

$$1 + 1 = 3$$

The most important lesson your child will ever learn

Which is more real to your child math or prayer? If the answer is math then our little effort at addition is quite wrong. If however the answer is prayer you and your child will know that 1 + 1 truly does make three. "Where **two** or three have **gathered** together in My name, I am there in their midst. Matthew 18:20 " Like math however there is much more to be learned than 1 + 1. Try filling out the following report card for each of your children. Have them initial each box they can answer yes to and check the boxes they need to work on. You might even fill out a report card for yourself.

☐ **I believe God is there every time I pray.** Do you believe? Do you pray about your doubts? Do you doubt God is real? Do you doubt God loves you? Do you doubt creation? Do you doubt invisible things like the Holy Spirit. The first step to a sound prayer life is asking God to help get rid of your doubts. Doubt and prayer do NOT go together. "I believe, help thou my unbelief.

☐ **I know there are two parts to prayer, the part where we talk to God and the part where he talks to us.** I stick with my prayers until they are complete...until God answers. A great lesson for a child is to write his or her prayer on a piece of paper and put it in a jar or ziploc bag. Keep praying with the child until you can write the answer on the back. If necessary ask others to pray with you. If it is still not answered ask your pastor if there is something wrong with the prayer itself. Prayer's like cars sometimes need fixed.) This is an important lesson. If a child has not stuck with at least one prayer until God answers WHY in the world would he bother???

☐ **I know that praying with someone else is better than praying alone.** Who could be a prayer partner for you? We hope all parents everywhere pray with their children at least once a week. We hope too that every Sunday School teacher in the country assigns "Prayer Partners" and asks these partners to pray together at least once a week. The child who does not pray with others is less likely to pray on his own.

☐ **I know the only way to pray powerful prayers is PRACTICE.** *If I keep my prayer car parked I won't get anywhere.* I plan to get my prayer car in gear and give it a little gas...daily. (For very young children you might even try this lesson actually sitting in your car or with a toy

car.) Prayer is meant to take you to a new place. Let God show the way from doubt to faith, from sadness to joy, from fear to trust, from anger to love.

☐ **I have read the instruction manual.** You can't pray rightly without scripture and you can't understand scripture without prayer. We recommend you look up the following verses about prayer and pray that God help you understand them and store them in your heart. John 5:39, Hebrews 11:6. Isaiah 40:29, 1 John 3:22, Jude 1:20.

☐ **I know there are things that block the answers to my prayers.** If I am angry with someone I do my best to forgive them. If I have sinned I repent and ask God to cleanse my heart. If I feel ungrateful I thank God for past prayers answered. If most of my prayers are selfish I make a list of others to pray for.

☐ **I pray at the beginning of the day.** Everybody prays when they are in trouble...Daniel in the Lion's Den, Joseph when his brothers threw him in a pit, Jonah when he got swallowed by a whale. Jesus way of praying is BIGGER. He teaches us to pray before we get into trouble, prayers like: "give us this day our daily bread" and "lead us not into temptation." If your child has not yet memorized the Lord's prayer we highly recommend the Learning Puzzle at www.teachustoprayer.com. There really is no better habit than praying in the morning...of going to God FIRST.

☐ **I know what it is to pray "in the spirit".** The only way for a child to break free of the worldly influences that surround us all is an ever increasing sensitivity to the alarms sent by The Holy Spirit. That path begins with prayer ... with a HABIT of prayer. Today pray with your child for the gift of the Holy Spirit...his or her personal prayer teacher.

It is the children who can put their initials in all the boxes who will grow up to be all God intends them to be, children who escape the sins that surround us all, children who lead their families and our nation. We pray your child is among them.

Charles White is a retired Christian preschool teacher and lifelong volunteer at his local Salvation Army. He prays that this article is used by many as a tool to reach those who do not have a daily walk with Christ.