

Serious Illness, Simple Prayer

By Paige Evers



When your child or the child of a family member or friend is seriously ill, this simple prayer activity connects you and the children in your life with God's presence and love, and reminds you that God is with the one who is sick and with you. Each of you can gain support and strength from God, even when the situation is so frightening that you don't know how to pray.

For

Young Family

Season

Spring

Needed

Bible, stuffed animal



[CMRF Crumlin](#)

Prepare in Advance

- Mark your Bible at Romans 8:26-27; 38-39.
- Choose a time when everyone can sit still for a few minutes.
- Think about how you will describe the medical situation of the child who is ill. (This might be someone in your family; a friend at school, church, or in the neighborhood; or a child who lives far away.)

Activity Plan

1. Gather in a circle and pray aloud to begin:

Dear God, thank you for loving each one of us and holding us in your heart. Help us to remember that whether we are sick or whether we are healthy, you will never leave us. Amen.

2. Name the child whose medical situation is prompting the activity. Share as much medical detail as is needed to explain the seriousness of the situation, keeping it age-appropriate for those participating. Tell about the surgery or treatments for the child's care. Explain that you are coming together as a family to pray for this child and to ask God to help him or her.
3. Place the stuffed animal in the center of your group. Invite family members to hold the animal as they ask questions about the sick child or express their worries about the situation.
4. Read aloud Romans 8:26-27 from your Bible, or use the text at the end of this activity. Explain that the Holy Spirit is God's presence with us to help us and guide us. Comment that sometimes when a family member or friend is sick, it's hard to know how to pray. Sometimes when we are very worried, we don't know what to say to God. We have a lot of questions. We wonder what will happen. God wants us to know we can pray for healing and ask God to be with us even when we don't know what to say.
5. Imagine the "groanings (sighs) too deep for words" in verse 26. Invite family members to demonstrate what these groans or sighs might sound like. Explain the prayer pattern for this activity. You will pass the stuffed animal around the circle. When each person is holding the animal, he or she may say a brief prayer for the child who is ill, or simply say the child's name. After the animal has gone around the circle, have everyone take several deep breaths together as an invitation to the Spirit to add a prayer for the child.
6. After the prayer, read aloud Romans 8:38-39 from your Bible or from the text at the end of this activity. Wonder together about the good news in these words. Discuss how these words can encourage you in times of illness or when you are worried about someone else. Pray aloud:



Gracious God, thank you for hearing all of our prayers for [sick child's name], even when we don't know what to say. Be with [him/her] and help [him/her] to get well. Guide the doctors and nurses who are taking care of [him/her]. Show us how we can help and support [name] and [his/her] family. Most of all, give each one of them your peace and the comfort of your presence. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Romans 8:26-27; 38-39

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

