

PrayKids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word On...

Petition

When people pray for others, it's usually called intercession. Do you know what it's called when you pray for yourself? People who teach about prayer call it "petition." The dictionary says that **petition** is an earnest or humble request or appeal. If you "appeal" to God, it's almost like pleading with Him. It's like realizing He is your only hope. Nothing has to be hidden, stiff or formal, nothing is held back. You take every single detail to God and **petition** His help and guidance. God loves it when you talk to Him that way. In fact, He's listening for it now! ★

Take a **LOAD** OFF

By Cheri Fuller

Have you ever carried a heavy backpack full of books, supplies, gym shoes, and stuff all day at school—and then that night your back was *so* tired? Sometimes kids carry a backpack full of feelings, troubles, and worries too, and it saps their energy and joy.

God wants you to know that it's okay to bring all those feelings and needs to Him. You can pour out your heart—everything you are feeling! You can tell Him your needs—all of them! You don't have to put on a happy face when you pray. You can tell God even when you are really angry, afraid, or sad.

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One's ENOUGH

In many societies, people use **petitions** to “talk to” their leaders. A **petition** is a document that identifies a certain need. It gets signed by lots of people, and when there are enough signatures, it is presented to government leaders as a way of getting their attention.

But when you **petition** God, it's different. You don't have to get lots of signatures. You can present your **petition** to God all by yourself, because you are so very important to Him that you already have His full attention! He is always thinking about you, always loving you, and always tuned right in to you. Because of Jesus, you have clear and direct access to God, and you can tell Him any request or **petition** you have—no signatures required! ★

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In 1 Peter 5:7, God says to “cast all your anxiety” (that means any problem, feeling, or worry) on Him because He cares for you. Isn't that a great invitation? God is so big He can handle *anything*. And He loves you so much that He cares about every single thing in your life. If you have trouble in a relationship or at school, if you need a friend, or if you are afraid, God cares and He wants you to talk to Him about it.

What is in *your* backpack? When you empty out that backpack of problems

and feelings, and **petition** God for His help, two great things happen. His peace will fill your heart and de-stress your mind. And your **petition** will pave the way for God to work out an answer to your situation.

Check out what the Bible says about this: “Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has

done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7, New Living Translation). Now that's good news! ★

Cheri Fuller loves to pray with kids. She teaches the “Prayer Class” with children at her church in Oklahoma City, and she helps coordinate the Children's Prayer Walk in her city on the National Day of Prayer.

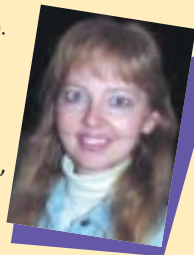
Dear Readers,

My son asked, “Why ask God for what He already knows we need?” That's easy! Since you love God so much, you want to talk to Him about everything!

If you want a new bike you'd talk to your parents about it nonstop because you're excited just thinking about it. It's like that with God, too. He already knows your needs, but He loves to hear you share.

This issue is all about asking, or **petitioning**, God. I hope you'll see how much God loves hearing you tell your hopes and dreams to Him.

Keep
Praying!
Nancy Sutton,
editor of
PrayKids!



PrayKids!

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Mission Statement

The mission of **PrayKids!** is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages 8-12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.





“Help My Dad!”

Several years ago, my family and I were sitting down to dinner one evening while my dad was on his way to Baltimore for a business trip. All of a sudden I felt in my heart that God was telling me to pray for my dad. Out of the blue, I told my mother and two brothers, “We need to pray for Dad *right now!*” It was surprising that my older brothers listened to me!

We stopped our meal and started asking God to protect my dad. The prayer was very simple, but after we prayed, I knew my father would be in God’s hands. Little did my family know exactly what that simple prayer had done.

Later that night, my dad called home and told us a shocking story. He said, “The strangest thing happened at the airport tonight.” He told us that as he was looking for a taxi, a man walked up to him and offered a taxi ride. As



by Elizabeth Winger

the man escorted my dad toward a car, another man who worked

at the airport ran up and said very excitedly, “This guy is trying to hurt you! You

should take the real

taxi the airport offers. Go over and wait in line for the next official taxi.”

After my dad finished telling us this story, we realized that the moment I had asked to pray for him was the exact time he was about to be harmed.

I believe this event has changed the way I pray. I learned that God hears prayers and takes them seriously. I also realized that when our prayers are sincere, and when we have faith that is as “big” as a mustard seed, God can move mountains (Matthew 17:20).

So if you ever feel God speaking to you and urging you to pray, don’t hold back. You never know who you could be helping out. Your prayers can shape the future and make history! ★

—Elizabeth Winger

Don't Be Silly

If you could ask God for anything, what would you ask? A million billion dollars? All the candy you can eat? It might be tempting to ask Him for those things. But God wants good things for us—not silly things (Matthew 7:11).

Say you want to ask God for some close friends (that’s a good thing!). To have a good friend, you need to be a good friend. So here are some things you can **petition**

God for. Look up the Scriptures and fill in the blanks as you pray for yourself to be a good friend:

Lord, help me to _____
(Proverbs 17:17a).

Teach me to _____
others (Romans 12:10b).

Make me a _____
person (Ephesians 5:20a).

Help me be a _____
maker (Romans 12:18b).

You just took God’s Word and prayed it back to Him. Now, find some other verses that are good things to ask for and talk to Jesus about them. ★

(Answers: love, honor,
thankful, peace)

A fictional story based
on 1 Samuel 1 & 2

Prayer



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When I was little, I carried a bundled blanket around as if it were a real baby. I lovingly fed my “baby,” rocked him, and sang to him. I dreamed of having real children of my own someday.

By Joyce K. Ellis

“Hannah,” my mother said, “the way you treat that pretend baby, you’ll make a great mommy.”

Years later, I married Elkanah, and we lived in the hill town of Ramah. We dreamed of having many children, but no babies came.

In our culture, when a couple couldn’t have children, the man sometimes married a second wife. This often caused a lot of hurt in families,

but people did it because they wanted sons so badly.

The day Elkanah brought home his new wife, Peninnah, I ran out of the house, crying. Within months, Peninnah’s tummy started growing, and soon she had a baby. “Too bad *you* can’t give Elkanah a child like this,” Peninnah laughed. “I wonder why God is punishing you,” she said with a sneer.

That stung because I loved the Lord God with all my heart. I always tried to follow Him in everything I did.

Peninnah kept having babies and kept teasing me. One year, when it was time to make a sacrifice to God, our whole family hiked 10 miles to Shiloh. After worship, as we ate around our campfire, Peninnah cuddled her baby. “Looks like you’ll never be a mother,” she jeered.

I crumpled into a heap, sobbing. Elkanah shooed Peninnah away and hugged me. “Why are you upset, Hannah?” he asked. “I love you more than anything. Isn’t that better than having 10 sons?”

I swallowed hard, dried my eyes with my head covering, and forced down my dinner. Then I silently slipped away to the tabernacle and knelt. “LORD Almighty,” I cried, tears streaming again. “Don’t You see my pain? I’ve prayed so long for a son! I want this so much that I’ll give my child back to You. All I have is Yours!”

I didn’t say the words out loud, but I guess my lips were moving. I opened my eyes and saw Eli, the priest, staring at me.

“Go home, woman,” he scolded. “You’re drunk!”

“No, sir, I’m not,” I sobbed. “I’m not drunk, and I’m not crazy! But I’m very sad, and I was pouring out my heart to the LORD. . . . I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow.”

Eli slowly smiled. “Then go in peace,” he said.

Praying Like Crazy

“And may the God of Israel give you what you have asked.”

About nine months later, Elkanah and I had a little boy—Samuel. His name means “we asked God for Him.” We were thrilled, and we praised God for him. But then, as difficult as it was, I had to keep my promise. When Samuel was about three, we took him to live at the Tabernacle, where he became Eli’s helper in serving God. He later grew up to become one of Israel’s greatest prophets and judges.

The LORD God honored me for keeping my promise, and soon I snuggled baby blankets around three more sons and two daughters. I never forgot how God heard my **petition** through my tears. He gave me what I asked for and much, much more! ★

Joyce K. Ellis is the creator of *One-Minute Bible Devotions for Kids*.



Why Do You Ask?

God wants us to share our deepest desires with Him, just as Hannah did. Sometimes, though, we find out that we are asking for the wrong reasons. This happened to two of Jesus’ disciples.

James and John came to Jesus one day saying, “Teacher . . . we want you to do for us whatever we ask” (Mark 10:35). Then they asked Him to give them seats of honor right next to His throne when they got to heaven!

Jesus didn’t scold them for making such a self-centered

request. But He did tell them that they didn’t understand what they were asking. He explained that those special seats would be given to people who suffered greatly for Him. Were they willing to suffer? Or did they just want the places of honor?

God wants us to **petition** Him about *anything* that is important to us. Sometimes we won’t receive it, however, “because the reason [we] ask is wrong” (James 4:3, *New Century Version*). ★





Let's Pray for Military Families

Military families are families who have a father or mother serving in the armed forces. These families are probably a lot like yours, but they face some additional challenges.

When a military father or mother goes to live and work, train, or fight in another country, that is called being "deployed." Their work can be dangerous, and they may be living in uncomfortable conditions.

Can you imagine what it would be like not to see your father or mother for many months? Your parent might miss your birthday, or Christmas, or all of your games that season. He or she wouldn't be able help you with your homework. You might get some letters and emails, but you might not be able to talk on the telephone or see one another for a long time.

Deployed parents, while they usually are proud and glad to serve our country, miss their families and worry about how their families are doing without them.



Some children from military families feel angry that their parent is not home. They might feel sad or scared or lonely. Sometimes these children don't know how to express their feelings, because they know their parent is doing something important and they feel guilty for wanting him or her to come home. Some boys feel that they have to become the dad of the house. Some kids get teased or feel left out because their parent is away.

Sometimes a kid feels that it's his or her fault that the parent went away.

Military families give up a lot to protect our freedom and keep us safe. They need our prayers, especially when their mom or dad is deployed! ★

Sandy Weyeneth and her husband Randy are on the Navigator staff serving Marines families at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base in San Diego, California.



PHOTOS BY CAMP PENDLETON MARINE CORPS BASE

SIX

LOVER THE GLOBE

Things You Can Pray for Military Families

1. Father, we pray that the children of military families would receive Jesus and believe on His name so they can become Your children (John 1:12).

2. Lord, let them know You love them with a love that lasts forever. Assure them that You will be there for the family if their dad or mom gets deployed (Psalm 68:5; Jeremiah 31:3).

3. Rescue the moms and dads in war zones from the enemy. Teach them to do Your will so they won't get tripped up (Psalm 143:9-10, 140:4).

4. Thank You, God, that when military families call out to You in need, You will answer them. Teach them to pray instead of worrying so that they can experience Your peace (Psalm 86:7; Philippians 4:6-7).

5. Teach military moms, dads, and kids to be strong and courageous by trusting in You. Help them not to be afraid. Help them believe Your promises that You will never leave them all alone (Deuteronomy 31:6).

Keep in Touch

You know how good it feels when you get a letter or an email? Well, God likes mail too! Try sharing your **petitions** with God in a letter. God loves to hear from you—and you don't even need a stamp!

Here are some ideas to start with:

"Dear God,
I love You because _____" (tell how you feel about Him).

Now, tell Him your thoughts, dreams, and feelings. This part can be short or long. The important thing is to tell God what's going on inside of you. Pick one or two ideas from this list, or a personal one not listed here.

- I really want a closer relationship with You. Please help me _____.
- I hope people can see You in me. Please give me Jesus' attitudes of _____.
- I've been feeling _____ because of what's happening to me in the area of _____.
- I want you to guide my future. Please lead me in _____.

Love, _____

Note: Be sure to save your letters and reread them to see how God answers. ★



A Chip and a Prayer

Here's a great (and delicious!) way to help you recognize God's answers to your prayers of **petition**.

Every time you **petition** God or He answers one of your prayers, add a chocolate chip to a jar. When the jar is full, make cookies and have a party to celebrate your growing relationship with Him. Use the following recipe for no-bake cookies, or a favorite family recipe.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Prayer Cookies

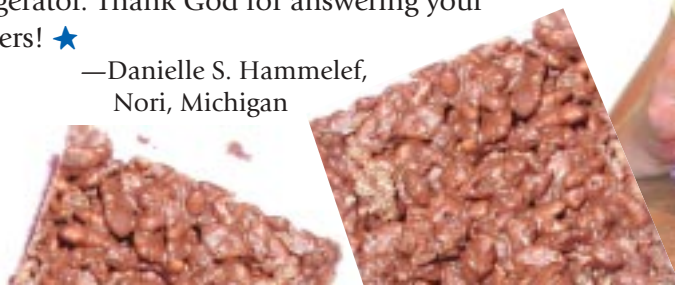
Ingredients:

- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup peanut butter (crunchy or smooth)
- 3 cups crisped rice cereal

Directions:

In a medium pan, melt chocolate chips over low heat (ask an adult to help with this step). Stir until smooth and remove from heat. Add peanut butter and mix thoroughly. Add crisped rice cereal and stir until well coated. Spread in a 9x9x2-inch pan coated with cooking spray. Refrigerate until firm. Cut into bars to serve. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Thank God for answering your prayers! ★

—Danielle S. Hammelef,
Nori, Michigan



Get Real

By Cynthia Bezek

Prayer is the perfect ingredient to create the openness and intimacy that Christian families long for.

Here are suggestions for creating a safe and loving environment for sharing **petitions** and praying them with your family:

- **Pray needs, not answers.** For example, if your daughter shares a desire to earn better grades, resist the temptation to tell God—in front of her how—to accomplish that. Praying answers instead of needs can be interpreted as criticism or lecturing, and that can cause kids to be reluctant about sharing personal needs next time. A prayer that says, “Show Beth what You want her to do to earn better grades” is better than “Help Beth to watch less TV and spend that time studying so she can earn better grades.”

- **Be vulnerable.** Kids are more willing to share their personal needs when they see you doing it. The requests you share should be age-appropriate, but even younger children can understand and pray for your difficult relationship at work, your need for guidance on a decision, or God’s help in overcoming a sinful habit or attitude.

- **Protect confidentiality.** If your children overhear you telling someone at church about their fear of the dark or their anxiety about their appearance, they may become embarrassed and stop sharing their prayer requests with you.

Family Petition Activity

This activity will help your family open up, bond together, and pray for each other from the heart.

Before your **petition** time, instruct everyone (Mom and Dad included) to think about three **petitions** they would like to pray for. Have them select an item that symbolizes each need. For example, a child might bring a report card to symbolize a request for improved grades, a photo of a friend who has moved away to symbolize a request for less loneliness and new buddies, or a remote control to symbolize a request for God’s help in developing more godly television viewing habits.

A parent might bring a bank statement symbolizing his concern for finances, the help-wanted ads from the newspaper if a job is threatened, or car keys if the temptation to speed is a problem.

When you gather for **petition** time, share the story of how King Hezekiah received a threatening letter from an enemy nation. Explain how he spread the letter out before the Lord and prayed over it (2 Kings 18:9-16).

Give family members a chance to show the items they’ve brought and to share what their requests will be. Don’t let others interrupt and keep comments to a minimum. The goal is to help everyone understand the need so they can support each person in

prayer, not to give advice or correction.

After all have shared, encourage them to place their symbolic items on the table or in the center of the floor. Gather around the items, lay hands on them, and commit them to God in prayer, as Hezekiah did. Invite each family member to offer his or her **petitions** to the Lord as honestly as possible. If some family members sense God leading them to intercede for the **petitions** made by others, that’s fine.

As you close, consider praying from a Scripture such as Philippians 4:6-7 or 1 Peter 5:7. For example, “Thank You, God, that when we present our **petitions** and requests to You, You give us peace that goes beyond human understanding. Thank You that we can cast every anxiety on You because we know You care for us!” ★

ENCOURAGE YOUR KIDS

If your child has a story of an answered prayer, how his/her life was impacted by prayer, or how his/her class prayed and something special happened, please send it to:

PrayKids!
P.O. Box 35004
Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3504
Email: praykids@navpress.com

While we cannot publish everything that is sent in, we will put some additional stories up on our website. www.praykids.com

FREE

Leader’s Guide for Teachers/Parents:

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