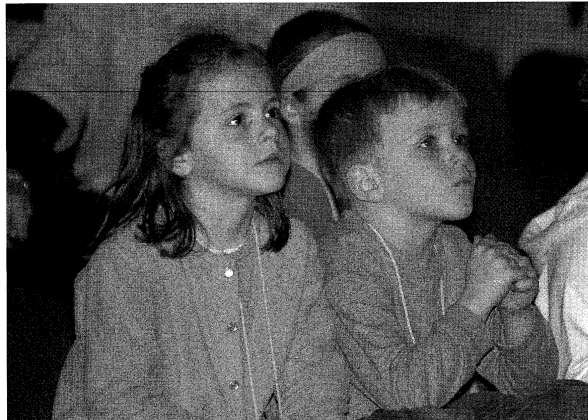


Kids Praying for their School

When children start to pray for their school, most will need to learn a new skill. It's the skill of seeing their school as an entity, a community of which they are just one part. To



do this children need to put to one side their own needs, achievements and failings and think of the needs, achievements and failings of the school

as a whole. Children are naturally, egocentric, so thinking like this doesn't come naturally for children, particularly little ones, but it's worth persevering. As you model this way of thinking and praying, some children will catch the idea and you'll have taught them something that God will be pleased to use throughout their lifetime. On the other hand, don't worry that some children can't get beyond praying about personal things – that's also true of some adults!

Here's a specific plan to start your kids' group praying for their school.

1. Discuss

What is prayer for?

Accept the children's answers. Open the group to the idea that God has given us prayer as a powerful tool for doing God's work here on earth and making our world the way God wants it to be.

2. Explore

What sort of place would God want our school to be?

Students may think of concrete things first, such as more computers or better costumes for the play.

Challenge them instead to really focus on what we know God wants, through questions like these:

How does God want us to treat each other?

What should be our attitude to everyone else in the school?

What should be our attitude to schoolwork?

How should any unpopular children and teachers be treated?

Explore together some Bible verses which give instructions on how God wants us to live and relate to each other.

Matthew 7:12

Romans 12:17-18

Philippians 2:3, 4, 14

Philippians 4:5a, 8

Colossians 3:12-14, 23

1 Thessalonians 5:14

3. LIST and IMAGINE God's ideal school

List points from the Bible verses as they relate to the school.

4. Write sentence prayers

If your children are not used to praying, help them to form sentence prayers. Write them on paper for individuals to pray.

For example ask

How would we ask God to help everything in the school be fair and right?

Help the students to make up a sentence for example, 'Please help everyone in our school to act fairly and do the right thing.'

OR

How could we pray that God will make the school peaceful? 'Please help everyone to respond the best way if someone is mean.'

You may need to explain first that God is not a human but he is a person and we can talk to him the way we talk to other people.

5. Pray

Let the children read the written prayers to get them started. You could encourage them to add a sentence prayer of their own if they wish. Keep it short and fast moving so they are keen to do it again.

Learning to pray is a journey. We can share with the children the things we have already learned along the way and be open to what the children can teach us. As you challenge your group to see the school through God's eyes they will, with encouragement, learn to notice new things to pray about.

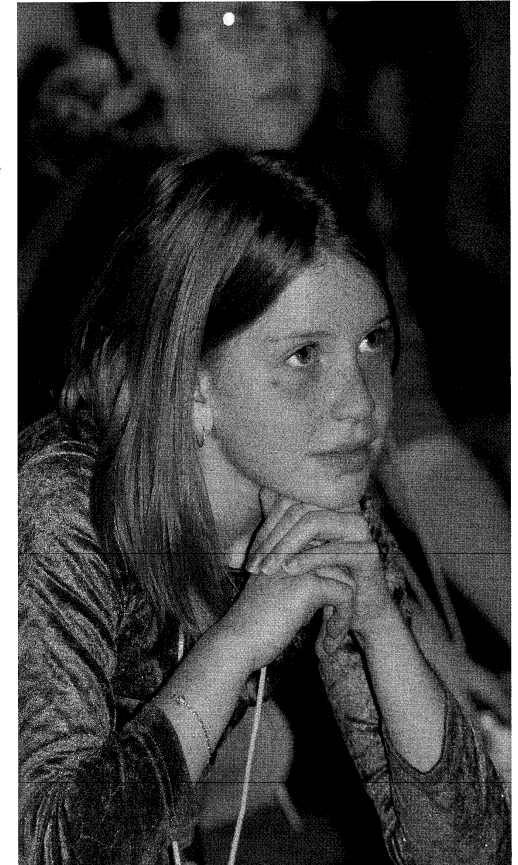
Many people find a good structure to use in praying with children is

THANK YOU

SORRY

PLEASE

Encourage the group regularly to think of things



that the school as a whole can be thankful for, such as new equipment, acts of service by a class, a safe and happy sports carnival. As well as thanking God on behalf of the school the children can say sorry when they know the school isn't doing as well as it should. When children are not included or teachers rightly disappointed, it's good to pray for forgiveness. 'Please' refers to asking God for things. Encourage the overriding 'thing' to be God's ideal for the school.

Encourage your group with the thought that God wants to change the school to make it more like heaven in the way that everyone treats each other. You and they together can have a key role in that transformation by your prayers, your attitude and your actions.