

# CONVERSATION WITH GOD

“Prayer is listening as well as speaking, receiving as well as asking;  
and its deepest mood is friendship held in reverence.”

—George A. Buttrick

**W**hat makes you walk away from a conversation saying, “Good talk!” ... or what makes a conversation satisfying? Many times, it comes down to being heard by the other person and hearing loving truth from them, a place of mutual listening and acceptance.

**Those same things that make for genuinely good conversation are valuable to us when we pray.** Prayer is a place of both awe and intimacy. Prayer is “a climbing up of the heart unto God” (Martin Luther). Prayer is a place where deepening relationship flows in both directions.



We might need to broaden our understanding of prayer. We might need to take the time to marinate our hearts in the Lord’s Prayer, since those are the words that Jesus used to teach his first disciples how to pray. Acknowledging who God is, trusting in his will, forgiveness and forgiving, and rejoicing in provision, guidance and deliverance.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us, “Don’t stop praying.” From that we know that prayer is more than a mealtime, “Thanks,” or a bedtime, “Bless me.” Prayer is not an event; it is a lifestyle. Prayer is, according to Richard Foster, “a life of constant conversation with the Holy One.” Imagine a child who converses with God as she plays, does her chores, tries hard to learn a new concept in school, faces failure as she practices, or endures disappointment when plans change. **What a wonderful existence if children can go through life with the habit of talking to God and hearing from him — in conversation.**

As we enjoy the soul-satisfying habit of a continuing conversation with our God, we can influence the children in our lives to abide there also. And as we invite children to engage in ongoing conversations with God, we are showing them a place where they can have heart-to-heart authenticity, acceptance, understanding, encouragement, and his lingering presence. And it is a place where they can hear from God — where they become familiar with the loving whisper of the Spirit of God.

**Start the conversation with your child!**

“Come and sit with me a minute. Let’s have a conversation about conversation.”

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## INVITATIONS TO ENGAGE

### EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-6 years old)

*(Sit on one side of an open door and have the child sit on the other side of the door.)*  
Can you hear me? Even though we can't see each other, you know I'm here and you know that I can hear you. Tell me something that makes you happy. Now tell me something that makes you sad. I care about those things so much! And God cares even more than I do. Even though you can't see him, God loves to hear from you and he loves to talk to you.

Let's sit together, and you can tell God what you told me. Now let's sit quietly for a minute to see if God has something to say to you.

Isn't it wonderful that we don't have to come to this door to talk to each other? Praying to God is like that. You can talk to him anytime about anything.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us, "Don't stop praying." That means that all day long you can say, "Help me!" or "Thank you!" and God will hear you and answer.

### ELEMENTARY AGE (5-10 years old)

When we have a conversation with someone, part of the time we talk and part of the time we listen. Sometimes we forget to listen, don't we? Prayer is a conversation with God, and sometimes we talk so much that we forget to listen to him, too.

Let's use two colors of paper strips and create a prayer chain to hang in your room. As you pray, write on one color of paper strip the things you are saying to God. Then on the other color, write the things God has said to you when you listen to him while you pray. Then add them to the chain.

Each night as you remember what you've prayed about through the day, add to the chain and you will learn something about your conversations with God.

### PRETEEN/EARLY ADOLESCENT (10-14 years old)

*(Have the child cut three or four small circles out of red paper or use red stickers.)*

Good conversation means that there is both talking and listening. That's true even when we are in conversation with God. Maybe if we had some red lights, like we see when we are driving, we would remember to stop and pay attention to what God might be saying.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us, "Don't stop praying." That means that we can talk and listen to God all day long.

You can think of places to put these red circles. Then when you see them all through today, you can stop and talk to God and then wait there a little while to listen to what he might want to say.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

*Children, Can You Hear Me?*  
by Brad Jersak