

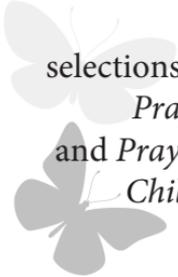


20 Powerful

Prayers

for the school year

selections from *Mom's Little Book of
Prayers* by Fern Nichols
and *Praying the Scriptures for Your
Children* by Jodie Berndt



MOM'S LITTLE BOOK
of POWERFUL
PRAYERS



FERN NICHOLS

with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson

 ZONDERVAN®

We want to hear from you. Please send your comments about this book to us in care of zreview@zondervan.com. Thank you.

ZONDERVAN

Mom's Little Book of Powerful Prayers

Copyright © 2014 by Fern Nichols

This title is also available as a Zondervan ebook. Visit www.zondervan.com/ebooks.

This title is also available in a Zondervan audio edition. Visit www.zondervan.fm.

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Author LName, First.

The title of the book : the subtitle, if any / the Author's Name.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index [if applicable].

ISBN 978-0-310-00000-0

1. Subject one. 2. Subject two. I. Title.

AA000.O.A00 2004

000.00—dc22

201100000

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from The Holy Bible, *New International Version*®, *NIV*®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from The Amplified Bible. Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible* copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*. Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NLT 1996 are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois. All rights reserved. Prayers contain Scripture quotes and adaptations from various translations, including the *New International Version* (NIV 1984).

Any Internet addresses (websites, blogs, etc.) and telephone numbers in this book are offered as a resource. They are not intended in any way to be or imply an endorsement by Zondervan, nor does Zondervan vouch for the content of these sites and numbers for the life of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published in association with XXXXXX.

Cover design: Name goes here

Cover photography or illustration: Name goes here

Interior illustration: Name goes here

Interior design: Name goes here

Printed in the United States of America

14 15 16 17 18 /DCI/ 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



A LETTER TO MOMS

Dear Mom,
I know it's not easy raising children today. So many influences and ideas fight to capture our children's hearts. I have four married children and eight grandchildren, and my concerns for their spiritual, emotional, intellectual, relational, and physical well-being are great. I welcome Jesus' invitation: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). It is a promise I'm glad I can count on.

Having the opportunity to talk about these concerns with my heavenly Father gives me hope when I feel hopeless, peace when I am fearful, and wisdom when I don't know what to do. That is why I'm sharing this little prayer book with you. I have experienced the love of a faithful God who hears and answers my prayers, and I want you to have that experience too.

There is nothing — absolutely nothing — of concern to us that God does not care about. Our concerns are his concerns. He says, "Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" (Psalm 50:15). Nothing is too little or too big to share with God in prayer. We can pray about every need our children have.

When we place our children's needs in God's hands through prayer, we call forth his intervention, blessing, and protection. So prayer is not only a wonderful gift to give our children; it's a powerful antidote to the fears and worries that

often accompany motherhood. I am excited for you to begin this journey as an intercessor for your children by standing in the gap and praying for their needs. I know these prayers have the power to be life changing for you and your children.

The prayers in this book follow a specific pattern, beginning with the Scripture chosen for each prayer need. Scripture is what makes the prayers so powerful. When we pray God's Word, we are praying God's heart. When we place our children's names into Scripture, we are praying back to God his will for our children. I'm thankful for the reassurance that I can trust God to be true to his Word: "For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment" (Luke 1:37 AMP).

The prayers also include praise, confession, and thanks. These are important for preparing our hearts to intercede for our children. The praise focuses our attention on one of God's attributes. It helps enlarge our vision of who God is, which leads us to greater trust of the God we know. Confession helps make us aware of any sin that would block our communication with God and reminds us that whatever virtue we are praying for our children, we need to model ourselves, and whatever weakness we want to discourage in our children, we also need God's help to discourage in ourselves. Thanksgiving helps open our hearts to magnify the Lord for what he has done and anticipate what he will do.

Because these prayers are based on the timeless truths of Scripture, you should find them suitable for all ages and stages — for young children, teens, and even for adult children. For the sake of simplicity, I have written each prayer for a male or female child, but nearly all of the prayers are appli-

cable for either gender, so pray them according to your child's identity. Because our times bring unique challenges often not faced by previous generations, I have included a number of prayers on contemporary topics or issues, including, for example, body image, social media, mental illness, and divorce, to name a few. No matter what you or your child might be facing, be assured that God's Word will address the problem and bring much-needed comfort and wisdom.

Feel free to use these prayers sequentially as they appear in the book, or use the index to choose prayers according to your child's need at the moment. However you proceed, I encourage you to take your time. Resist the temptation to pray hastily. Allow God's Spirit to mold your heart to his will as you praise his character, confess your sin, and give him thanks. May these prayers be a springboard to a lifelong journey of intercessory prayer for your child. May they inspire prayers for many more needs — not just for your child, but for this whole generation of children.

My prayer for you, precious mom, is that these prayers will cultivate a closer, more intimate, loving relationship with your heavenly Father. You are his beloved child, and he longs to hear your voice. Whether God says yes, no, or wait, he will be faithful to hear and answer your prayers.

Rest assured that your prayers are powerful and effective; they make a difference. You will never regret the time you invest in prayer. Prayer is a legacy you can give your children that will last forever.

May God bless you and your children,
Fern

First-Day Fears

So do not fear, for I am with you. (Isaiah 41:10)

Praise God: Who is our peace.

Confess: The times I allow fear and worry to take away the peace of God's presence with me.

Offer Thanks: That the God of peace promises to be with me.

Ask God: O God of peace, may my child not fear, for you are with him. Knowing that you are with my child on his first day of school brings hope to this mother's heart. This is such a big step, and it is hard to let go. So many questions weigh heavy on my heart and mind. Will the teacher like him? Will he find good friends? Will he be tearful and afraid? Yet when I pray, placing him into your mighty, loving hands, I have peace knowing that you are right there with him. Please replace his fears with the strength and courage to face whatever the day brings. Help his teacher to be sensitive to all the little fears that walked into her classroom today. And if I could be so bold, I ask that his teacher would say something to my son that makes him feel safe and secure. Give him a real sense that Jesus is with him. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God gives us his peace and his presence to calm our fears.



Praying for Classmates and Teachers Who Don't Know Jesus

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

Praise God: Who is faithful.

Confess: Any weakness of faith or lack of trust that leads me to doubt God's faithfulness.

Offer Thanks: For God's faithfulness in responding to my prayers for big, important things.

Ask God: O Father who is faithful, I pray for my child to believe that whatever she asks for in prayer, she has received it, and it will be hers. I ask that you would pour out your Spirit of prayer upon her to cry out for the lost at her school. May she know that praying for her classmates and teachers is the most important thing she can do. Please bring others who will join with her in praying that you will open the eyes of the blind and turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God so that they may receive forgiveness for their sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith. Assure her of your promise that you are patient, not wanting anyone to perish but wanting everyone to come to repentance. Put a great expectation on her heart that her prayers are making a difference. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God is faithful to keep all his promises.



Wisdom in Choosing Friends

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with scoffers. But they delight in doing everything the LORD wants; day and night they think about his law. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season without fail. Their leaves never wither, and in all they do, they prosper. (Psalm 1:1–3 NLT 1996)

Praise God: Who is wise.

Confess: Any carelessness in choosing how or with whom I spend my time.

Offer Thanks: That God's Word brings joy into my life when I obey its wisdom.

Ask God: Wise heavenly Father, I pray for my child to live in the joy of not following the advice of the wicked, or standing around with sinners, or joining in with scoffers. May he delight in doing everything you want; day and night may he think about your law. Then he will be like a tree planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season without fail, not withering but prospering in all he does. O Father, may he choose to walk with the wise rather than foolish, godless companions. Guide him to relationships that draw him closer to you. I pray that his heart will be attracted to those who love you and not to those who may be popular or outwardly attractive but despise the things you love. Lead my son to seek you with a pure heart that delights in your commands, so that he will prosper. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God is wise, and his ways bring joy to those who walk in them.





To Be a Diligent Student

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15 NASB)

Praise God: Who is sovereign.

Confess: My own laziness in preparing myself to serve God.

Offer Thanks: That our sovereign God cares enough to prepare us to do the work he has planned for us.

Ask God: Sovereign Lord, I pray that my child will be diligent to present himself approved to you as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. Help him see that right now his work is his studies. Place a desire in his heart for excellence and cause him to be disciplined and persistent in his study habits. May he work hard with a good attitude to accomplish all that is required of him so that he will not bring shame on himself by being unprepared in the classroom. I pray that his teachers will not look the other way when he is not working up to his potential but instead will help him in any way they can when he struggles. May he give his maximum effort in all he does, especially being diligent in the study of your Word so that he can impart it accurately to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God is sovereign, helping us fulfill his plans.



Help for Struggles with Schoolwork

I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. (Isaiah 41:13)

Praise God: That he is our helper.

Confess: Any pride or doubt that keeps me from admitting my need for help or accepting help when it is offered.

Offer Thanks: For the times God my helper has come to my aid.

Ask God: O Lord my helper, I pray that my child will know that you are the Lord his God, who takes hold of his right hand and says to him, “Do not fear; I will help you.” May the promise of your words reassure him as he struggles with his studies at school. Please give his teachers patience, compassion, and wisdom to know how to help him learn. I pray that he will not be too proud or embarrassed to ask his teacher for help, and may he be eager to ask for your help as well. When he calls on you, give him an understanding of his lessons, enlighten his mind, and protect him from discouragement. Grant him peace and contentment when he knows that he has tried his best. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Remember: God is always our helper.



Success in Taking Tests and Exams

May the Lord our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!
(Psalm 90:17 NLT 1996)

Praise God: Who is all-knowing.

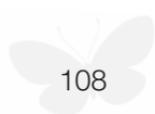
Confess: The times I have not valued God's approval and have done less than my best.

Offer Thanks: For the times my all-knowing God has helped to make my best efforts successful.

Ask God: Omniscient, all-knowing God, may you show my child your approval and make her efforts successful. Yes, make her efforts successful! I pray that she will turn to you for help in understanding the material she is to study. Help her schedule appropriate time to study for her tests. When taking an exam, may she recall the promise that you have not given her a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind. Give her a calm spirit because she knows that you are there to help her and will supernaturally bring to mind what she has studied. I pray that she will not get sidetracked while taking an exam, and if she is tempted to cheat, give her the integrity and moral strength to do what is right. Whatever the outcome of an exam, may she be at peace knowing that she did her best and that you honor her efforts. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: Our all-knowing God cares enough to make our efforts successful.





Protection from Physical Harm

[God] orders his angels to protect you wherever you go.
(Psalm 91:11 NLT 1996)

Praise God: Our protector.

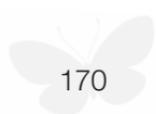
Confess: The fear that God will allow my child to slip out of his protective care.

Offer Thanks: That my child is never out of God's sight and protective care.

Ask God: O blessed Protector, I pray that you will order your angels to protect my child wherever he goes. He is so rambunctious and does things before he thinks about what the consequences might be. I cry out to you for his physical protection today. It is a great comfort to know that you command your angels to deliver him from harmful activities and protect him from injury. Please help him to make the right choice about things he should and should not do. Tame his impulsiveness. Strengthen him to not heed the persuasive cheers or mocking taunts of friends who challenge him to take daring risks. May he find comfort in knowing that your angels are with him to guide and protect him. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God is always our protector in the physical and the spiritual realms.





Responding to Bullying

When [God's people] cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them. (Isaiah 19:20)

Praise God: Who is our defender.

Confess: My lack of forgiveness for those who have wronged me.

Offer Thanks: That God who defends us also cares deeply for those who come against me.

Ask God: O Lord my defender, I ask that my child would cry out to you because of her oppressors, knowing that you will send a savior and defender to rescue her. My heart is sickened to know that she is being bullied at school, and that despite her complaints, the behavior has not stopped. She is feeling so worthless and devalued because of the continued taunts. O Father, defend my child. Guard her from these attacks. Please rescue her. Send a teacher, a friend, somebody who will see this bullying as it happens and step in to stop the oppressor. As a result of this trial, I ask that you would develop in her a spirit of forgiveness and prayer for the bully. Grant her courage to stand up to that child, knowing that you are her defender, who cares about what is happening to her. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God is our defender.





Using Social Media

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:29)

Praise God: For he is kind.

Confess: Any habits of gossip or slander.

Offer Thanks: To God, whose words of grace and truth call us into relationship with him.

Ask God: O kind Lord, I pray that my child will not let any unwholesome talk come out of her mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. I ask that your protective hand would cover my daughter's relationships with friends and schoolmates. Her social life is so important to her. Give me wisdom in teaching her to set appropriate boundaries on the content of social media and the amount of time she spends on it. As she communicates with others, grant her a keen awareness of the impact of her own behavior, and keep her from getting caught up in gossip or any other behavior that might harm others. When she receives inappropriate or illegal content, give her wisdom to realize that it is wrong and take the right actions to protect herself and defend others. Protect her from receiving vile or demeaning images and messages. I pray that she would be careful to use social media in a way that honors you and builds others up. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God wants us to build each other up in love.



Choosing a College

The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." (Psalm 32:8 NLT 1996)

Praise God: Who is our Counselor.

Confess: Any fear or pride that pushes me to try to manipulate and control my child's future.

Offer Thanks: That my child's future is in God's able hands, and that he will guide her in the best pathway.

Ask God: O blessed Counselor, I cry out for my child's heart to be at peace because she can trust you to guide her along the best pathway for her life. May she find confidence in knowing that you will advise her and watch over her. Help her research different colleges and universities and evaluate them rightly. Give her a heart that seeks your counsel first and welcomes godly counsel from others as she makes this most important decision. May she not heed voices that are contrary to yours. Please give a clear indication of where she should go, and close the door to universities or colleges that would not be good for her. I ask that she would find godly fellowship in a vibrant Christian ministry on her campus. May it be a place where she can get involved and develop her gifts and talents as she grows in her faith. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember: God, our Counselor, advises, guides, and watches over us.



PRAYING
the Scriptures
for Your
CHILDREN

Also by Jodie Berndt

Celebration of Miracles

Praying the Scriptures for Your Teens

Praying the Scriptures for Your Adult Children

PRAYING

the Scriptures
for Your

CHILDREN

*Discover How to Pray God's
Purpose for Their Lives*

JODIE BERNDT

 ZONDERVAN®

We want to hear from you. Please send your comments about this book to us in care of zreview@zondervan.com. Thank you.

ZONDERVAN

Praying the Scriptures for Your Children
Copyright © 2001 by Jodie Berndt

This title is also available as a Zondervan ebook.
Visit www.zondervan.com/ebooks.

Requests for information should be addressed to:
Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

This edition: ISBN 978-0-310-33755-3 (softcover)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Berndt, Jodie.

Praying the scriptures for your children : discover how to pray God's will for their lives /
Jodie Berndt.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-310-23216-2 (hardcover)

1. Mothers—Prayer-books and devotions—English. 2. Children—Religious life. I. Title.

BV4847.B45 2001

248.3'2'0852—dc21

OO-051294

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from The Holy Bible, *New International Version*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. Scripture references indicated AMPLIFIED are based on *The Amplified Bible, Expanded Edition*, copyright © 1987 by Zondervan and The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Scripture references indicated LB are based on *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois. All rights reserved. Scripture references indicated THE MESSAGE are based on *The Message: The New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs in Contemporary Language*, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995 by Eugene Peterson. All rights reserved.

Any Internet addresses (websites, blogs, etc.) and telephone numbers in this book are offered as a resource. They are not intended in any way to be or imply an endorsement by Zondervan, nor does Zondervan vouch for the content of these sites and numbers for the life of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Cover photography: Laurence Mouton / Getty Images®

Interior design: Beth Shagene

Printed in the United States of America

13 14 15 16 17 18 19 /DCI/ 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	9
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	13
<i>Introduction: Getting Started in Prayer</i>	15

PART 1: PRAYING FOR YOUR CHILD'S FAITH

1. Praying for Your Child's Salvation	23
2. Praying for Your Child to Love God's Word	34
3. Praying for Your Child's Gifts	43
4. Praying for Your Child to Promote God's Kingdom	52

PART 2: PRAYING FOR YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER

5. Praying for Wisdom and Discernment.	65
6. Praying for a Servant's Heart	76
7. Praying for Kindness and Compassion	86
8. Praying for Self-Control, Diligence, and Self-Discipline.	96

PART 3: PRAYING FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY

9. Praying for Physical Health and Safety	109
10. Praying for Spiritual Protection	120

11. Praying for Emotional Well-Being	130
12. Praying for Kids in Crisis.	140

**PART 4: PRAYING FOR YOUR CHILD'S
RELATIONSHIPS**

13. Praying for Your Child's Relationship with Friends	153
14. Praying for Your Child's Relationship with Siblings	162
15. Praying for Your Child's Relationship with Teachers and Coaches.	173
16. Praying for Your Child's Relationship with You.	185

**PART 5: PRAYING FOR YOUR CHILD'S
FUTURE**

17. Praying for Your Child's Purpose in Life	199
18. Praying for Your Child's Marriage	210
19. Praying for Your Child's Management of Time and Money.	221
20. Praying for Your Child When He or She Leaves Your Nest.	232

<i>Conclusion: The Life-Changing Work of Prayer</i>	<i>243</i>
---	------------

<i>Appendix: Using Biblical Characters to Pray for Your Children</i>	<i>249</i>
--	------------

<i>Recommended Resources</i>	<i>255</i>
--	------------

<i>Notes</i>	<i>257</i>
------------------------	------------

Praying for Your Child's Relationship with Teachers and Coaches

*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.
They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.
Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden,
for that would be of no advantage to you.*

—HEBREWS 13:17

I'll never forget the day one of our daughters came home from school and announced that her new teacher was a Christian.

I looked up from the manuscript I was proofreading, intrigued. "Really?" I asked. "How do you know?"

"I know she's a Christian because she prays," came the reply. "She prays?"

"Yes, Mom. Almost every day she says, 'O God, help me get through this day.' But sometimes she just says, 'O God,' and puts her head down on her desk."

I laugh every time I remember that story, and my heart still goes out to that teacher!

Like so many parents, Robbie and I prayed long and hard about where to send our children to school. We lived in Atlanta

when the time came to enroll Hillary in kindergarten, and we clearly sensed God leading us to send her to the local public school. Despite some of our concerns about the general state of public education (especially in a big city), we obeyed this prompting. Later, when we moved to Winston-Salem, we revisited the issue and again felt drawn to the public school. We knew—as we had in Atlanta—that not all of our children's teachers would be Christians, and that some might be directly opposed to our faith. Yet we couldn't deny what God had told us to do, and so, following the advice of Proverbs 3:5–6, we decided to trust God instead of leaning on our own understanding, and to rely on him to make our paths straight.

And he has. We have been blessed with wonderful teachers, wise administrators, and an education that has exceeded our highest expectations, both academically and in terms of how the experience has shaped our children's characters. Every spring we pray that God will choose our kids' teachers for the following year, and while we have not always gotten the teacher *we* would have chosen, God, in his infinite wisdom, has proved that *he* knows what is best for our kids.

My friend Camille, who also asks God to pick her children's teachers, loves the freedom inherent in this approach. "Instead of agonizing over which teacher our kids will get, we just leave it up to God. He knows their needs better than anyone."

Praying that God will choose your child's teachers—and then living with his answers—is not always easy. One year, for instance, one of our daughters wound up in a class with a teacher whose academic standards were not very high, and we worried that she would be bored or lose interest in school. In hindsight, though, we realized what God knew all along:

Our daughter's greatest need that year was not for intellectual stimulation but for emotional acceptance—and the love and praise she received from this particular teacher built her self-confidence in a way that academic challenges never could have.

Prayer Principle

Asking God to choose your children's teachers
frees you from having to worry about
or meddle in the decision.

The Life-Changing Power of Prayer

I am not, of course, advocating a “hands-off” approach to your children's education. There will undoubtedly be times when you have concerns and you will want to meet with the teacher or the principal. But before you start worrying, complaining, or maneuvering, ask God if there is anything else he wants you to do.

Sharon's daughter, Addy, was a model student, popular with her teachers as well as with her classmates. Thus, when a high school math teacher went out of her way to make Addy's life miserable, Sharon and Addy couldn't help but wonder what God was thinking.

The teacher, Mary Ellen, was a single woman who had grown up under the shadows of divorce, poverty, and a physically abusive, tyrannical father. She really knew very little about God, but her parents' religious community adhered to incredibly strict rules and used fear and punishment to perpetuate their faith—distorting her concept of a loving, heavenly Father.

Years later, when Mary Ellen became a math teacher, her longtime distrust of anything religious manifested itself in the way she treated her students, particularly those she identified as “Christians.” She ridiculed their beliefs and bullied them into questioning their convictions—so much so that Addy and her friends would come home from school in tears.

One day Sharon got a call from the school secretary, who knew that Sharon and several other moms prayed for their children and for the school in an informal prayer group each week. “Mary Ellen is having hip surgery next week,” she said, “and she’s not doing very well. She expects all of us here at school to take care of her, but we have families of our own. I don’t know how she’ll manage—she has nobody, you know. Could you ask your group to pray for her?”

Sharon agreed to pray—yet inwardly cringed. She did not like Mary Ellen, they had nothing in common, and, if truth be told, she didn’t much care what happened to the woman. Nevertheless, she and her group began to pray, and as they did, the women began to sense God leading them to take care of the teacher. Like Sharon, none of the mothers felt at all close to Mary Ellen, and providing the physical support she would need would be more than just an inconvenience: Not only did Mary Ellen live far away, but her apartment was on the third floor—and the thought of three flights’ worth of complaining and Christian-bashing as they helped her go up and down was more than any of them could bear.

Even so, the mothers accepted their assignment, driving Mary Ellen to the hospital, sitting with her at her bedside, and cooking and caring for her as she recuperated at home. Desperate for help, Mary Ellen could do little but receive their

gesture—although she was quick to remind them that she thought that their prayers were a big waste of time.

In time, though, Mary Ellen’s heart began to soften. Sitting with her one day, Sharon had the privilege of sharing the gospel—the *real* message of God’s love—and then praying with the teacher as she committed her life to Jesus Christ. Addy and the other students who knew what their mothers were doing watched in amazement as Mary Ellen returned to school, obviously a changed person. Even the other teachers noticed.

“Watch out for those moms in that prayer group,” one of her coworkers warned. “They’re in some kind of a cult.”

“You may think that,” Mary Ellen calmly replied, “but they are the first people I’ve ever met who really loved me.”

Today, Mary Ellen is one of Sharon’s good friends, and she has spent a number of Christmases with Sharon and Addy’s family. And because Sharon and the other moms acted out of obedience to God—rather than on the basis of their feelings—they have all learned a valuable lesson. “Our kids will have tough teachers,” Sharon told me, “but trying to protect them from these situations is not always the wisest course. Sometimes God allows a difficult situation just so they can see his power to change people.”

Prayer Principle

Praying for your children’s teachers —
instead of complaining about them —
will encourage your kids to rely on God’s power
in the face of difficult circumstances.

Praying for a Teachable Spirit

If you're like me, you tend to spend more time praying for your kids to get the right *teachers* than that they will be the right *students*. But how our children think and behave in the classroom or on the athletic field can go farther toward fostering strong relationships with teachers and coaches than just about anything else.

Ned and Drew are two of the most teachable young men I know. Eager learners, they are quick to explore new ideas, and they have learned to recognize and respect the giftedness of their teachers—even when some of the concepts they were taught clashed with their own Christian convictions.

Ned and Drew's willingness to learn is also evident in their athletic pursuits. Both are outstanding runners, a trait they inherited from their father, Jim, an Olympic medalist who was the first high schooler to run a mile in less than four minutes. When Ned and Drew won spots on their high school track team, Jim vowed not to interfere with the coach's methods. Moreover, he encouraged his sons to respect the coach's authority, even if the man's coaching style differed from their father's teaching.

As it turned out, the high school track coach did not do everything the way the former Olympian would have, and Ned and Drew knew it. But rather than argue with the man or rebel against his methods, the boys opted to buckle down and do their very best, while Jim and his wife, Anne, stayed content to pray for their sons from the bleachers. As a result of the family's gentle, teachable spirit, the coach saw Christianity in a very favorable light—a testimony that would not have

been possible had Ned and Drew taken an aggressive or defiant stand against his techniques. What's more, the track team won an unprecedented (and never-repeated) series of three straight state championships.

Every life has its share of boredom, dissatisfaction, frustration, and tragedy. But if our children can learn to meet each new challenge, as Ned and Drew did, by seeing the value in other people, respecting authority, and looking for opportunities to learn and grow, then even painful or disappointing circumstances can become reasons for thanksgiving. And long after our children have graduated from classrooms and playing fields, a teachable spirit will prove its lasting worth in their careers, their marriages, and their ability to minister to others.

Prayer Principle

Asking God to give your children a teachable spirit involves allowing him to use their mistakes and failures as stepping-stones on the path to victory.

Poised for Prayer

Our children aren't the only ones who need a teachable spirit. As parents, we must adopt a similar attitude of gratitude and respect—particularly when we approach our kids' teachers, coaches, or school administrators. I learned this lesson the hard way when I told a teacher what I thought was wrong with a book she had recommended to one of our kids—without first giving her the chance to explain why she liked the story so much. When I finally got around to considering her point of

view, I realized that some of her ideas made sense—but my opportunity for sharing a Christian perspective on the subject matter was long gone.

If you find your kids (or yourself) in a tough spot with a teacher or a coach, don't criticize the teacher—especially not in front of your children. Instead, make prayer your top priority. Praying for your children's teachers can soften your heart toward them and cause you to see them as God sees them: as his precious children, regardless of where they are in their journey of faith. Invite your children to join you in this work, and don't get discouraged if you don't see an immediate change. Focus on verses like 1 Corinthians 15:58, which reminds us to stand firm and give ourselves “fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord [that is, your prayer] is not in vain.”

Next, check your attitude. Get rid of defensiveness, self-righteousness, bitterness, or anger, replacing those traits with humility, gentleness, gratitude, and love. Ask God to give you and your kids a teachable spirit, and diligently follow Paul's advice in Colossians 4:6: “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

Finally, remember that you are part of a bigger picture. When your child graduates from a classroom or a school, God will likely bring another Christian family into that classroom or school to take your place. Don't say or do anything to jeopardize that family's testimony; *you* might not have to live with the consequences of your actions, but *they* will. Instead, think of yourselves as runners in a race, receiving the baton from

those who have gone before you and passing it on to those who follow.

Jesus said that the “harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”¹ How our families minister to our teachers is, from a kingdom perspective, just as important as how they impact us. Let’s learn to see our teachers and our schools as harvest fields, and let’s thank God for giving us—and all those who come behind us—the privilege of working alongside him to bring in the harvest.

Prayers You Can Use

Heavenly Father ...

Turn _____'s ear toward wisdom and her heart toward understanding. Give her a teachable spirit, one that calls out for insight and searches for it as for hidden treasure.

PROVERBS 2:2-4

Cause _____ to obey his teachers and coaches and submit to their authority. Let him know that these people keep watch over him and that you will hold them accountable for the job they do. Show _____ that when he obeys his teachers and coaches and makes their work a joy instead of a burden, the end result will be to his advantage.

HEBREWS 13:17

Make _____ and her teachers completely humble and gentle. Let them be patient, bearing with one another in love.

EPHESIANS 4:2

I pray that _____ would show proper respect to everyone. Let him love his brothers and sisters in Christ, fear you, and honor those in authority over him.

I PETER 2:17

Don't let any teacher take _____ captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:8

Let _____'s teachers and coaches never become weary in doing good, but let them know that at the proper time they will reap a harvest if they do not give up. Likewise, don't let _____ grow weary as she prays for her teachers.

GALATIANS 6:9

Cause _____ to be wise in the way he acts toward his teachers, making the most of every opportunity. Let his conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that he will know how to respectfully and graciously answer his teachers' questions.

COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

You know our needs even before we ask you, Lord, and you promise to work in all things for the good of those who love you. Handpick each one of _____'s teachers, and surround her with classmates of your choosing.

MATTHEW 6:8; ROMANS 8:28

Remind _____ to pray for his teachers and coaches and give thanks for the role they play in his life.

I TIMOTHY 2:1-2

I pray that _____'s male teachers and coaches would be men of temperance, dignity, and wisdom, with lives marked by faith, love, and endurance. I pray that the women in _____'s life would be models of goodness, self-control, reverence, and purity. In everything, let these men and women set an example for _____ by doing what is good. TITUS 2:2-7

INTRODUCTION

Getting Started in Prayer

*This is the confidence
we have in approaching God:
that if we ask anything according to his will,
he hears us.*

—1 JOHN 5:14

The Brothers Grimm tell the story of *Sleeping Beauty*, which opens with all of the fairies in the kingdom bringing baptismal gifts to an infant princess. One fairy gives beauty, another offers virtue, a third bestows kindness, and so on until the little girl has everything she needs to grow into a wise and lovely young woman.

Reading this story to my own young daughters, I used to wish that such blessings were so easy to come by. Just throw a christening party, invite all the fairies, and—presto!—your child would be covered.

But God gives us another—better—way to provide these gifts (and so many more) for our children. He invites us to pray. And, in fact, according to many biblical scholars, God *requires* us to pray before he can go to work. About 250 years ago, British evangelist John Wesley wrote that “God does nothing on earth save in answer to believing prayer”; many contemporary

pastors and authors echo this thought, noting, as nineteenth-century evangelist Andrew Murray did, that “God’s giving is inseparably connected with our asking.”¹

The Bible supports this connection. Over and over again God says, “*Ask of me, and I will . . .*” and “*If my people . . . will humble themselves and pray, . . . then will I . . .*” and “*Ask and it will be given to you.*”² Moreover, there is scriptural evidence that there are times when our failure to ask God for something results in his holding back on the blessings or protection he wanted to provide (see, for example, Ezekiel 22:30–31). No matter how you interpret passages like this one, one thing is clear: *God wants us to pray.*

As a mother, I’ve always seen prayer as a natural part of the parenting process, and I have always prayed for my children. But for many years my prayers tended to run along the “God bless Johnny” lines. I’d ask God to help my kids on their spelling tests, protect them on field trips, and restore their health when they got the flu or ran a fever. Rarely, though, did my prayers get more creative than that, and almost never did I sense that they packed any real punch.

And then I got involved with a group called Moms in Prayer (formerly Moms In Touch). On the basis of Scripture verses like John 15:7 (“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you”) and Jeremiah 1:12, AMPLIFIED (“I am alert *and* active, watching over My word to perform it”), the Moms in Prayer tactic is to use the Bible itself—God’s actual words—as the foundation for our prayers.

Here’s what I mean. Verses like Ephesians 4:32 (“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just

as in Christ God forgave you”) can be reworked into terrific prayers for how your kids treat each other:

I pray that Hillary and Annesley would be kind and compassionate toward each other, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave them.

Verses like 2 Timothy 2:22 (“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”) can serve as a prayer for the friends your children choose:

I pray that Virginia and Robbie would flee from evil desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, enjoying the company of children who call on the Lord and have pure hearts.

Not only are prayers like these more interesting and creative than the ones I used to come up with on my own, but, because they come straight out of the Bible, they carry the full weight and power of God’s word. As God says in Isaiah 55:11, “my word . . . will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” And as the author of Hebrews points out, “the Word that God speaks is

alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective].”³

Using the Bible as the basis for many of my prayers made them more interesting, creative, and powerful, but I still found myself hanging back, more comfortable sitting on the bench than actually charging onto the playing field of Serious Prayer. Serious Prayer was, I figured, reserved for life’s *real* Prayer Warriors—people who had fewer kids and a lot less laundry to do than I did. Reading about Christians who spent hours in prayer did little to inspire me; in fact, it made me want to give up and throw in the prayer towel. “I’m just not that holy,” I’d tell myself. “I’m just not like that.”

Then I met Cynthia Heald, a best-selling author whose books include one called *Becoming a Woman of Prayer*. “I’d like to be a ‘woman of prayer,’” I told her, “but I’m not. The way I see it, if I don’t spend at least a half hour sitting down, with my notebook and Bible in hand, and really *pray*, then my prayers won’t count.”

Cynthia set me straight. “You can pray in the car pool line,” she said, “or while you’re washing dishes. Pray while you walk through your neighborhood, or while you clean the bathroom. It doesn’t take a lot of time or preparation to meet God. Just go to him, and you’re there.”

Now, I am sure that Cynthia Heald would encourage all of us to make time in our daily schedules for some concentrated, uninterrupted prayer, but her gentle advice to “just do it” got me started. I began to pray while I drove, while I made lunches, while I cleaned—and I even added my own little trick. Thinking of the temple incense that wafted toward heaven in Bible times, I began to use the smell of Lysol or Tilex as my own

“fragrant” reminder to send my prayers heavenward while I scrubbed the toilet!

No matter how limited your own prayer life might be, it can't be as pathetic as that.

I love my kids—Hillary, Annesley, Virginia Jane, and Robbie. And I know you love your kids. Don't let Satan rob you of the joy of praying for them—and of seeing God work in their lives—by making you think you're somehow not up to the job.

Each of the chapters in this book deals with a different prayer topic or area of concern that parents often have for their children. Each chapter includes illustrations that bring these topics to life, and while I have sometimes changed names and minor details, all of the stories are true. I am grateful to the many parents who were willing to share in this book their concerns as well as their prayers.

At the end of each chapter I've included several Bible verses written in the form of prayers you can personalize for your family. You can use just one of these prayer verses, or pray your way through all of them. You can read and pray through all twenty chapters, or pick and choose the sections that appeal to you. Once you find out what's here, you might want to use this book as a reference manual of sorts for those times when your kids come to a tough spot and you need some fresh ideas for prayer.

Pastor and author Jack Hayford likens prayer to a “partnership of the redeemed child of God working hand in hand with God toward the realization of his redemptive purposes on earth.”⁴ As you slip your hand into your heavenly Father's, prayerfully working with him to see his purposes fulfilled in

the lives of your children, my prayer is that you will come face-to-face with the God of Ephesians 3:20—the One who is able to do immeasurably more than all you could ask or imagine.

Sleeping Beauty may have had a bevy of fairies in her nursery, but we have access to the throne room of the King of kings. And given a choice between the two, I know which one I'd pick.

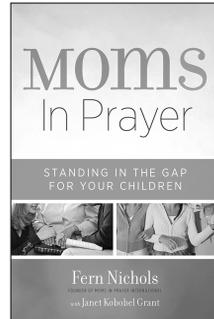
What about you?

If you were blessed by these selections, please check out the authors' books in FaithGateway Store

Moms in Prayer

Standing in the Gap
for Your Children

Fern Nichols
with *Janet Kobobel Grant*



What principles enabled the concerned mom of two junior high school students to move from deciding she needed to pray for her kids at school to becoming the founder of a worldwide prayer movement called Moms in Prayer (formerly Moms In Touch International)?

Fern Nichols is a passionate believer in the power of prayer. In *Moms in Prayer*, she reveals how she teaches women to pray in a way that changes their lives and the lives of those they love. She teaches the principles and practices that will revolutionize not only the way people think about prayer, but the way they do prayer, leading them into a deeper intimacy with Jesus, who is always interceding on our behalf.

Sparkling with real-life stories of God at work in the lives of praying moms, Fern introduces us to the four prayers that are the foundation of the Moms in Prayer approach to prayer:

- *Praise* – Praying according to the attributes of God
- *Confession* – Breaking strongholds
- *Thanksgiving* – Expressing a grateful heart
- *Intercession* – Standing in the gap with Jesus

What transforms these well-known elements of prayer into such a powerful force in *Moms in Prayer*? Fern Nichols introduces a way of praying that energizes, creates an appetite for intimacy with God, overcomes spiritual paralysis, eliminates fear, unveils the heart and character of God, and transforms the pray-er's life and perspective.



Order Now

Praying the Scriptures for Your Teens

Discover How to Pray God's
Purpose for Their Lives

Jodie Berndt

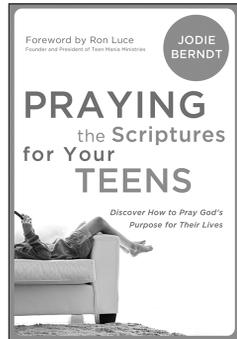
It's never been tougher to be a teenager – or the parent of one. Thankfully, from your teen's first date to the next time he or she borrows the car keys, you can take your concerns to God.

Drawing on God's Word, *Praying the Scriptures for Your Teenagers* offers palpable help to pray about the stormy issues your teen faces:

- Relationships • Depression • Drug and alcohol use
- Sexuality • Eating disorders – and much more.

This book guides you in praying about everything from your teen's character to the purposes that God has for his or her life. Filled with historical, biblical, and contemporary illustrations, *Praying the Scriptures for Your Teenagers* shows how to make the Bible your source for prayers that can powerfully influence your teen's life.

With humor and a warm, personal style, author Jodie Berndt encourages you that, in this sometimes daunting new world, “when you pray the Scriptures, you tap into the same power that has kept teenagers safe for generations.”



Order Now

ZONDERVAN
.com

A Word
from Author

JODIE BERNDT



OF ALL THE BOOKS EVER written about prayer, few have stood the test of time so well as R.A. Torrey’s straightforward classic, *How to Pray*. Written in 1900—*1900!*—it serves up pearls like this one: “The true purpose in prayer is that God may be glorified in the answer.”

As parents, we can be tempted to glorify or idolize our kids. Not overtly, of course, but when we center our thoughts on them—either because they have made us so *proud* or because they have made us so *anxious*—we inadvertently elbow God out of the picture. When you pray the Scriptures for your kids, I encourage you to do so with a heart that desires, above all else, to bring honor and praise to God. He really does have marvelous plans for our children; let’s give him the freedom, in prayer, to accomplish those purposes in his ways and according to his timetable. Let us “enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise”¹—no matter what the circumstances look like. He has it all under control.

And as you pray, know that I am praying for you. Be encouraged. God is with you and your children. He is mighty to save. And he takes great delight in you.²

You are loved.

1. Psalm 100:4.

2. Zephaniah 3:17.