

Praying With Expectant Hearts — Parent + Elementary Discussion Guide (James 5:13–18)

BIG IDEA:

We can talk to God about anything—how we are thankful, sorry for, need help, and what we know about Him.

Time: 10–15 minutes

Supplies (optional): crayons + paper, a small bottle of olive oil (only as a symbol)

Family Ground Rules

- We encourage each other to share but don't force anyone.
- We don't tease—this is kind and safe.
- We pray honest prayers (Tell God the truth).

Warm-Up (2 minutes)

Ask your child:

- “When you feel upset, what do you usually do first?”
- “When you feel happy, what do you like to do?”
- “What do you think prayer is?”

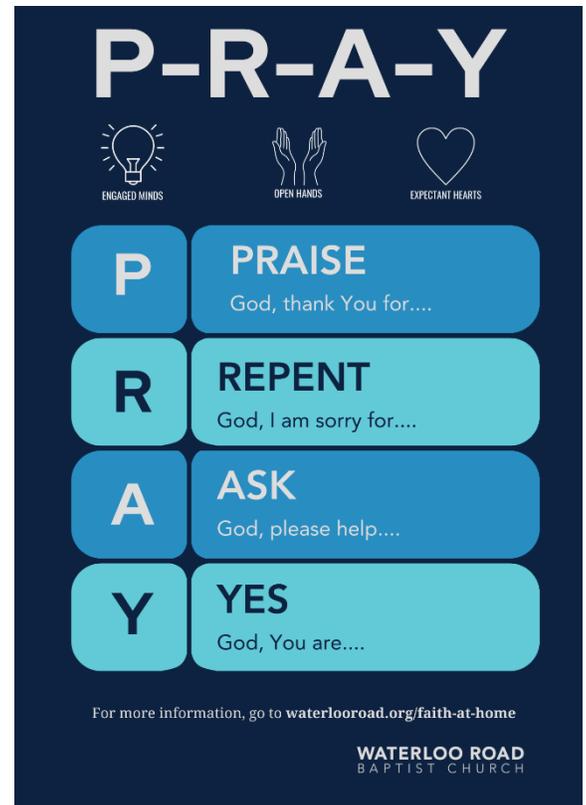
Parents can share too.

Read the Word (3–5 minutes)

Read James 5:13–16 in a kid-friendly way. Have your kids get their Bibles out and find the passage too. Encourage them to follow along as you read or even ask them to read a verse.

Some points to talk about with your kids:

- When people were in trouble (hurting, sick, needing help), they **prayed**. We can pray too. (vs. 13)



- When they were happy, **they sang praises**. This is another way of talking to God and thanking Him. (vs. 13)
- When they were sick, they asked people to pray with them. We can ask God to help us and ask others to pray for us too.
- They prayed for one another. We are going to pray with and for each other today.

Ask: “What did you hear the Bible say we should do?”

Main Points

1) When I’m sad or worried, I can pray (v. 13)

Kid question: “What is something that makes you sad, scared, or worried?”

Parent tip: If they share something big, take a moment to talk through with them what they are feeling and let them know that they can pray to God to help them through this situation. Stop and pray over them right then.

2) When I’m happy, I can praise God (v. 13)

Kid question: “What is something good that happened this week?”

3) When I need help, I don’t have to be alone (vv. 14–16)

Explain for kids:

Sometimes we feel **really tired, really sad, or really sick**. God gives us helpers—parents, pastors, teachers, and church leaders—who can pray with us.

Kid question: “Who are safe grown-ups who can help you and pray for you?”

Write names:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Parent note (optional): James mentions oil—sometimes oil was used for care and comfort, and it can also remind us God is with us. If you would like, you could use oil to pray over your kids during the activity time.

Activity (3–5 minutes): “P-R-A-Y”

Practice praying to God in all things by using the P-R-A-Y acronym. Remind everyone that we are praying with expectant hearts, knowing that God is listening and will answer our prayers. Remind your kids that God is smart enough to help us in the way that is most helpful to us. Sometimes His answer is “Yes”, sometimes His answer is “Wait”, and sometimes His answer is “That’s not what is best, so no.” Sometimes His “Yes” looks different than what we thought it would look like.

PRAISE

Praising God is telling Him what we are thankful for. No matter how we feel, we can thank God for what He is doing.

Share the following examples:

God, thank you for...

- Listening when we pray.
- Giving me a great mom and dad.
- Taking care of me.
- Forgiving me when I sin.
- Helping me to be kind to others.

Ask your child what they are thankful for and encourage them to pray a short one sentence “Thank You God for” prayer themselves.

REPENT

Repenting is telling God that you are sorry for doing something wrong, asking Him to forgive you, and working to change your behavior. God always forgives us when we ask Him to.

Remind your kids what sin is: anything we think, say, do, or don’t do that displeases God.

Share the following examples:

God, I am sorry for...

- Yelling at my sister/brother.
- Not listening to my mom/dad.
- Getting angry when I’m told, “No”.
- Being mean to the new kid at school.
- Cutting someone in line.

Help them identify something they can repent for (tell God I'm sorry for). Encourage them to pray a short one sentence "God, I am sorry for" prayer themselves.

ASK

God is big enough to help with whatever we are going through. God is smart enough to help us in the way that is most helpful to us. We can always ask God for help, whether it is a small situation or a really big situation.

Share the following examples:

God, please help...

- Me to be kind to others.
- My mom to get better because she's sick.
- My friend because her dog is lost.
- Me to learn more about You.
- Me to not be afraid.

Help them identify things that they can ask God to help them with. This can be as simple as helping them with learning something new or as complex as making friends. Encourage them to pray a short one sentence "God, please help" prayer themselves.

Parent tip: If they share something big, take a moment to talk through with them what they are feeling and let them know that they can pray to God to help them through this situation. Stop and pray over them right then.

4) We can say "Yes" to God and about God.

God is more awesome than we can ever understand. Part of praying to God is telling Him we know just how awesome He is. Another part of saying "Yes, God" is recognizing that He is the Creator of and over everything. If we are believers, then God is our Boss, so saying "Yes, God" also includes yielding to Him.

Share the following examples:

Yes God, You are...

- In charge of my life and I yield to You.
- Loving and Kind.
- Powerful.
- The Creator of Everything
- All-Knowing – You know my thoughts and actions.

Closing Prayer (1 minute)

Parent prays a short blessing:

“God, help us pray when we’re hurting, praise You when we’re happy, and ask for help when we need it. Make our home a place where we talk to You. Thank you for giving us a way to talk to You and help us to come to you with expectant hearts when we pray. Amen.”