



The Evangelical Covenant Church

Justice Journey for Kids

SPIRITUAL
PRAYER PRACTICES



Justice Journey for Kids *Spiritual Prayer Practices*

As children explore their own justice journey, it is important for them to seek God's direction and the assurance of God's loving presence. We want children to know that their justice journey is ultimately a journey with Jesus.

This resource includes eight prayer practices to help children reinforce a personal and deepening relationship with God, celebrate the diversity of God's creation, and be empowered by the Spirit and the loving presence of Christ to overcome injustice in a broken world.

HOW TO USE THESE PRACTICES

These eight prayer practices complement the eight modules of Justice Journey for Kids. Each practice is designed for the three sessions of each module. These practices are an excellent way to begin or end individual sessions.

Consider inviting parents and guardians to attend the final few minutes of each class so they can participate in the prayer practice together with their children. You may also choose to encourage them to engage in each week's prayer practice at home.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Each practice includes a tactile and kinesthetic element to help children engage fully in the practice and in conversation with God.

Module 1: Paper, crayons, or markers

Module 2: Mirrors

Module 3: Small rocks

Module 4: Two 10-inch pieces of different colored yarn for each child

Module 5: Large craft sticks, crayons/pens, and playdough

Module 6: Strips of construction paper, markers, and tape to make a chain

Module 7: Paper, scissors, pens/markers

Module 8: Large craft sticks and pen/markers

Spiritual Practice: Awareness of Diversity

CREATION, CHURCH, KINGDOM

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God. Today we will practice a prayer of awareness with God. Awareness means we are focused on what is happening around us.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Give each child paper and crayons or markers.

Session 1: Draw a picture of something God made.

Session 2: Draw a picture of people in the church.

Session 3: Draw a picture of many kinds of people around the world.

TIME WITH GOD

Let us close our eyes and take some deep breaths. Focus on God's loving presence. You may sense God speaking to you. When God speaks, he often speaks quietly in our hearts.

Session 1: God, help me to understand what is good. I wonder why you made all the animals and plants different and called them good?

Session 2: I wonder how I could show love and kindness to people in different kinds of churches?

Session 3: I wonder why you made us all different, and I wonder how we can all love and care for each other?

SHARE

I wonder why all the drawings are different? I wonder why God didn't make everything and everyone the same? When things are not the same, we call it "diverse." God purposefully made creation diverse and called it good. All your pictures are different or "diverse," and all of them are good. God loves diversity.

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for loving us and all people and for making such a wonderfully diverse creation. *Amen.*



Spiritual Practice: Prayer of Examen

INJUSTICE, GOD'S SHALOM, LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God.

Today we will practice a prayer of examen with God. "Examen" is a word that means looking carefully at ourselves and sharing our thoughts with God.

Before we pray for our neighbor, let's talk about who our neighbor is. Discuss.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Give each child a small mirror, or pass some mirrors around for each child to examine their faces. As they look in the mirror tell them they are loved by God even when they mess up. God gives us opportunities to make things right.

TIME WITH GOD

Let's close our eyes and take some deep breaths.

Focus on God's loving presence.

Session 1: What have I done that is not fair to others? How can I make it right?

Session 2: What can I do to bring peace and love to those who are hurting?

Session 3: When have I loved my neighbor? When have I hurt or ignored my neighbor? How can I make it right?

SHARE

How did you feel about your prayer time with God? What did you learn?

Is there anything you want to do or change? How can God help you to do that?

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for making us all different, for loving us, for forgiving us, and for helping us to love and care for others. *Amen.*



Spiritual Practice: Contemplation

MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE, APPRECIATING DIVERSITY,
TREATING AND EVALUATING EVERYONE EQUALLY

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God. Today we will practice a prayer of contemplation with God. Contemplation means to think deeply. We can practice contemplation as we look carefully at ourselves and share our thoughts with God.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Give some small rocks to each child.
Ask them to look at the rocks and feel them as they reflect on their prayer.

TIME WITH GOD

Let's close our eyes and take some deep breaths. Focus on God's loving presence.

Session 1: I wonder why you made us all different, God?

Session 2: I wonder how can I celebrate that God made us different?

Session 3: I wonder how can I treat others equally who are different from me?

SHARE

How did you feel about your prayer time with God? What did you learn?

Is there anything you want to do or change?
How can God help you to do that?

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for making us all different, for loving us, for forgiving us, and for helping us to love those who are different from us.
Amen.



Spiritual Practice: Confession

BROKENNESS, RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS, JUDGING OTHERS

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God. Today we will practice a prayer of confession with God. Confession means to admit when we have done something wrong.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Cut two 10-inch pieces of different colored yarn for each child. Ask them to weave the pieces together. Explain that when we have a good and right relationship with others, it is like this intertwined yarn. But when our relationship with others is broken, the yarn is not completely woven together.

TIME WITH GOD

Let us close our eyes and take some deep breaths. Focus on God's loving presence.

Session 1

I confess when I have ignored or been unkind to others who are different from me. *(What does my yarn look like?)*

Session 2

I wonder what I can do to restore right relationships? *(What does my yarn look like?)*

Session 3

I wonder how you could help me, God, to be kind to those who are different from me? *(What does my yarn look like?)*

SHARE

How did you feel about your prayer time with God? What did you learn?

Is there anything you want to do or change?
How can God help you to do that?

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for making us all different, for loving us, for forgiving us, and for helping us to love those who are different from us. *Amen.*



Spiritual Practice: Reconciliation

RECONCILIATION, RECONCILIATION, RECONCILIATION

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God. Today we will practice a prayer of reconciliation. Reconciliation means fixing what sin has broken.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

For each session, build a bridge with two pieces of Play-Doh, joined by a craft stick.

Explain: One piece of playdough represents you. The other piece represents someone with whom you have a broken relationship. The craft stick acts as a bridge, to fix a relationship that has broken because of sin.

TIME WITH GOD

Let us close our eyes and take some deep breaths. Focus on God's loving presence.

Session 1

God, forgive me for when I have been unkind and broken a relationship with someone who is different from me. Help me to see when I have not treated others fairly. What can I do to make it right? *Write it on the stick.*

Session 2

Jesus, remind me when I have not been a good listener and ignored someone who is different from me. Teach me how to listen to those who have not been treated fairly. How can I be a good friend? *Write it on the stick.*

Session 3

Holy Spirit, how should I respond to someone who is hurting and not being treated fairly? How can I help to make it right? *Write it on the stick.*

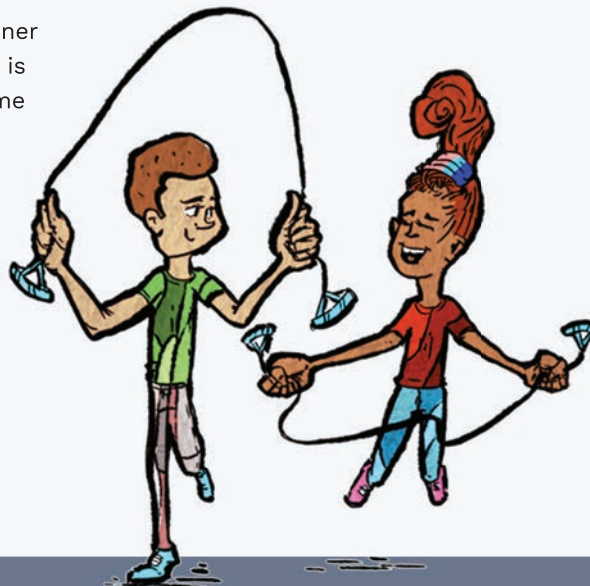
SHARE

How did you feel about your prayer time with God? What did you learn?

Is there anything you want to do or change? How can God help you to do that?

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for making us all different, for loving us, for forgiving us, and for helping us to love those who are different from us. *Amen.*



Spiritual Practice: Prayer of Communion

EVERY PERSON VITAL, EVERY PART VITAL, LOVING NEIGHBOR

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God. Today we will practice a prayer of communion with God. Communion means being together and caring for one another.

Before we pray for others, let's talk about who "others" are. They include not just people we know but also people we don't know. They are not just people who look and act like us, but they are also people who look and act differently from us.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Give each child strips of construction paper and crayons or pens. During the prayer time, as children are praying, encourage them to write a name or draw a symbol, such as a heart or cross, on each link for each person they pray for. These could be people they know or people they don't know

TIME WITH GOD

Let us close our eyes and take some deep breaths. Remember that God is here with us and loves us.

Session 1

Who do you think God would like you to pray for? You can pray for anyone—people you know and people you don't know.

(Write a name or symbol on a paper link for each person.)

Session 2

Every person, no matter what they look like, is important to God. Who do you think God would like you to pray for today?

(Write a name or symbol on a paper link for each person.)

Session 3

What neighbors do you think God would like you to pray for, both those you know and those you don't know? *(Write a name or symbol on a paper link for each person.)*

SHARE

As you debrief, have the children make chains from the strips of paper, which they will add to each week.

How did you feel about your prayer time with God? What did you learn?

Is there anything you want to do or change? How can God help you to do that?

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for making us all different, for loving us, for forgiving us, and for helping us to love and care for others. *Amen.*



Spiritual Practice: Conversational Prayer

JESUS THE WAY, JESUS THE VINE, NEW COMMANDMENT

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God. Today we will practice a conversational prayer with God. Conversational prayer is a means of talking with God.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Children will cut out paper hearts to hold as they pray and are invited to write what they have heard from God on the hearts.

TIME WITH GOD

Let's close our eyes and take some deep breaths. Remember that God is here with us and loves us.

Session 1: How is God showing love to you today? What do you want to say to God?
(Hold the heart as you pray, or write down on the heart what you hear God saying to you.)

Session 2: Jesus wants all of us to be lovingly connected to him and to others. What do you want to say to God? Now, listen. What do you sense God wanting to say to you?
(Hold the heart as you pray, or write down on the heart what you hear God saying to you.)

Session 3: Talk to Jesus about what it means to love others. Ask Jesus how you can love and pray for others. *(Hold the heart as you pray, or write down on the heart what you hear God saying to you.)*

SHARE

How did you feel about your prayer time with God? What did you learn?

Is there anything you want to do or change?
How can God help you to do that?

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for making us all different, for loving us, for forgiving us, and for helping us to love and care for others. Amen.



Spiritual Practice: Prayers of Compassion

EYES TO SEE, EARS TO HEAR, HEARTS THAT RESPOND

God has given us the special gift of prayer as a way to talk with God. Today we will practice a prayer of compassion with God. Prayers of compassion are focusing on God who guides us to respond to the suffering of others.

TACTILE KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Give children large craft sticks to hold as they pray. Invite them to write what they hear from God, on the sticks. This may be just a word or two.

TIME WITH GOD

Let's close our eyes and take some deep breaths. Let's remember that God is with us and loves us.

Session 1: Ask God to help you see how you can help when someone else is hurting. What could you do? *(Write it on the craft stick.)*

Session 2: Ask God to help you hear when others say mean things to someone. What does God want you to do? *(Write it on the craft stick.)*

Session 3: Ask God to help you respond when someone is being made fun of or ignored. Ask Jesus how you can love and pray for them. *(Write it on the craft stick.)*

SHARE

How did you feel about your prayer time with God?

What did you learn?

Is there anything you want to do or change?

How can God help you to do that?

CLOSE

Thank you, God, for making us all different, for loving us, for forgiving us, and for helping us to love and care for others. Amen.

