



Praying *in* color

Kids' Edition

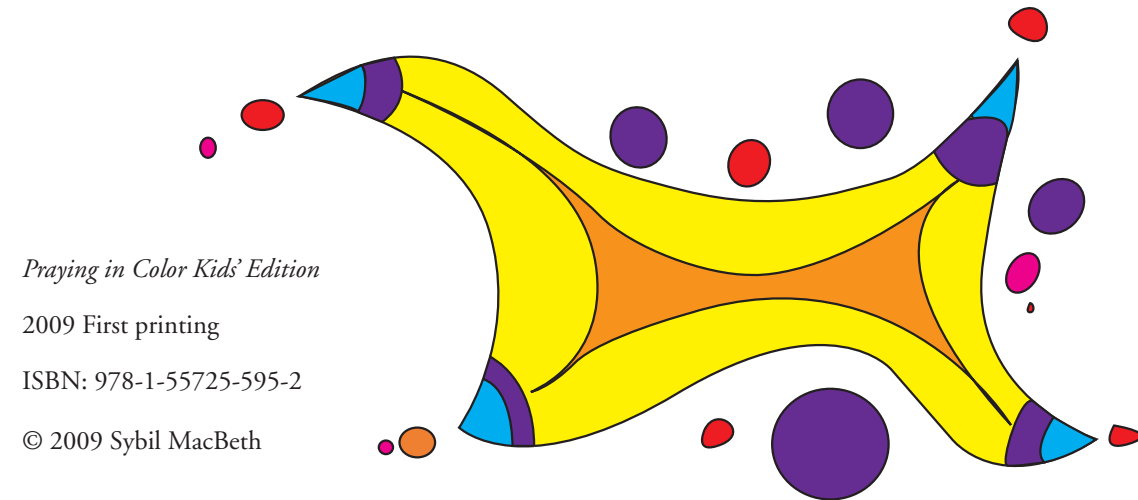
Sybil MacBeth



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Prayer Problems

1

If you have had one or more of these prayer problems, you are not alone. Join the frustrated pray-ers club!

You feel antsy and fidgety when you try to be still and pray.

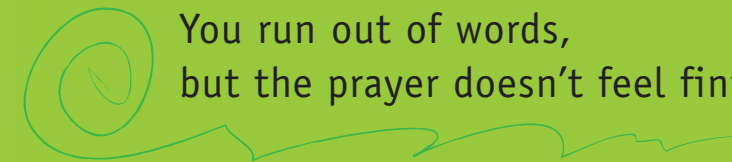


You start to pray, then fall asleep.

You're tired of the same old prayers you've said since preschool.



You run out of words, but the prayer doesn't feel finished.



You can't wait for your prayer time to be over and done with.

What is Prayer?

You can't **find the words** to say what you think or feel.

You wonder whether **God is listening** or even cares.

You want to like praying, but it just feels like **another chore**.

You start to pray but realize that you're thinking about tomorrow's soccer game, a friend's sleepover, or homework.

You tell God exactly how you feel and then wonder whether God will **be angry**.

Prayer is the way we spend time with God. People often describe prayer as a conversation. Conversation includes both talking and listening. We talk to God and we listen to God in our prayers. When we talk we use **WORDS**. Here are some of the things we say **WITH WORDS** in our prayers:

Thank you God for the stars and the trees, for my family, friends, and teachers, for passing my science test, for pizza, for Jesus. . . .



Why does my math teacher always call on Henry in class and **never me**?



My friend Rachel has something called leukemia. Help her not to be scared and **make her better**.



Dear God,
please watch over **my mom**
when she flies to Chicago today.

Jesus, you are so wonderful
and awesome!

Sometimes I hate my brother.
He's so mean to me.

God,
are you really listening
to me?


I'm sorry I copied off of Josh's paper today.
It was just one question.
But I guess that's still cheating.

Please God,
help me to be a better basketball player
so I can make the fifth-grade team.

My mom and dad are getting
a divorce. I'm really sad
and angry. Why can't they
love each other?

This has been the best day.
Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Dear Jesus, help me to be nice
to my little sister even when she
grabs the remote and changes the
channel when I'm watching TV.



Our WORDS
make great prayers.
But WORDS don't
always seem to be there
when we need them most.
They are sneaky. WORDS play
hide and seek. Just when we're
searching for the ones we want,
they go missing like socks under
the bed. On some days, "Thank you,"
"Help," "I'm sorry," and "Please" are the
only prayer words we can find.

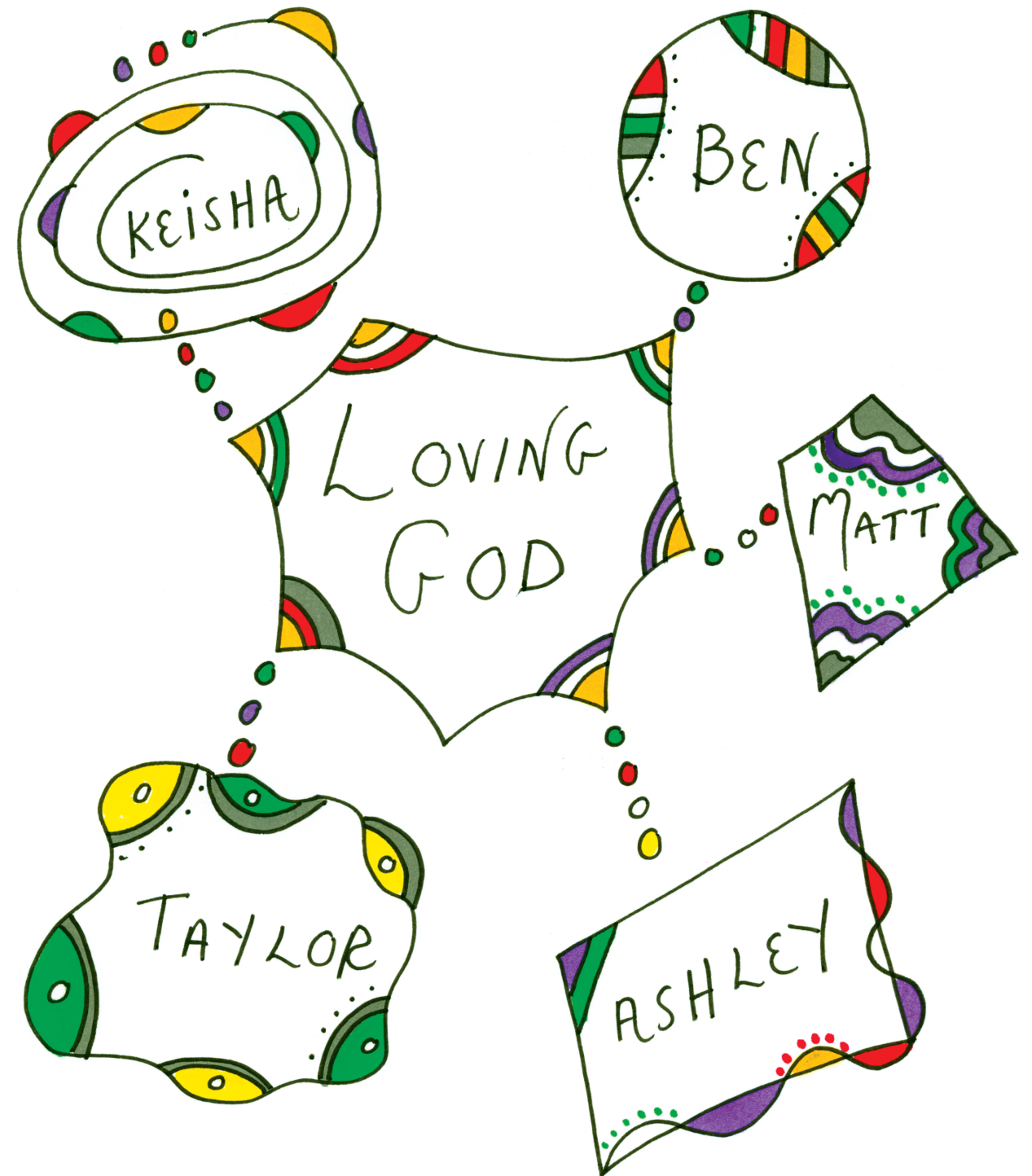
Praying
WITHOUT
WORDS is another
option. But what do
you DO, if you're not using
words? How do you pray for
yourself or other people without
words? How do you get quiet and
listen to what God might say? Or, as the
writer of 1 Kings 19:12 in the Bible might
ask, "How do you hear the 'still small voice' or
the 'gentle whisper' of God?"

Look at the drawing on the next page. Believe it or not, it is a prayer. It is a prayer doodle for Ben, Keisha, Matt, Ashley, and Taylor.

Ben had his ninth birthday.
Keisha broke her arm.
Matt's grandfather died.
Ashley is going on a trip.
Taylor was in a fight and is grounded.

Ben and Ashley had happy events in their lives. Keisha, Matt, and Taylor had some unhappy events. We pray for people in both happy and unhappy times. We offer our positive and grateful thoughts to God, but also our scared and worried thoughts too.

In the drawing, the pray-er drew a shape with her name for God in the center. She added arcs and color. Then she drew doodles for each friend. As she drew, she pictured each person in the presence and care of God. She used no words. The drawing *was* the prayer.



Toolbox for Praying in Color

3



My name is Sybil MacBeth, and I am the author of *Praying in Color Kids' Edition*. I began to pray in color when several of my friends and family members were very sick. All of my usual prayer words vanished when I tried to pray.

One day I was doodling on my back porch with my colored markers and pens. Without realizing it, I wrote the name of one of the friends on my prayer list in the doodle. I continued to draw and add color. When the drawing was finished, I knew I had prayed. I had offered my friend into God's care without words.

Here are some tools you will need for Praying in Color:

1. Doodling Ideas
2. God Names

Doodling

Doodling Ideas

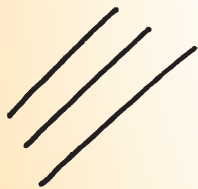
Doodling is playful, aimless drawing. When the famous artist Paul Klee painted and drew, he said he was “taking a line for a walk.” Doodling is like that. Except in doodling, the “line takes us for a walk,” kind of like a puppy on a leash. When we doodle, we don't necessarily know where we are going. We don't have an end picture in mind.

To pray in color, you don't need to be an artist. You don't need to be able to draw a cat or a flower or anything at all. You just need to put a pen and colored markers or pencils on a piece of paper and start moving.

Here are some shapes and movements you can make when you doodle:

Draw

Lines



Circles



Scribbles



Triangles



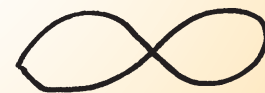
Ovals



Squares or Rectangles



Figure Eights



Clouds or Blobs



Squiggly Lines



Curves or Arcs



Scallops



Teeth



Polka Dots



Dots



Wacky Shapes



Petals



Spirals

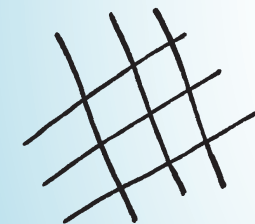


Hearts



Combine together the ideas above:

Lines with Lines



Rectangles with Arcs



Hearts with Polka Dots



Circles with Triangles



Petals with Scribbles



Teeth with Figure Eights



The number of ways to combine different shapes is huge. You can invent new shapes and patterns for yourself. If you like to draw *real* things like trees, crosses, flowers, or boats, go for it. Just don't get hung up in the drawing. The point is to keep your hands busy and your body involved so you can pray.

God Names

When we begin to pray, we often use a name to address God. The Bible gives us many names. People throughout history have used those old names as well as new ones they have learned in their religious traditions. Here are some of the most common names we use when we pray:

Beloved One
Holy Spirit
Father Jesus
Adonai
Mother God Yahweh
Lord
Abba
Redeemer
God SAVIOR

We can add adjectives to the names above to describe them in a special way.

Almighty God Loving God Holy Jesus
Precious Lord Gracious and Loving God Divine Spirit
Dearest Savior Holy One

Your name for God might be different from the ones on this list. That's fine. Try other names to see how they feel when you use them in your prayers.

Getting Started

4

Begin your prayer time with one of these activities:

1

try this!!

Read a passage from the Bible.

Here are some possibilities:

"This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his
righteousness; and all these things shall be added
unto you." Matthew 6:33 KJV

"O come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!"
Psalm 95:1

"Be strong and courageous;
do not be frightened or
dismayed, for the LORD your
God is with you wherever
you go." Joshua 1:9

Now grab your drawing supplies—paper, markers, crayons, gel pens—and find a place to pray. You can pray on the couch, in the car, outside, on the floor, in bed, on an airplane, at your desk. . . . In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us: ". . . Whenever you pray, go into your room (or closet) and shut the door. . . ." With a clipboard, magazine, or notebook behind your paper, you can turn any place into a prayer room and shut an imaginary door on the noises of the world.

Turn the page for more
Bible verses!

Step-By-Step Praying in Color

5

1

"Make me to know
your ways, O LORD; teach me your
paths. Lead me in your truth, and
teach me, for you are the God of my
salvation; for you I wait all day long."
Psalm 25:4–5

Stretch your arms over your head, reach
for the sky, and shout, "Thank you, God."
Invite your body into prayer with you.

or this!!

2

Take several deep breaths.
Let out a slow, noisy sigh after each one.

"The spirit of God has made me,
and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."
Job 33:4

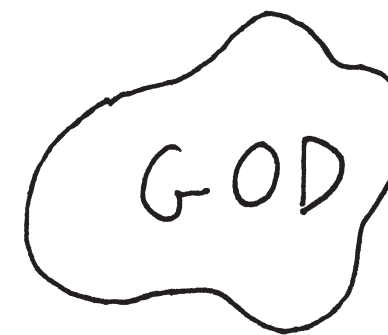
18

3

or this!!

If none of these ideas
appeals to you, just pick up your pen
and your markers, and begin to pray in color.

With a black pen, draw a shape on the page—a cloud, a square,
a squiggly line, a spiral. . . . Write one of the names for God in
the shape or near the shape.



19

When we write our name for God, we ask
God to be present with us in our prayer
time.

Another way to start is to leave the first shape
empty. We don't always know what name to
call God, but we know that God is bigger than
any of the names we use. Think of the empty

space as a window for you to see God and for
God to see you.

If your mind begins to wander, try the follow-
ing: Say your God name to yourself in silence
or out loud. Then take a big breath and exhale.
Repeat these steps several times. This is one
way to stop distracting thoughts.