

PrayKids!®

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word on...

Confession

The word **confession** often means “to admit to or agree with.”

Romans 10:9 says we “**confess** . . . [that] ‘Jesus is Lord.’” That means we agree that Jesus is Lord.

First John 1:9 says God forgives us if we **confess** (agree with God about) our sins. Do we have to cry or say special words to **confess**? No—there might be tears, but what God really wants is for us to understand how much He hates sin. Our sin hurts God’s heart and separates us from Him.

So if you do something wrong, stop right then and tell God: “I agree with You—that was sin. Please forgive me.” He will forgive us if we **confess**. He promised! ★

Have you ever wondered why sometimes your prayers aren’t answered? Have you told God to forget it—because other kids sometimes get what they ask for, but you don’t?

The Bible teaches that how you live will affect whether or not God answers when you ask Him for things. First Peter 3:12 says, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

In fact, what you do and say

will determine whether or not you will get through to God with your prayer requests. The Bible says, “Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He [or she] who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:3-4).

Hold your hands in front of you. Take a good long look at them. Now answer “yes” or “no” to these questions about the hands you are looking at:

- Did your hands ever hurt somebody when you were angry?
- Did your hands ever destroy somebody else’s stuff on purpose?

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by Evelyn Christenson



those HANDS

JESUS Is the Way

Confessing sins that have broken the communication with God is only for those who already have come to God by accepting Jesus as Savior. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). God always hears the prayers of those who are seeking Him, but in order to be able to come straight to God and ask Him for things, we must first accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. First John 3:22-23 says that first comes believing in Jesus. How? Jesus said "repent [turn away from your sins] and believe" (Mark 1:15). If you aren't sure Jesus is your Savior, just ask God to forgive all your sins—and Jesus to come into your heart right now.

If you need help or have questions, log on to www.praykids.com for the simple steps from the Bible. ★



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- Did your hands ever push a smaller kid around?
- Did your hands ever touch another's body where they shouldn't have?
- Did your hands write an answer you stole from a student near you?
- Did your hands ever take something, no matter how small, that didn't belong to you?
- Did your hands ever log on to computer sites you know were wrong to look at?

God calls all your "yes" answers *sin* (James 4:17).

Is God always eager to hear your praying and praising when you fold or wave those unclean hands in His face? Actually, He might have been plugging His ears! Why? Because God is holy, and you were trying to enter His heaven—where the angels continuously say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty" (Revelation 4:8)—with dirty hands. Your sins have wrecked your getting through to God.

So is it hopeless? No! God loved you so much that He sent His Son Jesus to

The cool part of confession is that God then forgives.

pay the price for your sins on the cross. All that is left for you to do is to admit the things in your life that you know from the Bible are sin. Then really be sorry—and tell God so. The Bible calls this **confessing** (1 John 1:8-9).

The cool part of **confessing** is that God then *forgives*. **Confessing** makes your hands clean! And once you have been forgiven and cleansed by **confessing**, you can go right into the presence of the holy God of the universe (Hebrews 10:19), who definitely will listen to—and answer—your prayers according to His perfect, all-knowing will. ★

Evelyn Christenson has written many books on prayer, including *What Happens When Children Pray*.

PrayKids!®

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Mission Statement

The mission of PrayKids! is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages 7 to 12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.

Grown-ups!

Sign up now
for our **NEW**
PrayKids! Online
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This is a *free* monthly newsletter, including timely PrayKids! articles you may have missed, exclusive subscriber-only offers, and updates on newly released resources and tools. It's perfect for Sunday school teachers, children's workers, Christian school teachers, homeschool parents, and anyone else who has a heart to encourage kids in growing their prayer lives! Just go to www.praymag.com, look at the lower left under the newsletter sign-up section, check the box next to PrayKids! Online Newsletter, and click the SIGN-UP button!

PUTTING GOD ON HOLD

By Elise Sjogren

Have you ever been put on hold while talking on the phone? It's not fun, especially when you have to wait a long time and you have a lot of other things to do. Sometimes we treat God this way. We say a prayer when we wake up and when we go to bed, but we put Him on hold the rest of the day. I know that when I go through a day putting God on hold, I end up getting more frustrated and mad at people than I usually do. I also know that when I don't put God on hold, I feel like I've spent the whole day with Him.

I let Him help me get over being frustrated right when it happens instead of having to deal with a pile of frustrations that night.

I remember one day when I put God on hold; I got really frustrated and "unteachable" in math. I had to go to my room, and I felt like crying (I'm homeschooled).

In my room I took God off hold. I **confessed** my sin, asked forgiveness, and got over my frustration. I also apologized to my mom. From then on, I kept talking to God and I didn't have any more problems that day.

So keep talking to God throughout the day and don't put Him on hold. But if you do put Him on hold, remember to **confess** your sins and start talking! ★



-Elise Sjogren, age 11

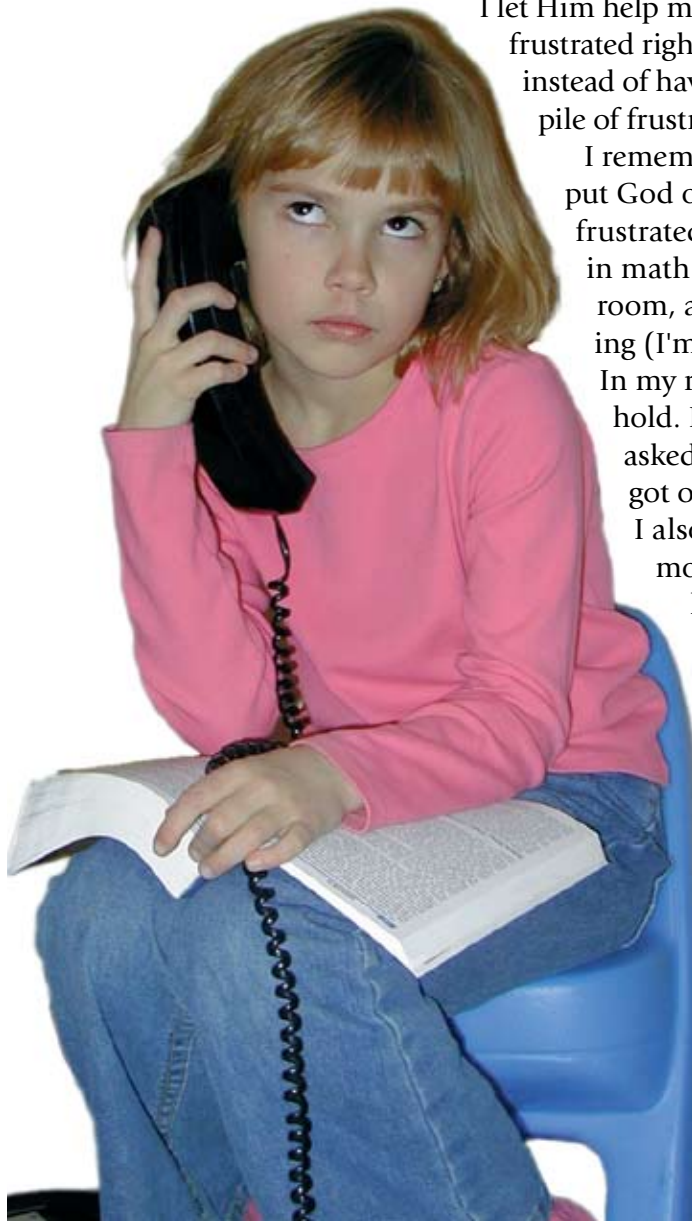
I'm Sorry, GOD

One great way to **confess** our sins before the Lord and ask for His forgiveness is by praying Scripture. It is important to speak to God straight from your heart—but He also likes to hear *His* words coming out of our mouths! We can use His very words from the best prayer manual ever written—the Bible! You can use a concordance to look up verses about **confession** and then pray those verses to God.

Whenever you do something that makes God sad, maybe you can use Bible verses like these to **confess** (admit) what you did and to say that you are sorry:

Dear Father, I sinned against You by _____ (tell God what you did). I am very sorry for what I did, because "against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Psalm 51:4). Please "wash me, and I will be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7). Only You can "create in me a pure heart, O God" (Psalm 51:10). Thank You that "if we **confess** our sins, [You are] faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. ★

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The Time the Sun and a King Moved Backward



A fictional story based on 2 Kings 20

Have you ever felt that when you're trying hardest to follow God, the most terrible things happen? That's how Hezekiah must have felt. He was one of the few Hebrew kings who obeyed God. He smashed Judah's idols, fixed God's temple, and convinced his people to worship Jehovah again. Then he became very sick! An infected sore on his skin left him feverish and in pain.

Turning over in bed, Hezekiah faced the wall. The prophet Isaiah

brought him a scary message from God, and Hezekiah didn't want Isaiah to see him crying.

As Isaiah left the palace bedroom, his words stabbed like a dagger. "Be prepared," he said, "You're going to die soon."

Tears stung Hezekiah's eyes. Maybe the young king thought about everything he still wanted to do. Maybe he thought about his attempts to set things right after his father's (King Ahaz) wicked

reign. Maybe he worried about his people. Their worst enemy, Assyria, threatened to attack any day.

by Joyce K. Ellis

"Lord," he prayed, "I love You with all my heart. Haven't I always tried to obey You? Why do I have to die?"

Then Isaiah returned. "God sent another message!" he announced.

Startled, the king raised up. "What is it?"

"Jehovah says, 'I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. In three days you will be healed, and I will let you live 15 more years. I will also deliver Jerusalem from Assyria so everyone will know I am the only true God!'"

"How can I be sure this is true?" Hezekiah wondered, getting his hopes up.

Isaiah told the king's servants to prepare medicine that would draw out the infection from the king's sore. Then he gave Hezekiah a choice of miracles to prove that God would keep His promise. Isaiah pointed to a building Hezekiah could see through his window. Its steps were a Babylonian-invented step clock, like a sundial. As the sun moved across the sky, the shadows it made moved one more step every half hour.

"Do you want the Lord to make the shadow jump forward 10 steps or backward 10 steps?" Isaiah asked.

"Backward," Hezekiah said. "That's tougher."

Isaiah prayed, and that's just what God did! Step by step, the shadow slid quickly backward: 10 . . . 9 . . . 8 . . . 7 . . . An incredible miracle!

Hezekiah got well in three days but didn't give God the credit. Instead, he became proud of the success God gave him. He showed off his wealth and well-equipped army to ambassadors from Babylon, another enemy of Judah. In that one weak moment, Hezekiah took a giant step backward in his friendship with God.

The Lord became angry, and Hezekiah felt terrible. He truly loved God, so he **confessed** his pride and told God he was sorry. The Lord forgave



him, but years later the nation lost everything and became slaves to Babylon.

Even when we're trying to follow God, pride and other sins can creep in. If we **confess** them and ask Him to forgive, He will. **Confession** isn't a giant eraser, wiping out all the consequences of sins. But it clears up our friendship with God. ★

Author and speaker Joyce K. Ellis created the book, *One-Minute Bible Devotions for Kids* (Broadman & Holman), an engaging tool to help you enjoy interacting with Scripture each day of the year.

What Can I Do?

Pride sometimes makes us forget to give God the credit He deserves. Maybe you got a good grade on a hard test, maybe you won a contest, maybe your team won, maybe you got over

your cold extra fast. Whatever it is, remember how you prayed and asked God to help? Make sure you give God the credit.

Ask God to let you know when you are being prideful. Then, when He shows you, be like Hezekiah and quickly **confess** it! ★



Let's Pray for Hurting Children

Listen to Jasmina. She lives in Bosnia where there was a war. "My family will never be the same. We try to forget, but it's so hard. I still have terrible nightmares." Although the war is over, Jasmina says, "The things that happened are always in my mind." Many children were killed in the war. Children who lived through the war have terrible memories of seeing people killed, watching homes and villages be blown up, and burying dead family members.

Now listen to Michael. He lives in the United States. "My mom and dad left me alone and I had nowhere to go. I lived on the streets until the police picked me up and put me in a home." Imagine being all alone. No place to sleep, no TV, no fridge full of food, none of your clothes or things, and no parents or anyone to help and protect you. Life on the street is cold and dangerous. Just ask a street child in Brazil where the police have tried to get rid of homeless kids by killing them.



Dump-dwelling kids dig through trash in Davao, Philippines. Below: A Filipino girl looks out of the window of her handmade tin house.

All over the world, there are children who live in constant danger and fear. We call these kids "children at risk." In Luke 18:16, Jesus told His friends to be kind to children. There are many ways you can help these needy children.

Check with your local church and community for any programs that need kid volunteers. Many communities have places to drop off food, clothing, and toy donations for people who need it. There are organizations like World Vision and Compassion International where you can send money to help provide food, clothing, and schooling



for a child. Your prayers and kindness can make a world of difference in the lives of children at risk! ★

Emma Garrow, Viva Network (Jasmina's testimony courtesy of World Vision)

Did you know that the first Saturday of June each year is the World Wide Day of Prayer for Children at Risk? For more information, contact:

Viva Network
P. O. Box 633
Oxford, UK, OX2 0XZ
www.viva.org

PHOTOS BY CHUCK BIGGER
COURTESY OF COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL

SIX

LOVER THE GLOBE

Each week pray for children at risk. Pray for . . .

MONDAY- Children who have to find food for themselves in garbage dumps. Ask God to send Christians from the local churches to bring food and God's love to these children.

TUESDAY- Children who cannot go to school because they have to work. Pray that God will provide a way for their family to have enough money so the child can go to school.

WEDNESDAY- Children like Jasmina who live in places where there is or has been a war. Ask God to keep them safe and send peace to the country.

THURSDAY- Children who are abused. Pray that God will send adults who can help them out of the abuse situations and help the children to learn about God's perfect love, which never ends or fails.

FRIDAY- Children like Michael who

live on the streets.

Ask God to send His angels to protect them and let them know they are not alone. Ask Him to find people who will start homes for these children, so they can be safe and learn about Jesus.

SATURDAY- Children in shelters, safe houses, group homes, or foster homes. Pray that they would be well cared for and that local church members would help them. Pray that children who need new families would find parents to love them.

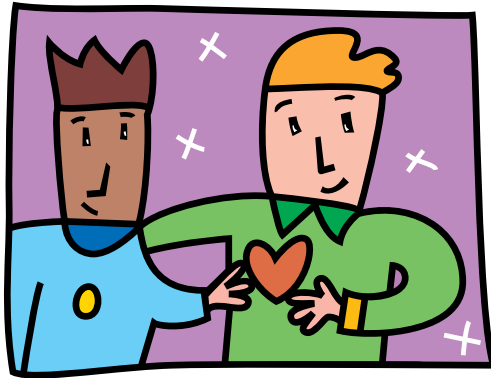
SUNDAY- Children at risk who don't know Jesus as their Savior. Pray that Christians everywhere will learn more about "children at risk" and want to get to know, help, and pray for them.

Making Things Right

Do you sometimes think you're better than others? Ever let a swear word slip out? Maybe your brothers or sisters bug you and you've wished something bad would happen to them. Sometimes we try to just forget about these "little" sins.

But *every* sin separates us from God. So here's how to make things right:

✕ As soon as you realize you've sinned, tell God you're sorry and ask Him to forgive you. Ask Him what you can do to make things right with someone you might have hurt (like saying you're sorry, or



being more kind).

✕ At bedtime, ask the Lord to remind you of your wrongs, and **confess** them.

✕ If you're **confessing** the same sins over and over, it may be that the enemy has a foothold in your life. Ask a parent or other adult to help you **confess** the sins to God, tell Him you're sorry, then tell the enemy to be gone, in Jesus' name.

✕ Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit, to help you to do right. The power to obey comes from His Spirit living inside you. God loves you and wants to help you obey Him! ★

Crossword

Confession

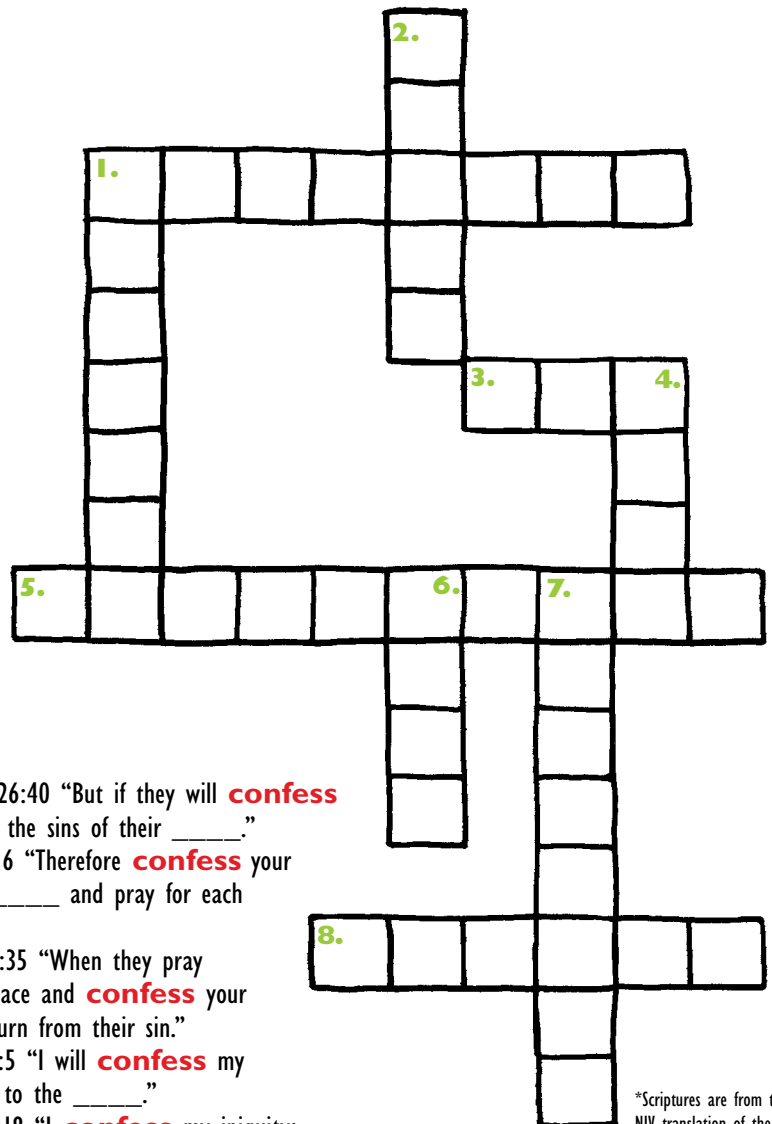
The Bible has a lot to say about **confessing** our sins. Look up the verses below* and find the missing words for the puzzle. While you read the Scriptures, ask God to show you anything you need to **confess** to Him. You can also take each verse and turn it into a Scripture prayer.

ACROSS

1. I John 1:9 "If we **confess** our sins, he is _____ and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
3. Numbers 5:7 "And must **confess** the _____ he has committed."
5. Nehemiah 1:6 "I **confess** the sins we _____, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you."
8. Leviticus 5:5 "When anyone is _____ in any of these ways, he must **confess** in what way he has sinned."

DOWN

1. Leviticus 26:40 "But if they will **confess** their sins and the sins of their _____."
2. James 5:16 "Therefore **confess** your sins to each _____ and pray for each other."
4. I Kings 8:35 "When they pray toward this place and **confess** your _____ and turn from their sin."
6. Psalm 32:5 "I will **confess** my transgressions to the _____."
7. Psalm 38:18 "I **confess** my iniquity; I am _____ by my sin."



*Scriptures are from the NIV translation of the Bible.

Family Confession Activities

By Cheri Fuller

To help your kids experience in a hands-on way how **confession** works and benefits them, try these two activities:



Clean Heart

Take a whiteboard and draw a big heart on it with a red dry erase marker. Then ask your children to name some things they might do that would be "sin," or wrongdoing, that displeases God—like being mean to their little sister, lying, disobeying, etc. Write the sins in black with a water-based or washable marker on the board inside the heart. (Kids are generally a lot more willing to admit these than adults are.)

Then together read aloud 1 John 1:9, which says, "If we **confess** [or admit] our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness [or wrongdoing]." Lead your children into a few moments of silent **confession** by asking them to put their hand over their heart and pick one thing that comes to mind that they could honestly **confess** before God. (You should do this, too. Ask God to show you the sin you need to **confess** according to Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God" or "shine your searchlight on my heart" and then tell God you're sorry for that.)

Demonstrate how God gives us a clean heart by then

spraying the heart with window cleaner. The "sins" in black will be quickly washed away, leaving the heart clean and white again. Then thank God together that you are forgiven!

Unclogging the Pipe

Psalm 66:18 says, "If I had cherished sin in my heart [that means holding on to sin, refusing to repent, and trying to hide it], the Lord would not have listened." God longs to hear from His children, but the lines of communication get clogged up with unconfessed sin—things like resentment, unforgiveness, wrong thoughts and actions. Not only will God not hear us, but **unconfessed** sins block us from hearing Him as well. **Confession** reopens the communication lines so we can hear God as we pray.

To help your kids understand this truth, get a white plastic 4" PVC elbow (or transitional) piece of pipe. You could also use an empty paper towel tube. Put it to your ear to demonstrate that this is like the "hearing" pathway, back and forth, between us and God. Then stuff something dark in the pipe (like brown play dough, dark socks, or even wadded up brown construction paper with "sins" written on it) to plug up the pipe. Try to talk and listen through it. Then remove the dark stuff from the pipe, showing how when the pathway is cleared by **confession**, we can hear God's voice, He will hear our prayers, and we'll enjoy fellowship with Him.

I've found kids really get the concept from this activity and have an increased desire to keep short accounts with God.

—Adapted from *When Children Pray*, by Cheri Fuller

PRAYER FOR YOUR KIDS

You have the wonderful privilege to pray for your child or maybe a group of children. Pick a verse to pray each day for your child. Pray the verse to God using your child's name in place of the underlined words.

Cleanse a Guilty Conscience

Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."

Check for Hidden Sin

Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Repent of Evil

Job 36:10: "He makes them listen to correction and commands them to repent of their evil."

MEMORY VERSE

*If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just and
will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all
unrighteousness.*

—1 John 1:9

PRAYKIDS! TEACHER'S GUIDE! Ready for a leader's guide that makes it even easier and more fun to teach children ages 7 to 12 to pray? This REVISED and EXPANDED version of the 26 leader's guides currently available at www.praykids.com comes handily bound in a single, easy-to-use volume. *PrayKids! Teacher's Guide: A Hands-on Guide for Developing Kids Who Pray*—Available Fall 2005.

Back issues of PrayKids! are available in packs of 10 for \$6.99. Select from 26 different topics and themes to teach groups of kids about prayer. To order, go to www.praykids.com or call (800) 366-7788 or (719) 548-9222 and mention offer #6456.