

PARENT CONVERSATIONS

Before our children are even born, we begin praying for them. This month, see how three Christian parents approach praying for their children. Then, share how you pray for your children at forwardinchrist.net/submit.

—Nicole Balza

WHAT DO YOUR PRAYERS FOR YOUR CHILDREN INCLUDE?

“LET THEM BE okay!” “Please help them sleep!”
“Let her make these free throws!”

Let’s be honest. Some parental prayers come from panic, stress, and fear. When I’m more deliberate, I’ve noticed that prayers for my children fit into two broad categories: what they do and who they are.

What they do. These prayers, which obviously change throughout the years, focus on whatever issues the kids are facing. My current prayers for my young adults tend to be about school, friendships, their future paths, careers, safe travel. (Safe travel comes up a lot!) Sometimes I also pray for just the right amount of struggle, because I realize that a completely easy life doesn’t help them become responsible adults.

Who they are. While “what” prayers are good, I want to spend more time on prayers about their faith and character. That’s why I made a list of 31 qualities I want God to develop in them, so their lives bring him glory. Each day of the month, I focus on one. Some are about love

for God, his Word, and others. I want my children to be humble, joyful, faith full, generous, grateful, courageous, content. I pray the Holy Spirit would help them seek justice, control their tongues, persevere, stand up against temptation, respect authority, accept correction, choose friends wisely, and pray always.

One last thing . . . even as we are busy praying for our children, let’s not forget to pray *with* them. As we hold their hands in the car on the way to school or in their room before they go to sleep, we are teaching them to carry all things—their fears, joys, hurts, happiness—to the heavenly Father who loves them even more than we ever will.



Linda Buxa and her husband, Greg, are members at Abiding Shepherd, Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. Their nest will soon be empty after raising three children.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS pray for their children daily, if not hourly! Over the years, my husband and I realized that prayers for our children were as unique as our children. Parenting children from unique backgrounds and with diverse challenges continues to bring us to the feet of Jesus with constant pleas:

When our children are placed in our arms . . . prayers for wisdom.

When our children cry . . . prayers for comfort.

When our children enter our home as teenagers . . . prayers that they feel our unconditional love.

When our children ask about their birth parents . . . prayers for understanding.

When our children play together . . . prayers that they continue to support each other in adulthood.

HAVE PARENTING QUESTIONS?

Visit forwardinchrist.net/parents to access years of perspectives from Christian parents on topics ranging from discipline to gender confusion to sibling rivalry. Just type a keyword or two into the search bar. In addition to articles, forwardinchrist.net/parents also provides videos and podcasts featuring interviews with Christian parents and Christian counselors.

When we hear them pray . . . prayers of thanksgiving.

When our children reach a developmental milestone . . . prayers for continued growth.

When doctors share a new diagnosis . . . prayers that God uses it to keep them close.

When our discipline efforts trigger past traumas . . . prayers for forgiveness.

When rejection is felt . . . prayers that they feel Christ's love.

When our children meet others . . . prayers for empathy and kindness.

When our children explore an interest . . . prayers that God direct their path of service.

When sickness overwhelms them . . . prayers that Jesus take them home.

When our children question their faith . . . prayers for Jesus' arms to wrap around them in assurance of his never-faltering love for them.

When our children choose a profession . . . prayers that we support them.

When our children move out . . . prayers for safety and guidance.

When our children experience defeat . . . prayers for endurance.

When our children teach us . . . prayers for humility.

When our children find their spouse . . . prayers that their marriage will be centered in Christ.

When our children baptize their children . . . prayers that they remain in their baptismal grace.

When our children watch us age . . . prayers for compassion.

When we close our eyes in death . . . prayers for comfort of our reunion in heaven.

May we always have the confidence of the psalmist: "The LORD has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer" (Psalm 6:9).



Brenda Wagenknecht and her husband, Steven, have five children and six grandchildren. They spend their time between Phoenix, Arizona, where their children reside for schooling and medical options, and the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, where Steve pastors a congregation.

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OVER THE YEARS, I think my prayers for my children have gotten simpler. The prayer Jesus gave us is just so rich that it's been a perfect fit as I prayed while rocking my children in the middle of the night or as we wait in the drop-off line in front of the middle school. At Christ's invitation, we ask our Father:

Hallowed be your name: Keep my children's relationship with you the most precious thing in their lives, dear Father.

Your kingdom come: Every day strengthen and uphold my children's faith and guide them as they live it.

Your will be done: Stop those who would hurt my children. Strike their own sinful natures too.

Give us today our daily bread: Watch over my children's well-being. By the way you provide for them, show them every day that they can trust you.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us: Keep my children in grace—acknowledging their sins and your forgiveness for them, living with that same forgiveness for others.

Lead us not into temptation: Bless them with a loving church family and good friends who don't seek to pull

them from you.

Deliver us from evil: Use everything in life to be a blessing to them, so that one day they might die in the faith of their baptism and live with you forever.

Other prayers come and go along with those petitions. I often find myself praying less that my children will be "happy" and more that they'll have joy and meaning. I pray often for their future relationships—that what they've seen in our home life gives them optimism and desire for marriage and children as great gifts from God and that God guards and prepares their future spouses. I pray that their bodies and minds are kept safe at school. And I pray that no matter what should come, the Lord fills their hearts with hymns of joy and trust; that the little ones who sang hymns with my wife and me in bedtime prayers would have lives of singing hymns loudly in church, confidently at our funerals, and joyfully when we stand together in heaven.



Joel Seifert is a pastor at Beautiful Savior, Marietta, Georgia. He and his wife, Carly, are raising two children.

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