



## Listening to God as a Family

Jesus welcomed children to him and held them up as an example of faith (Matthew 18:2-3). We want to hear and learn from the children as Jesus did.

The Lightwave Community wants to use this time when we are listening to God for our own future, to learn how we can support the growing and nurturing of children's, teens' and families' personal relationship with God. We also want your voice in every area, because it is vital in hearing all that God is saying to us all.

**"Chat and Catch"** and the other prayer practices outlined below are ways to describe praying which are simple enough for a young child – but the habits beneath the simple description works for praying at whatever ages. If you make them a family habit, they will help children and adults alike to discern God's voice, actions and desires for our lives.

### Chat

"Chat" is talking to God. It is good for children and adults to learn that they can use ordinary informal language to communicate with God. And you can tell him anything!

If you are a praying parent, let your children see and hear you chatting to God about everyday stuff, as well as the big things. You may need to learn to speak out what you normally say in your head, but your children will learn a lot about praying by seeing your example. For example, when you hear that a friend is ill, and you automatically pray for them in your head, you could vocalise that prayer. Or when you don't know what to do, ask God for his help out loud.

You can also "chat" with God by writing to him or drawing for him, shaping clay or dancing for him – it is expressing to God what is on your heart.

There's a great video for parents about how children can chat with God here <https://parentingforfaith.org/course-component/4-conversational-prayer-chat-session-video>

### Catch

"Catch" is simply learning to recognise and respond to God's voice – however and wherever he chooses to speak. Here are some ways to get started:

**Discuss** – Talk as a family about how we might "catch" from God: It's not usually by hearing a booming voice in our ear! It may be a thought, a feeling, a mental picture, a wise

word from someone else, a Bible verse or noticing something as you walk in the countryside.

**Share** – If you are a parent who prays, share with your child how you catch from God. If you heard God speak through a passage from the Bible, share that with them. If you saw a picture in your mind that helped you, tell them what happened. Encourage children to share their experiences too.

### **Try it out**

When you are together, ask God a question – a random one is fine – and see if you can catch an answer. Or when your child has a big 'God question', try asking them to chat to God about it to see if they can catch his reply.

There is a great video for parents about how children learn to catch from God here <https://parentingforfaith.org/course-component/5-conversational-prayer-catch-session-video>

## **Examen**

The Examen prayer is a way of developing a habit of chatting and catching with God You might want to try this at the end of each day

- 1. Thank God** – What are you grateful for today? Where have you noticed God at work? Were there moments when I felt ungrateful?
- 2. Ask God for help** – What do you need help with? Who around you might need help? Where have you seen God at work?
- 3. Tell God about your day** – What have you seen, what have you noticed? What was the most life - giving part of your day? What was the most difficult or challenging part of your day? When today did you feel connected to God? When did you feel least connected?
- 4. Say sorry** – Look inward, who/what do I need to say sorry to/for, what might I need to do differently?
- 5. Decide** – Look forward into the coming days... Where/What might God be prompting you to go, do or say?

## **Step into the Story**

As a family you can learn to 'step into' a Bible story to hear what God is saying to you through the words. This is like Ignatian prayer. Visualise the story in your imaginations as you meet with and catch from God. Here's how you could get started:

1. Ask one of your children to choose a Bible story and read it together
2. Invite each member of the family to find Jesus in the story, approach him, talk to him, touch him and listen to him.
3. As you read the story together discuss: "Where is he, what is he doing, what is he saying?" "I wonder what Jesus wants to say to you through this story?"

## Try the example below:

Jesus calms a storm Text from Mark 4:35-41 (The Passion Translation)

Later that day, after it grew dark, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." After they had sent the crowd away, they pushed off from shore with him, as he had been teaching from the boat, and there were other boats that sailed with them.

*Can you see the boat? What does it look like? What does the sea look like? Can you see Jesus?*

Suddenly, as they were crossing the lake, a ferocious storm arose, with violent winds and waves that were crashing into the boat until it was all but swamped.

*Tell me about the storm. What are the disciples doing? How are they feeling? What would you do if you were there?*

But Jesus was calmly sleeping in the stern, resting on a cushion. So they shook him awake, saying, "Teacher, don't you even care that we are all about to die!" Fully awake, he rebuked the storm and shouted to the sea, "Hush! Calm down! Peace, be still!" All at once the wind stopped howling and the water became perfectly calm.

*What was Jesus like? What was it like to see the storm calmed? How did the disciples react? How did you react?*

Then he turned to his disciples and said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Haven't you learned to trust yet? But they were overwhelmed with fear and awe and said to one another, "Who is this man who has such authority that even the wind and waves obey him?"

*Reflect on these thoughts together. Encourage each child and adult to catch from God by asking him "What do you want to say to me through this story?"*

## Can you catch and chat for Lightwave?

**Chat** – Tell God about the church (or Lightwave group) where you belong. Tell him about your local area. Thank him for things that are good. Ask him for what you need.

**Catch** – Ask God about what would help you and your friends to follow Jesus. Ask God about how he wants to do in your home, village or school.

**Share with Lightwave** – What did you chat to God about? What did you catch? It would really help Lightwave to listen to God if you share. You can email [Lightwave.community@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:Lightwave.community@cofesuffolk.org) or [fill in the feedback form here](#) – or follow the links at [www.light-wave.org/discernfuture](http://www.light-wave.org/discernfuture)