

Praying with children (with hand actions)

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Sit with the children at the front of church. You need a lapel microphone so you can be heard and have your hands free.

1. Introduction: "We are going to do one of the most important things you can ever do in your life. And you don't get taught this at school! ... PRAY."
2. Before we pray, we let go of the wriggles and jiggles in our bodies, and our minds. So get your wriggles and jiggles (*move around quickly*) and drop them down (*let them go, flick...*). *Repeat?*
3. Now we BREATHE. Oh, were you breathing already? I'm so pleased. But to pray it helps to breathe in a special way. so... we are going to breathe in slowly (*count to 4 with your fingers as you do*) then all out. Again – this time imagine breathing in love and peace, and when you breathe out, breathe out all your stress and worries.
4. Right, now we are ready to start. Today I'm going to teach you a prayer in 4 parts, and each part has a different way to hold your hands. So get your hands out, where are they? Sometimes people pray like this (*demonstrate head bowed, hands in 'prayer position' or clasped*). We're not going to do it like that today, we're going to try something new! And the adults are going to join in too, aren't they??!
5. First, hold your hands out a bit, facing up, as though you were catching a big soft ball. This is for our THANK YOU prayer. You can shut your eyes if you want to, up to you. (*Read a THANK YOU prayer. Include things that kids enjoy. Write this with some kids beforehand.*)
6. Next, lift your hands up, higher, higher. Go on, you can do it! It is hard to hold them up for long, so you can drop them down a bit if you like. But this action helps us to PRAISE GOD. We lift up our hands and we lift up our hearts to our God. We give back to God our gift of praise and honour and celebrate his glory. (*Read a PRAISE prayer ... for example: You are amazing, God, and we give you our praise this morning. You made the universe, and you also made each one of us. You tenderly shaped us into tiny babies, and loved us every breath and every step of our lives. We love you, Lord God. Everything we are and everything we have is yours.*)
7. Right, the third part of our prayer is when we REACH OUT (*reach out with one hand*). We reach out with God's love and power to other people, especially to people we know who are hurting. (*Read a REACHING OUT prayer of intercession, relevant to the children's understandings and concerns*)
8. Well done! Now we come to the last part. Cup your hands together and just relax for a while, just you and God. Keep breathing slowly, sit quietly, and enjoying being in God's loving presence. (*Leave a space for as long as people are holding attention – at least 1 full minute*)
9. Closing: We pray all this in the name of our friend and Lord, Jesus Christ. AMEN. Say it with me, nice and loud ... **AMEN!** Say it again ... AMEN.