Mary and Jesus.

And flee they did. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus traveled from Bethlehem to Egypt. Scripture does not reveal much about this period in Jesus’ life. We simply know that He was safe there, away from Herod.

Victims of the flood in New Orleans found one kind of refuge in Louisiana, Texas, and other places all across the country. We might hope that they also found another kind of refuge—one from sin’s flood, death’s waters, and the devil’s destruction.

God is our refuge from evil. In His name, we have been baptized. By His power, we are forgiven. In Him, we are safe in life or death, even in hurricanes.

Journal: Describe a time in your life when you were traveling away from home or when you were a refugee. How can God’s presence in His Word reassure us?

Pray: Lord, thank You for the many blessings in my life. Thank You for being my refuge. Please help me to reach out to others in their need. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen. J. S.
The weather forecasters started talking about snow. As the days went on, the predictions got stronger and people began to prepare. Everyone stocked up on bread and milk. They bought snow shovels and ice melt. Kids were thinking about snow forts and snowmen, while grown-ups were thinking about batteries and flashlights.

Finally, the blizzard arrived. The storm began very early that Sunday morning. By the time the snow finally stopped a few days later, there were more than twenty-six inches on the ground! What a blessing those weather forecasters were! Without them, people would not have been prepared.

Many years before Jesus was born, prophets declared that the Messiah was coming. Micah forecast that He would be born in Bethlehem. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be born of a virgin and be called Immanuel. Samuel announced that the Savior would come from the house of David. Hosea wrote that the Christ Child would spend time in Egypt.

With all of those forecasts, everyone should have been prepared to recognize Jesus as the Savior, but that wasn’t true. As Isaiah also prophesied, many people rejected Him. How sad! But for Christians, the words of the prophets and the words of Jesus Himself are a true blessing, for in those words, we have eternal life! Thanks be to God!

Journal: Isaiah wrote more about the coming Messiah than any other prophet. Write one of his prophecies in your journal.

Pray: Lord, thank You for Your words of eternal life. Amen. N. D.
Peter’s mother had a flat tire on the way to pick him up from basketball practice. When she finally pulled into the parking lot, Peter asked, “Where have you been? I’ve been waiting here forever.”

Jasmine and Rachel have been in the same class at school for six years. They both play basketball, play the flute, and like to read. Under her picture in Rachel’s yearbook, Jasmine wrote, “Best Friends Forever!”

For his birthday, Ryan received a new watch. A note on the packaging read, “Powered by Super Life—guaranteed to run forever without replacing the battery.”

Avery’s dad got married again. His dad and new stepmom promised to love each other until death parted them. Is that love forever?

Exactly how long is forever? Ten years? A hundred years? Forever is without end. That’s a long time. No one can make a promise that will last forever. Right?

God can! In Psalm 136, what does the psalmist say will last forever? Right, God’s love. We know that God loves us because He sent His only Son to die for us. In addition to loving us right now, God promises that He will always love us.

He will love us longer than Jasmine and Rachel will be friends. He will love us longer than Avery’s dad will love his bride. He will love us longer than the life of Ryan’s watch battery. The love He poured out for us on the cross will continue even after we leave this life. His love endures forever!

**Journal:** How has God shown His love to you through His Son? How does God show His love to you through other people?

**Pray:** Lord God, thank You for creating me and loving me. Give me faith to trust in You all the days of my life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen. S. S.