Teaching Children to Praise

Thinking About Praise

Discuss one or two of the following questions with a partner.

• When did you last praise God in a heartfelt way?
• What were you doing at the time?
• What effect did this time of praise have on your spiritual life?
• What effect did this praise time have on your emotional well-being?
• What effect did this time have on your close relationships?

Think about the following questions:

• How did you learn about the importance of praising God when you pray?

• Why is it important for children to learn to praise God?

• What would you like to have been taught about praise when you were a child that would have helped you as a teenager and adult?

• If you were all alone and there was no-one to see or hear you, how would you best like to praise God?

• How does praising God help children to develop their spirituality?
Activities
1. **Praise balloons**
   *Needs: A bag of assorted balloons, inflated; permanent marker pens; balloon (curling) ribbon or string.*
   - Take a balloon and write a sentence or two of praise to God, such as ‘I praise You God for the way You have made me! It's amazing!’
   - Bring your balloons back to the group and toss them all around within your circle.
   - Catch a balloon and hold it safe.
   - Take it in turns, around the circle, to read out the praise phrases on your balloons.
   - Or, tie the balloons together in bunches and hang your praises around the room.

2. **Rainbow praise**
   *Needs: A large piece of background paper (or two large sheets of paper stuck together); sheets of brightly coloured paper; marker pens; pencils; scissors; glue sticks.*
   On the background paper draw large, concentric semi-circles, to make the outline of a rainbow. Label each section of the rainbow with a different colour.
   - God has a rainbow around His throne in heaven.
   - Let’s create a rainbow of praise right here!
   - Draw around your hand on one of the different coloured papers and cut out the shape you have drawn.
   - Write or draw praises on your hand-shape using the following colour code:
     - Red - Praise for Jesus as our Saviour
     - Orange - Words of thankfulness
     - Yellow - Words of adoration
     - Green - Praise for God as our Creator
     - Blue - Praise for God our Protector
     - Indigo - Words of love for God
     - Purple - Praise for God as our King
   - Stick them on the corresponding strip on the rainbow. Let the fingers curl freely, so the colours blend to make a rainbow.

3. **Noisy praise**
   *Needs: A variety of musical instruments*
   - Read Psalm 150. Talk about the different instruments mentioned in the psalm
   - Sing a familiar praise song with the children and invite them to praise God using the different instruments you have available.
Let them be free to make as much noise as they like. Remember that Jesus loved the children’s noisy and active praise! (Matthew 21:15-16)

4. **Alphabet praise**  
**Needs:** a small cloth bag filled with alphabet letters – cards, magnets or letter tiles from a word game.
- Sit in a circle.
- Pass the cloth bag around the circle and take it in turns to take a letter out of the bag.
- When you have taken a letter out of the bag – everyone in the group has to think of a different word to describe God, or the word for a name of God, beginning with the letter you have chosen. Or let the group call out words as they think of them, so that children who find it hard to think fast are not made to feel uncomfortable. Write the words down if you wish.
- If you want to you can remove the difficult letters like Q and Z from the bag, but it is often interesting to see what the children will suggest for these difficult letters. For X use words with the prefix ‘ex’ such as ‘excellent’.
- Alternatively, post papers around the room with a different letter of the alphabet on each sheet of paper.
- Give the children marker pens and invite them to write words that describe God that begin with the different letters on the sheets of paper.

5. **Picture psalm praise**  
**Needs:** A variety of beautiful nature scenes (calendars are a good source of appropriate pictures); paper and pens.
- Provide the children with a wide range of pictures.
- Invite them to choose one that especially appeals to them.
- Give the children a few minutes to look at the pictures and to use them as inspiration as they write a sentence or two of praise to God.
- Collect the praise sentences that have been written and compile them together to create a group/class psalm.

6. **Story wonder praise**  
**Needs:** a Bible story.
- Tell the children a Bible story in the best way you know how.
- After telling the story, invite the children to think about the story and to find as many things as possible in the story that they can praise God for.
- Encourage variety and creativity, and affirm everything the children say. God understands their praise words.
7. Praise diary
Needs: two sheets of plain paper stapled together down the middle to make an eight page booklet; pens or pencils.
• Give each child a booklet and invite them to decorate the cover with the title ‘My Praise Diary’.
• Have them write one day of the week on each of the next seven pages.
• Ask the children to take the diary home and see if they can find ten things a day for which they can praise God. Let them write or draw their praises on each day’s page.
• At the end of the week, invite the children to bring their diaries back to the class.
• Let them tell some of the special things they noticed when they were looking for ways to praise God during the week.

8. Creation praise postcards
Needs: an array of items (natural things where possible – water, rocks flowers, fish, pets, etc.) that illustrate each of the days of creation; large bulletin boards; marker pens; crayons; scissors; blank white index cards the size of postcards; glue sticks; collage materials.
• Show the children the different items you have collected to illustrate the days of creation. Invite the children to wonder and be amazed at God’s creation.
• Make a display of the items, and label each one with the day of the week on which it was created.
• Invite the children to create a postcard with a design that praises God for His creation on one of the days of the week. Ask them to write the number of the day in one of the corners of their card, so that you can be sure to post the card in the correct place!
• Arrange the cards on the bulletin board in order of the days of the creation to make an attractive display. Add pictures and things the children have made and drawn to add to the display.
• Invite the rest of the church to come and view the display. When you take down the display, let the children take their postcards away. Or you could also give them time to write a note of appreciation on the back of the card to send to someone in your congregation.

9. Body part praise
Needs: lively bodies!
• Ask the children some of the following questions and invite them to feel free to respond in any way they like.
  How can we praise God with our feet?
  How can we praise God with our legs?
  How can we praise God with our hands?
How can we praise God with our arms?
How can we praise God with our faces?
How can we praise God with our mouths?
How can we praise God with our whole bodies?
• Accept all their responses as delightful expressions of their love for God.

10. Creative praise
Needs: a wide variety of good quality craft materials; plain paper and pens, pencils and erasers; etc.
• Read the children a joyful praise psalm from a children’s version of the Bible.
• Invite them to think about how they would like to praise God.
• Show them the materials that you have provided and ask them to create something that expresses their praise to God, such as a banner, object, scene, poem, story, letter, mime or song.
• Allow plenty of time for the children to create their praise item.
• The item they make is their own praise communication to God and does not have to be shown to the rest of the group. This prevents children from shaping their response to God to please those around them, or from feeling that their praise response is better or worse than anyone else’s. God is happy with any kind of praise He receives from children.
• At the end of the activity, let the children know how happy God is to watch them make their items and that He is delighted with all the different ways they have praised Him. You can visit each child in turn and say something like, ‘Tommy, God loves you so much and He is delighted to see the picture you have made to praise Him!’

What ideas do you have for helping children learn about praise?

Write them below or on the back of this page:

Check out more ideas in Karen Holford's book:
‘100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids (and grown-ups too!)’