

# Top 10 Prayers Every Catholic Child Should Know

Teaching your children how to pray can be a daunting task. The best place to start is with common prayers for children that can be easily memorized. Children who are making their [First Communion](#) should have memorized most of the following prayers, while the [Grace Before and After Meals](#) and the [Guardian Angel Prayer](#) are prayers that even very young children can learn by repeating them daily.

## 1. [The Sign of the Cross](#)

The Sign of the Cross is the most basic Catholic prayer, though we don't often think of it that way. We should teach our children to say it with reverence before and after their other prayers.

The most common problem that children have in learning the Sign of the Cross is using their left hand instead of their right; the second most common is touching their right shoulder before the left.

## 2. [The Our Father](#)

We should pray the Our Father daily with our children. It's a good prayer to use as a short morning or evening prayer. Pay close attention to how your children pronounce the words; there are a lot of opportunities for misunderstandings and mispronunciations, such as "Howard be thy name."

## 3. [The Hail Mary](#)

Children naturally gravitate to the Virgin Mary, and learning the Hail Mary early makes it easier to foster devotion to St. Mary and to introduce longer Marian prayers, such as the Rosary. One useful technique for teaching the Hail Mary is for you to recite the first part of the prayer (through "the fruit of thy womb, Jesus") and then have your children respond with the second part ("Holy Mary").

## 4. [The Glory Be](#)

The Glory Be is a very simple prayer that any child who can make the [Sign of the Cross](#) can easily memorize. If your child has trouble remembering which hand to use when making the Sign of the Cross (or which shoulder to touch first), you can get some extra practice in by making the Sign of the Cross while reciting the Glory Be, as Eastern Rite Catholics and Eastern Orthodox do.

## 5. [An Act of Faith](#)

Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity are common morning prayers. If you help your children memorize them, they will always have a short form of morning prayer at their disposal for those days when they don't have time to pray a longer form of morning prayer.

## 6. [An Act of Hope](#)

An Act of Hope is a very good prayer for school-aged children. Encourage your children to memorize it so that they can pray the Act of Hope before taking a test. While there is no substitute for study, it is good for students to realize that they don't have to rely on their own strength alone.

## 7. [An Act of Charity](#)

Childhood is a time filled with deep emotions, and children often suffer real and perceived slights and injuries at the hands of friends and classmates. While the primary purpose of an Act of Charity is to express our love for God, this prayer is also a daily reminder to our children to try to develop forgiveness and love toward others.

## 8. [The Act of Contrition](#)

The Act of Contrition is an essential prayer for the Sacrament of Confession, but we should also encourage our children to say it every evening before they go to sleep. Children who have made their First Confession should also make a quick [examination of conscience](#) before saying the Act of Contrition.

## 9. [Grace Before Meals](#)

Instilling a sense of gratitude in our children can be especially hard in a world where many of us have an overabundance of goods. Grace Before Meals is a good way to remind them (and ourselves!) that everything we have comes ultimately from God. (Consider adding the [Grace After Meals](#) to your routine as well, to cultivate a sense of thanksgiving as well as to keep those who have died in our prayers.)

## 10. [The Guardian Angel Prayer](#)

As with devotion to the Virgin Mary, children seem predisposed toward belief in their [guardian angel](#). Cultivating that belief when they are young will help to protect them from skepticism later on. As children grow older, encourage them to supplement the Guardian Angel Prayer with more personal prayers to their guardian angel.

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### 1. The Sign of the Cross

Since we make the Sign of the Cross before and after our prayers, many Catholics don't realize that the Sign of the Cross is a prayer itself. It should be said with reverence; we shouldn't rush through it on the way to the next prayer.

Using your right hand, you should touch your forehead at the mention of the Father; the lower middle of your chest at the mention of the Son; and the left shoulder on the word "Holy" and the right shoulder on the word "Spirit."

**"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."**

### 2. The Our Father

The Our Father is the oldest of Christian prayers, going back to Jesus Christ himself, who, in Matthew 6:9-13, taught his disciples to pray in these words. Because the prayer came from Christ, it is used in every Mass, and we should pray it daily.

**"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."**

### 3. The Hail Mary

The first half of the Hail Mary is straight out of the Bible. The part before the semicolon is the angel Gabriel's greeting to the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation, when he told her that she had been chosen by God to bear His Son, Jesus Christ (Luke 1:28). And the words after the semicolon were uttered by St. Elizabeth, the cousin of the Blessed Virgin, when St. Mary came to visit her and St. Elizabeth felt St. John the Baptist leap in her womb (Luke 1:42).

**"Hail Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."**

**"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."**

## 4. The Glory Be

The Glory Be, also known as the Doxology, is one of the earliest-known prayers to refer to the Holy Trinity. In Eastern Rite Catholic churches (as well as Eastern Orthodox ones), the Sign of the Cross is made while the Glory Be is recited.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

## 5. An Act of Faith

Acts of Faith are common in morning prayers, and they should be said at any time in which we feel our faith is being tested or we are enduring temptation. An Act of Faith can be as simple as "My God, I believe in you," but the following is a traditional version which generations of Catholics memorized.

An Act of Faith is traditionally followed by an [Act of Hope](#) and an [Act of Charity](#).

"O my God, I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three Divine Person, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I believe that Thy Divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen."

## 6. An Act of Hope

Acts of Hope are prayers that express our trust in God's mercy and in His promises to us. They acknowledge that our salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone, and they are important prayers to say when we find ourselves discouraged. An Act of Hope can be as simple as "Jesus, I hope in you," or it can be longer, like this traditional version.

"O my God, relying on Thy almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen."

## 7. An Act of Charity

Charity is the traditional Christian word for love, and an Act of Charity is an expression of our unselfish love for God. While such a prayer can be as simple as "O God, I love You," the following longer prayer is a traditional version of an Act of Charity.

"O my God, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen."

## 8. The Act of Contrition

The Act of Contrition is usually associated with the [Sacrament of Confession](#), but Catholics should also pray it every day as part of their normal prayer life. In it, we acknowledge our sins, ask God for forgiveness, and express our desire to repent.

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of Heaven, and the pains of Hell; but most of all because I love Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

## **9. Grace Before Meals**

Every good thing we have comes from God, and that is why we offer Grace Before Meals, to acknowledge our dependence on Him and to ask Him to bless us and our food.

We should also offer thanksgiving for the food that we have received by praying the [Grace After Meals](#).

"Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

## **10. The Guardian Angel Prayer**

Each one of us has a guardian angel who protects us from harm, both physical and spiritual. In this prayer, traditionally one of the first that young children learn, we ask our guardian angel to watch over us.

"Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom His love entrusts me here, ever this day [night] be at my side to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen."