

Morning Prayers

Mornings seem to be the special province of young children. As long as they don't stay up too late, children have the ability to wake up with an ease and freshness that is truly astonishing. Unfortunately (but understandably), most grown-ups find it a little hard to appreciate this fact at six or seven in the morning, when young feet begin scampering down stairs or the sides of the crib begin to rattle and shake and small, insistent voices cry out for liberation.

Perhaps here, as in so many other aspects of our lives, children can remind us of something that we adults—with all our burdens, responsibilities, and anxieties—have lost sight of: that mornings should be greeted with wonder and gratitude.

If each morning is a new beginning, then it is also an opportunity to set the tone for the day, to put things into a

certain perspective. Even the briefest of prayers in the morning can help lift us out of the concerns and worries that all too quickly begin to preoccupy our thoughts and emotions. And for all their innocence, children too can become weighed down by the challenges of the coming day, whether it be a big test, a crucial sports event, or just the difficulty of finding friends and navigating the waters of their social life.

What kinds of prayer are appropriate for you and your children in the mornings? A lot depends on who gets up when. As members of the household straggle down at different times and in different conditions, the notion of the entire family joining together in prayer may be a little idealistic. Nevertheless, there may be a moment—between scarfing down a bowl of cereal and running for the bus—when a common prayer might be offered.

In our family, where both Mom and Dad are emphatically “night people,” it isn’t practical to have family prayers in the morning. So we have encouraged our children to develop their own short, private devotions. In some traditions, a physical gesture, such as the sign of the cross, is the first and simplest act of prayer.

When it comes to using words, a single verse of scripture or a classic prayer set to a simple rhyming scheme can also be sufficient. One of our favorite morning prayers is “This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

Praise and thanksgiving are natural sorts of prayers to offer in the morning, but so are requests for guidance and wisdom in facing the particular challenges that lie ahead. You may find that your child is able to express concerns in prayer that he or she is not as ready to share in normal conversation.

Even when morning prayers begin to fade from the mind, they can still serve, at a deep psychic and emotional level, to insulate your child from fears and temptations and to inspire hope and courage.



Guardian angel, protect me today,
Watch over me while I work and play.
Let me be kind and loving and good,
Help me do the things I should.

—Anonymous

Now, before I run to play,
Let me not forget to pray
To God Who kept me through the night
And waked me with the morning light.
Help me, Lord, to love Thee more
Than I ever loved before,
In my work and in my play,
Be Thou with me through the day. Amen.

—Anonymous

For this new morning and its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For every gift His goodness sends
We thank you, gracious Lord. Amen.

—Anonymous

Dear Lord, I offer you this day
All I shall think or do or say.

—Anonymous

Day by day, dear Lord of you
Three things I pray:
To see you more clearly,
To love you more dearly,
To follow you more nearly,
Day by day.

—Saint Richard of Chichester

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
That what I do in anything,
To do it as for thee.

—George Herbert

This is the day that the Lord has made;
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

—Psalm 118:24

Lord of all hopefulfulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy.
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

—Traditional Irish hymn

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation
of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight,
O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

—Psalm 19:14

O Lord, Our Heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, who has safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with Thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by Thy governance, to do always what is righteous in Thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Book of Common Prayer*

Shew me thy ways, O Lord;
teach me thy paths.
Lead me in truth, and teach me:
For thou art the God of my salvation;
On thee do I wait all the day.

—Psalm 25:4-5

O Lord our God, grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart, that, so desiring, we may find you; and so finding you, we may love you; and so loving you, may rejoice in you for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Saint Anselm

May my mouth praise the love of God this morning.
O God, may I do your will this day.
May my ears hear the words of God and obey them.
O God, may I do your will this day.
May my feet follow the footsteps of God this day.
O God, may I do your will this day.

—Prayer from Japan

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, his might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need,
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward;
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

—From the prayer known as

“The Breastplate of Saint Patrick”

God, who hast folded back the mantle of the night
to clothe us in the golden glory of the day,
chase from our hearts all gloomy thoughts
and make us glad with the brightness of hope.

—Ancient Collect

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the sun that always rises,
but never sets. You are the source of all life, creating
and sustaining every living thing. You are the source
of all food, material and spiritual, nourishing us in
both body and soul. You are the light that dispels the
clouds of error and doubt, and goes before me every
hour of the day, guiding my thoughts and my actions.
May I walk in your light, be nourished by your food, be
sustained by your mercy, and be warmed by your love.

—Desiderius Erasmus