

# 9 ways to say morning prayers with your kids

St. Paul urged the earliest Christians to “pray constantly” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Over the centuries, the Church developed a way to pray at regular intervals throughout the day. This traditional practice is known as the Liturgy of the Hours, or the Divine Office. The Liturgy of the Hours is like an extension of the celebration of Mass into everyday life, a way for Christians to sanctify the day.

Morning Prayer, also called Lauds, is one of the major “hours” in the Liturgy of the Hours. While it may be impractical to formally pray the full Office daily, many families “bookend” their day with morning and evening prayers.

Here are seven ways to do it (plus some prayers to print out at the end):

**1. Morning Offering.** Say the traditional Morning Offering prayer (see below). This prayer was written in 1844 by Fr. François-Xavier Gautrelet, S.J., one of the founders of the Apostleship of Prayer, as a way for Christians to make a daily offering of themselves to the Lord.

**2. Invocations.** Not a morning person? Keep it short by memorizing a handful of one-line invocations to pray in the morning (see some examples in the related article, [Invocations](#)).

**3. Canticle of Zechariah.** The Canticle of Zechariah is one of the traditional morning prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours, possibly because Zechariah’s song (found in Luke 1:68–79) refers to Christ as the dawn. See below for the text.

**4. Sing a song.** You can sing “This Is the Day the Lord Has Made” or another popular morning hymn. (Watch a video of the

song if you're not familiar with it: here's a [Gospel version](#), plus [a version with lyrics](#) displayed on the screen.)

**5. Pray a psalm.** Psalms often prayed during Morning Prayer include [Psalm 63:2–9](#) (“O God, you are my God; for you I long. . . .”), [Daniel 3:57–88](#) (“Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord. . . .”) and [Psalm 149](#) (“Sing a new song to the Lord. . . .”).

**6. Pray a short, kid-led litany of saints.** Let your kids invoke different saints, with the rest of the family responding, “Pray for us!” to each one.

**7. Write your prayer.** If singing morning prayer gets you dirty looks from family members, try writing out your morning prayer and leaving it in a prominent place: on the refrigerator, on a closet door, on the bathroom mirror.

**8. Post your prayer.** Teens who use social media might make a morning offering their first post of the day.

**9. Offer intentions for the day.** Before praying, ask for family members to voice their intentions for the day. These may be petitions (requests for a good day, help with a difficult situation, etc.), but they could also be offerings: “What will you offer to God today?” See [Keep a list of family prayer intentions](#).

## Morning Prayers for Your Family

### Morning Offering

*This prayer was written in 1844 by Fr. François-Xavier Gautrelet, S.J., one of the founders of the Apostleship of Prayer, as a way for Christians to make a daily offering of themselves to the Lord. You can find the pope's monthly prayer intentions at [apostleshipofprayer.org](#).*

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this  
day  
for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart,  
in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the  
world,  
for the salvation of souls, the reparation for sins, the  
reunion of all Christians,  
and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father this  
month.

Amen.

### **This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made (Psalm 118:24)**

This is the day the Lord has made;  
let us be glad and rejoice in it!

*Psalm 118 is from a thanksgiving liturgy in which the king,  
priests, and all the people processed into the temple to give  
thanks for deliverance from enemies.*

### **A Short Morning Offering for Children**

Thank you, God, for giving us this day;  
help us to be like Jesus in all we think, do, and say.

Amen.

### **Angel of God**

Angel of God, my guardian dear,  
to whom God's love commits me here,  
ever this day be at my side,  
to light, to guard, to rule, and guide.

Amen.

## **Canticle of Zechariah (Benedictus)**

*The Canticle of Zechariah is taken from the song that Zechariah sings after regaining his voice at the birth of his son, John (Luke 1:68-79). It was adopted for Morning Prayer by St. Benedict in the sixth century, possibly because of the reference to the dawn, and it is one of the central prayers of the Divine Office.*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
he has come to His people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,  
born of the house of His servant David.  
Through his holy prophets he promised of old  
that he would save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all who hate us.  
He promised to show mercy to our fathers  
and to remember his holy Covenant.  
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
free to worship him without fear,  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
to give his people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.

### **Lorica of St. Patrick (St. Patrick's Breastplate)**

*The Lorica of St. Patrick, also called St. Patrick's Breastplate, is traditionally attributed to St. Patrick, although it may have been composed much later. It has taken many forms over the years; this is one of the shorter versions.*

I arise today through  
God's strength to pilot me, God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to see before me,  
God's ear to hear me, God's word to speak for me,  
God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie before me,  
God's shield to protect me, God's host to secure me  $\frac{3}{4}$   
against snares of devils,  
against temptations and vices,  
against inclinations of nature,  
against everyone who shall wish me ill,  
whether far or near,  
alone and in a crowd . . .

Christ, be with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ where I lie,  
Christ where I sit,  
Christ where I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who  
thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that  
hears me.

Salvation is of the Lord.

Salvation is of the Lord.

Salvation is of the Christ.

May your salvation, O Lord, be ever with us.

Amen.

## **Prayer of Saint Francis**

*How would your family life look different if you put this prayer into practice today?*

*Although this prayer was written in the spirit of St. Francis, it first appeared in a small French church magazine, The Little Bell, in 1912. It was widely distributed during World War I and World War II.*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is error, truth;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

## **Pied Beauty**

*The author of this poem, Gerard Manley Hopkins, was a Jesuit priest whose unusual poetry was rejected by publishers during his lifetime. He burned all of his poetry upon entering the Society of Jesus as an act of humility, but eventually came to see his poetry as consistent with his vocation. Today, he is hailed as "one of the three or four greatest poets of the Victorian era" by the Poetry Foundation.*

Glory be to God for dappled things—  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise Him.

## **Canticle of the Three Youths (Daniel 3:57-90)**

*This prayer might be said antiphonally, with a leader speaking the verses and all responding on "praise and exalt him above all forever." This is the hymn sung by the three youths from within the fiery furnace that King Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into as a punishment for refusing to worship his idol (Daniel 3). It is omitted from most Protestant Bibles on the grounds that it was written in Greek rather than the Aramaic of the rest of the book.*

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord,  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord,  
praise and exalt him above all forever.

You heavens, bless the Lord,  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord,  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
All you powers, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Sun and moon, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Stars of heaven, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Every shower and dew, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
All you winds, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Fire and heat, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Cold and chill, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Dew and rain, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Frost and chill, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Hoarfrost and snow, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Nights and days, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Light and darkness, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Let the earth bless the Lord,  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Everything growing on earth, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
You springs, bless the Lord;



praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Seas and rivers, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
You sea monsters and all water creatures, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
All you birds of the air, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
All you mortals, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
O Israel, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Holy and humble of heart, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt him above all forever.  
For he has delivered us from Sheol,  
and saved us from the power of death;  
He has freed us from the raging flame  
and delivered us from the fire.  
Give thanks to the Lord, who is good,  
whose mercy endures forever.  
Bless the God of gods, all you who fear the Lord;  
praise and give thanks,  
for his mercy endures forever.