

Introduction

You and I were created to give praise to our God. We express our relationship with God through prayer. It is part of who we are. When we share our prayer with children and help them explore their relationship with God, we give God greater glory. So we must help children learn to pray for a lifetime. We must provide a variety of prayer experiences so they learn to pray to God in ways that speak to their hearts and their lives. We should also help families be communities of prayer, by giving them tools to help their children live in faith each day.

Prayer helps us explore God's presence in our lives and in our world. It helps us make sense of our lives and discover who we are at our core. Just as that experience is different for you and me, we must remember that it is different for children too. Individual children and families must find ways to pray so they can express their unique experience of God. By using varied forms of prayer, we invite today's children to make prayer a part of their daily lives.

This book can help children, catechists, and parents explore a variety of prayer experiences that speak to many stages and places. More than a list of activities, it will help you find approaches to praying with children and ways to help them open their minds and hearts to God. There are discussion start-

ers to help children make prayer a part of each day. There are ideas for praying with Scripture and the Mass. While the activities are suited for ages five through eleven, they are adaptable to other ages as well. Everything is easy to do and requires a minimum of preparation.

The activities and ideas are designed for small and large groups in school and parish settings. They can also be used individually at home. It is a great resource for catechists in parish programs, teachers in Catholic schools, directors of faith formation, religion coordinators, family life ministers, leaders of lifelong faith formation, parents, grandparents, and all who want to share prayer with the children in their lives.

Each of us is called to pray with and for the next generation. In all we do, we are called to be a people of prayer. When we weave prayer throughout our day, when we share it with our children, we follow our call. Prayer brings us hope in God, hope in the future, and hope for our world today. And that is so important.

For with God, we can do all things.