

Photo Prayers

It's hard to pray with a very young child or infant. This photo prayer is a way to engage babies and toddlers who are learning to connect people and faces. It also sets up a routine for praying for others that can develop into more advanced prayers.

Designed for Babies and Younger Toddlers

Materials

Photos of important family members and pets

Time Investment: 1–5 minutes, plus 10–30 minute preparation

How To

1. Print photos of family members and other significant people in the family's life. Choose photos in which faces are large and prominent.
2. Place the photos near a chair where you can sit just before bedtime.

For the Practice

1. After the child is dressed and ready for bed, sit with the photos and hold the child on your lap. Show the child each picture and say, *“God Bless [name]”* (*“God Bless Grandma,” “God Bless Angie,” “God Bless Papa,”* etc.).
2. As the child's age and speaking ability develops, have the child point to the photo, repeat the name, or say the blessing with you.
3. After the final picture say, *“Amen.”*

Notes

- This exercise is effective in its simplicity. Over time, even a very young child notices the routine of sitting down, looking at the photos, and saying the names. Resist the temptation to say more than the simple blessing.
- Keep the exercise sacred by looking at this particular set of photos only at prayer time.

Variations

- Instead of sitting in a chair with printed photos, walk around the house and touch photos that are hanging in frames or displayed on tables. As you walk by each photo, touch it and say, “*God Bless [name].*” The final destination is the child’s bed, and you can end by placing the child in bed, saying a blessing, and adding “*Amen.*”
- Add other drawings or pictures and use phrases such as “God Bless The World” or “God Bless all the animals in the land and the fish in the sea.”
- Add another sacred element, such as a special blanket or shawl to cover the child only during this prayer time, or turning on a battery-operated candle before you sit down.