

I'm Sorry Prayers

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Help children explore what it means to pray for God's forgiveness. Everyone makes mistakes and poor choices, and when we do, it's important to say "I'm sorry" to God and to those we hurt.

For

Young Family

Season

Spring

Needed

Bible

Prepare in Advance

Mark your Bible at 1 John 1:8-9; James 5:16a; and Matthew 6:9-13.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin:

God, remind us to come to you when we make mistakes and poor choices. Thank you for always forgiving us when we do not live as you call us to live. In Jesus' name. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud 1 John 1:8-9 from your Bible, or see the text at the end of this activity. Then have another family member read aloud James 5:16a. Take time to discuss the verses, especially the meaning of the word *sin*. Some definitions that may be helpful: missing the mark; saying or doing things that hurt our relationship with God and with one another; things we do and things we leave undone that keep us from following Jesus' teachings; disobeying God's Word, either by choice or mistake.
3. Say: "Everyone sins. Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone makes poor choices. We do not always say or do what Jesus teaches us to say and do. When we fall short, it's important to say we're sorry to the people we hurt and ask them to forgive us."
4. Have family members take turns practicing saying, "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" to each other. For example, have each person say, "I'm sorry, Mom," and then have Mom respond, "I forgive you." Talk about how sometimes people can hurt someone and not realize it. Talk about ways to tactfully point out when someone has hurt us.
5. After you finish practicing, talk about how it feels to say these words to one another. What did you discover?
6. Say: "When we make mistakes or poor choices, it's also important to say we're sorry to God and ask God to forgive us and give us another chance. Jesus promises us that God will give us this gift of forgiveness and new life." Have family members take turns saying a prayer that begins with, "Dear God, I'm sorry ..." and ends with "please help me ..." For example: "Dear God, I'm sorry I teased my sister. Please forgive me and help me to be kinder." "Dear God, I'm sorry I didn't sweep the garage when I said I would. Please forgive me and help me to keep my promises."



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7. Have someone read aloud Matthew 6:9-13. Point out that this is the Lord's Prayer. Ask someone to re-read Matthew 6:12. What does this say about apologizing and asking for forgiveness? It may be helpful to refer to the prayer language your church uses in worship, such as "sins" or "trespasses."
8. The next time you worship together, point out the part of the worship service that involves confession and assurance of forgiveness.
9. Continue to encourage all family members to apologize to one another when appropriate and to be willing to forgive. Remind family members to pray for God's forgiveness when they make mistakes or poor choices.

1 John 1:8-9

⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

James 5:16a

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,

¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

