

PrayKids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word On...

Faith

You have something really important that many adults don't have! You have a childlike **faith**! That's what Jesus was talking about when He said to His adult followers, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Faith is simple and complete confidence and trust in God, even when we can't see evidence. In prayer, it means that we believe God can and will do what we ask.

So, guess what? Since you probably already have the kind of **faith** Jesus was talking about, your job is to never let it go! Hold onto it when you pray! The Bible says that without **faith** it's impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). But a *child-like faith* is especially precious to Jesus. He'll use it to build His kingdom (Matthew 18:4)! ★

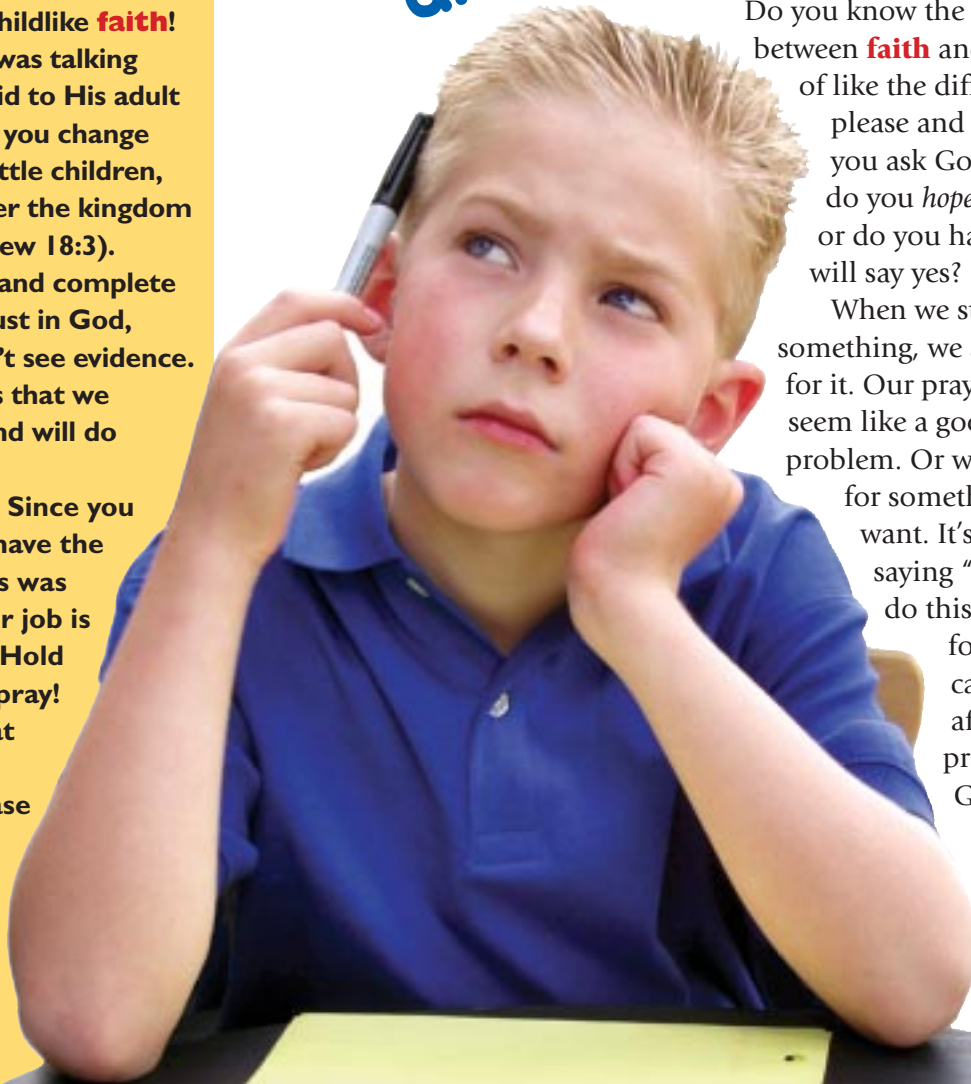
By Donna Fernandez

Please and Thank You

Do you know the difference between **faith** and hope? It's kind of like the difference between please and thank you. When you ask God for something, do you *hope* He will say yes, or do you have **faith** that He will say yes?

When we start to pray for something, we are usually *hoping* for it. Our prayer request may seem like a good solution to a problem. Or we may be asking for something we think we want. It's kind of like saying "please." When we do this, we are hoping for something we cannot see. But after we have prayed for a while, God may put something new into our hearts.

*continued on
page 2*



Dear Jesus,

I feel all alone... please
be with me. I hope You will.

Lord, I just read
Hebrews 13:5! You promised
that You will never leave
us! I have **faith** You are
with me right now even
though I can't see You!

Love,
Levi

(continued from page 1)

He may even give us a promise from His Word about how He wants to answer. When He does that, we know for sure His answer is on the way. So we move to the "thank you." That's when we can begin to pray with the kind of **faith** that moves mountains (Matthew 17:20)!

This doesn't mean that when we know God is going to answer, we can just forget about it. **Faith** means that we take actions and make decisions based upon what God has promised. It means continuing to trust God to keep His word . . . until we see it happen!

When you have **faith** like a child, it's much easier to keep believing that God is going to do what He said He will do. Adults sometimes have trouble with this. They believe that God has given them a promise, but then they start to see things around them that don't seem to line up with what God said. Then they start to doubt.

That is exactly what happened to Peter (Matthew 14:22-32). Remember the story? Peter saw Jesus walking on the water. He asked if he could come out and walk with Him. Peter was hoping for something—so he asked. That was his "please." Then Jesus said, "Come!" The minute Peter heard that answer, he knew it was going to happen. He had **faith**. So he made a decision and took action. He stepped out onto the water—and he walked on it! That was his "thank you." But then Peter started looking at all the waves instead of at Jesus. He started to sink. Jesus reached out His hand and saved Peter. But He said, "You of little **faith**, why did you doubt?"

When we pray with hope, we are saying "please" to God. But when we pray with **faith**, we have moved from "please" to "thank You!" We are sure it will happen, and so we say, "Thank You, God!"

Remember to say "please" and "thank You" when you talk to God. Start by praying with hope. Then, when God gives you a promise, pray with **faith**! This is one time when grown-ups *don't* know best! Don't doubt like they sometimes do. Don't look at the waves. Keep your eyes on Jesus and keep your childlike **faith**. Walk by **faith** and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). ★

Donna Fernandez lives in Colorado Springs. She is the mother of five children.

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Mission Statement

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

**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!

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We cannot publish everything that is sent in, but we may put some additional stories on our website.

www.praykids.com

Come Sit with Me, Jesus

My name is NiKayla. Jesus and prayer have been a big part of my life since before I was even born. When my mom was pregnant with me, the doctors did some tests that showed I would be born with birth defects. My whole family was in shock.

Then my mom went to a friend's wedding. The bride stopped her own wedding to ask the pastor to pray for us. While everyone was praying, my mom felt the hand of God resting on me inside her. She knew I was healed. Two days later,



NiKayla, age six

she had more tests and the doctors found out I was fine. When I was born completely healthy, even the doctor said it was a miracle!

When I was only 18 months old, I became deathly ill. God woke my mom up that night with the uneasy feeling that something was wrong. When she checked on me, she found I was as cold as ice, and my lips, toes, and fingers were turning blue.

On the way to the hospital, my mom kept praying that God would keep me alive. When we got to the hospital, the doctor explained that my body was shutting down, and I probably wouldn't make it. Once again, my parents cried out to God and once again He healed me. They never did find out exactly what caused me to be so sick. The doctors think it was a virus.

When I was two years old, my mom noticed that I wasn't talking as well as other children my age. When I started school last fall, doctors discovered that I have a severe hearing loss in my left ear. They said I had to have a CT scan. My mom knew how afraid I was of going to the doctor so she asked the elders of our church and a prayer team to pray for me.

The night before I had the scan, mom prayed with me and asked God to give me peace during the CT scan, and to help me hold still, so they wouldn't have to sedate me. I prayed that Jesus would be with me during the test.

The day of the scan, I was able to stay perfectly still, and I even smiled at my mom a few times. Mom said she couldn't believe how brave I was. On our way to the car, Mom asked me if I had been scared. I told her no. I wasn't scared because Jesus came and sat with me the whole time. He told me everything was going to be all right.

Now I know that no matter what happens, I can talk to Jesus, and He will be with me. Jesus wants to sit with you, too, when you are scared or in trouble. Just ask Him like I did. He's been watching over you since before you were born! ★

NiKayla's story, as told by her mom, Sharlene Schermer.

S-T-R-E-T-C-H It!

One great way to make your **faith** grow is to pray Scripture. Take a verse and ask the Holy Spirit to help you s-t-r-e-t-c-h it.

Pick a verse like Psalm 145:21. Now pray into it like this:

My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD: "Lord, I praise You [now use your mouth to praise Him every way you can]. You are awesome, wonderful, good, mighty, and faithful! You never tell lies. I can always come to You and trust You [keep going with as many things as you can think of]!

Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever: "Jesus, let every creature—every deer, cat, bird, lion, dog, elephant [keep going!] praise Your holy name forever!"

It's easy! Try Psalm 139:1-4. Here's a hint: List what God knows about you. What do you do all day? What time do you do it? What do you think about? What do you like and dislike?

The more you practice s-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g your prayers, the more you will know God. You'll find that the more you get to know Him, the more **faith you'll have!**

By Sharon B. Frankel, Huntington, Massachusetts.



4

The Widow and the

A fictional story based on 1 Kings 17:7-16.

I am a widow. My husband died when our son was a baby, and I've raised our son alone. I have earned money by selling cloth in the idol-worshiping town of Zarephath. This year, a famine came to the land. No crops grew. People ran out of money and food. No one could afford to

By Kathleen E. Bracher

Bottomles



buy cloth from me anymore.

"Mama," my son said, "how are we going to live?"

"I have heard there is only one true God. Let's pray to Him," I replied. "Dear God, if You're really there, please take care of us." I wondered how God would answer my prayer. Each day, I used up more of our flour and oil to make bread. It was almost gone.

One morning, I went out to gather sticks for our fire. My hands were full when a man called to me.

"Excuse me," he said. "Could you get me a cup of water? I am thirsty."

I felt sorry for this dusty traveler. I immediately went to get the water.

"Could you bring me some bread, too?" the man asked. "I'm hungry."

I turned to face him. "Sir, as the LORD your God lives, I don't have any more bread. I was gathering sticks for our fire. I have a little oil and flour to bake two small loaves for my son and me.

When those are gone, we will die." I blinked back the tears. "Don't be afraid," the man said. "I'm Elijah, the prophet of God. Make me a loaf of bread first. If you do, the LORD God promises that you will have enough oil and flour to last through this famine."

I shook my head. Elijah obviously had not seen our oil and flour barrels. How could he promise there would be enough? But he said his

God had promised it. Could I have **faith**?

"Come back home with me," I told Elijah. "I'll make you some bread."

The next morning, I went to the oil barrel.

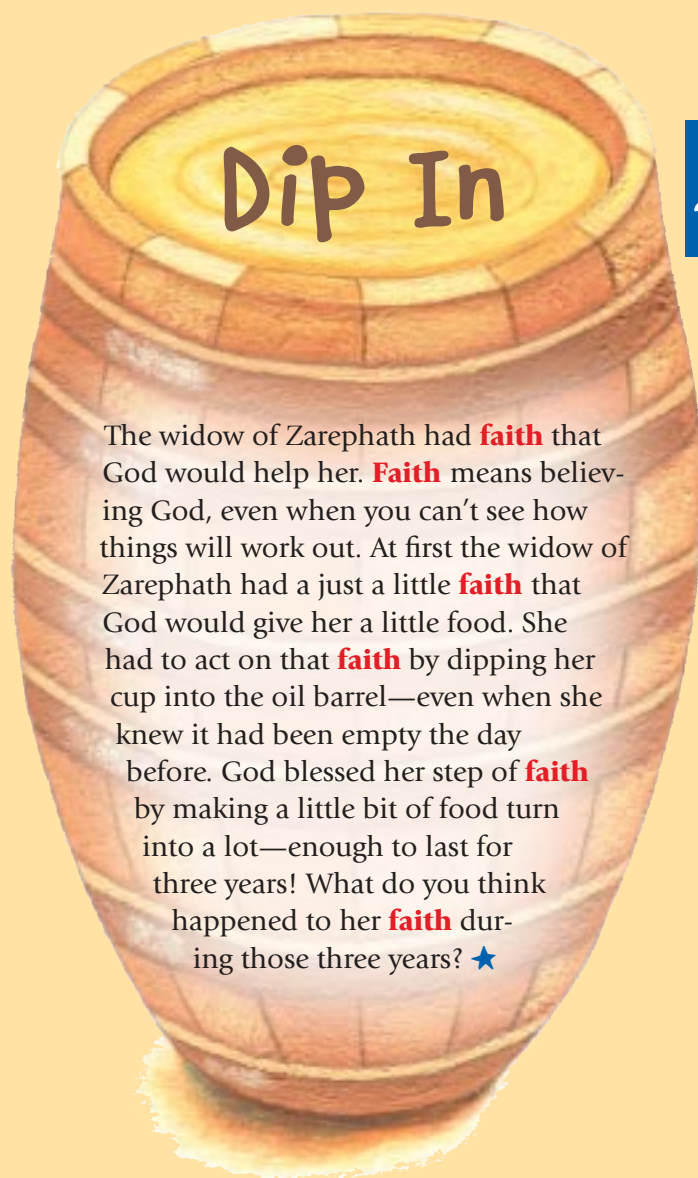
"It was empty last night," my son said.

"I know. But God promised to fill it," I replied. I dipped my cup into the barrel. It came up full! With a smile on my face, I ran to the flour barrel and stuck my hand in. Flour! God had provided for us.

"Mama, will we starve?" my son asked.

"No, we won't," I said. "The LORD God is taking care of us. I'm glad we learned to put our **faith** in Him." ★

Kathleen E. Bracher teaches children's church in Newburg, Indiana.



The widow of Zarephath had **faith** that God would help her. **Faith** means believing God, even when you can't see how things will work out. At first the widow of Zarephath had a just a little **faith** that God would give her a little food. She had to act on that **faith** by dipping her cup into the oil barrel—even when she knew it had been empty the day before. God blessed her step of **faith** by making a little bit of food turn into a lot—enough to last for three years! What do you think happened to her **faith** during those three years? ★

S Barrels



Let's Pray for God to Change Our World

All across the world, God is doing amazing things to change communities and nations. This story comes from Nathanael L. Hallberg, who is 10 years old and wants kids everywhere to pray that God will transform their communities.

Not long ago, our church showed us a video called *Transformations*. It's about revivals God is bringing all around the world. One part talked about the amazing things God is doing in Almolonga, Guatemala. I was so excited! I told my mom that I thought God was inviting us to "come and see" what God was doing there. And guess what? He really did make a way for us to go!

I've never seen anything like I saw in Almolonga. The city used to be full of crime. People used to do all kinds of sinful things. The churches were weak. Even the land itself was not producing good crops. But it says in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that if we pray and ask God's forgiveness, He will hear us, forgive us, and heal our land. That's what those



Nathanael poses with two of the humongous carrots that grow in the "miracle valley" of Almolonga, Guatemala.

people in Almolonga did. And God answered!

I found out that Jesus really is Lord of Almolonga. Since I got back home I've been telling people that what's in the *Transformations* video is TRUE! I met a policeman there. Policemen don't carry guns—they don't need them anymore. They just carry a whistle to direct traffic. The four jails that used to be full are now closed! Most of the 30 bars are gone.

They've been turned into churches. Everyone has a story to tell about how God has changed him or her. God even healed their land. Now they grow HUMONGOUS fruits and vegetables.

Seeing what God did in Guatemala has given me a bigger picture of God. If He can do that in Almolonga, He can do it anywhere!

Now I'm praying that God will be the Lord of my community, the Twin Cities of Minnesota. You can believe God for miracles in your community, too. I believe that the power of children's prayers will jumpstart the changes in cities across America. ★

By Nathanael L. Hallberg

PHOTO BY JOY HALLBERG

SIX

COVER THE GLOBE

Community-Changing Prayers

1. Jesus, let the children of our community come to You so they can know and love You as their Savior (Mark 10:14).

2. Father, give our community the desire to learn to pray and to learn to worship You in Spirit and in truth (Luke 11:1, John 4:23-24).

3. Lamb of God, protect our community from the evil one. Help believers to overcome him by Your blood and by their testimony (John 17:15, Revelation 12:11).

4. Holy Lord, cause Your people in our community to love righteousness and hate wickedness so they can have joy (Psalm 45:7).

5. God, give Your people in our community an undivided heart so they can fear Your name (Psalm 86:11).

After you pray these prayers for your community, start praying the same things for other cities, states, and nations!

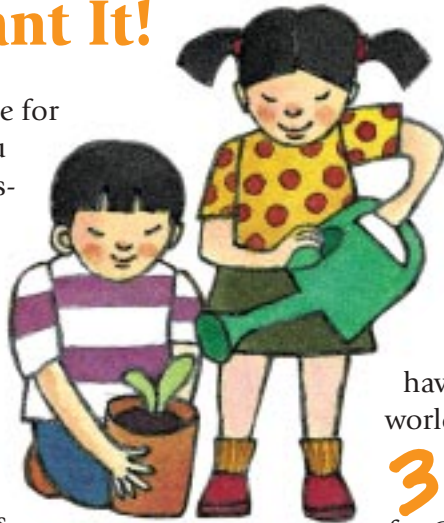
You Gotta Plant It!

How much **faith** does it take for a miracle? Jesus says, "If you have **faith** as small as a mustard seed, it is enough. . . . Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20, *New International Reader's Version*).

When you plant a tiny mustard seed, it grows into a huge plant (Matthew 13:31-32). But what happens if you just hold the seed in your hand and never plant it? Will it grow? Of course not!

Faith is like that, too. Before it can grow you've got to plant it.

Let's say you want your grandma to know Jesus. Here's how you can pray about that in **faith**:



1. Ask yourself what you really, really believe in your heart about Jesus—not just what your teachers or parents tell you about Him. (Example: Jesus is the Savior of the world.)

2. How does what you believe about Jesus help you to trust Him for a need you have? (Example: Since Jesus died for the whole world, that means He died for my grandma, too.)

3. Now add parts one and two. (Example: Jesus is the Savior of the world so Jesus died for Grandma so Jesus wants Grandma to be saved so I can pray that as His will.) You're ready to plant that seed—so go ahead and pray in **faith**!

4. Don't forget to say "thank You" to God for the answer that's on the way—and watch for it. ★

By Joe Green, Republic, Washington

All God Needs Is Seeds

This wristband is a fun way to remember that when you pray, God uses your **faith**—even when it is as small as a mustard seed!

Here's what you'll need:

- Plastic bubble from gum/candy blister pack
- Scrap of construction paper or cardstock
- 2 or 3 large elastic ponytail holders
- Tacky glue, pencil, scissors

Cut one plastic bubble from the gum blister pack. Remove the foil back and the gum (happy chewing!). Trace the outside of the clear plastic bubble onto the paper scrap, then cut it out. Put a thin line of glue all the way around the outside of the paper edge. Put the mustard seed in the center of the plastic bubble and carefully glue onto the paper back. Let the glue dry.

Glue the mustard seed in its plastic case onto the center of two or three of the ponytail holders. Let the glue dry and your wristband is ready to wear!

Now, pray with **faith** and watch God do great miracles! ★



Nurturing a "Bread and Jelly" Faith

By Thetus Tenney

My sister was a young child during the hard days of the Depression. Craving a snack one day, she stepped into the kitchen and announced: "Mother, I want a bread and jelly sandwich." Mom replied, "Agnes, I'm sorry, but we don't have any bread or jelly. If you want that, you will just have to pray about it." Mother continued her housework as Agnes headed out to the old car in front of the house. Opening the back door, she climbed in and made that back seat her altar.

Sometime later, Agnes rejoined Mother in the house. Looking out the window, Mother said, "I wonder who that little girl is coming down the lane?" Clamoring up to the window, Agnes boldly announced: "She is bringing my bread and jelly!"

When mother answered the door, the girl handed her a sack and said, "My mother was praying awhile ago. She felt God wanted her to send you this loaf of bread and jar of jelly."

Faith comes naturally to children. They have **faith** in their abilities in art, dance, music, and drama—even if they don't display particular giftedness in those areas. They believe the trusted people in their lives will do what they promise. As they grow older, however, many of them cross

an invisible line into doubt, fear, intimidation, and lost confidence. Their **faith** gets squelched.

But it doesn't have to be that way! Here are some ways you can water your children's **faith** seeds so they will grow and flourish:

Marvel together over God's creation. Every day, we can remind our children of how God made everything from the fish that can live under water to the birds that fly on tiny wings. These simple conversations build

faith. Hebrews 11:3 says

"It is by **faith** we understand that the whole world was made by God's command so what we see was made by something that cannot be seen" (*New Century Version*).

Recall together God's wonderful deeds. Scripture exhorts us to tell our children about "his power, and the wonders he has done" (Psalm 78:4). One way to do this is to go through the treasure chest in Hebrews 11, telling the stories of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and other heroes of **faith**.

Another way is to be like the man Jesus told to "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you" (Mark 5:19). Tell your children the stories of what God has done for you. And when you and your children have prayed about something together, always be sure to

point out and thank God for His answers.

Rejoice together in God's wisdom. God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9). He may answer a prayer differently from how your child asks because He knows something she doesn't! That's why we don't need to "protect" God against disappointing our kids. God is big enough! He can take care of Himself. He wants your child's **faith** to grow far more than you do. Times like these are good opportunities to say, "I don't know why, but God is good. He knows the missing pieces, and He'll work it out. Let's watch, listen, and trust Him."

For practical ideas on how to enhance your child's **faith**, go to our website (www.praykids.com) and click on "Parents/Teachers," where you'll find a free leaders' guide. ★

Thetus Tenney is author of *How to Be a God Chaser and a Kid Chaser*.



MEMORY VERSE

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (Hebrews 11:6).

Free

LEADER'S GUIDE for Teachers and Parents

Did you know we have a **free** leader's guide with extra activities, questions, and prayer points to go along with each article in *PrayKids!*? Go to www.praykids.com and select "Parents and Teachers." Then select which issue you want and click on the article title. Download what you need so you can use *PrayKids!* with a group of kids.

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