

Everyday MOMENTS

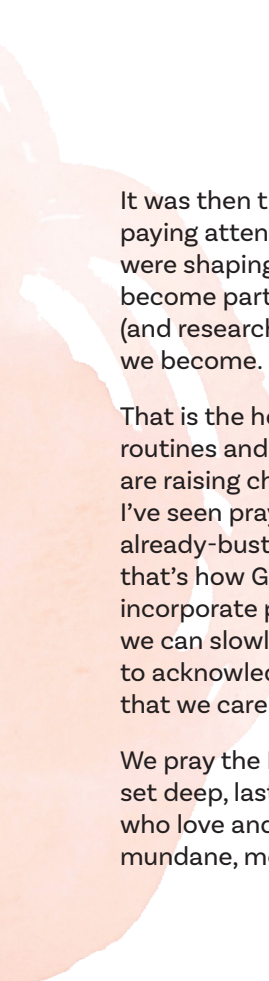
A family prayer resource

compiled by Megann Fleming



Introduction

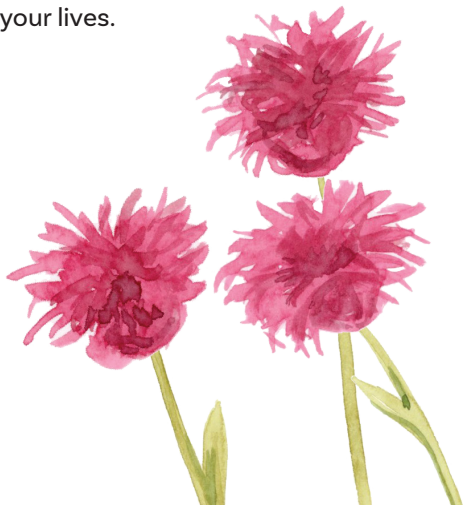
Not far from where we live there is a house that had been badly burned in a housefire. We pass the “broken house” (as we refer to it) every morning on our way to take our son to daycare. My son (2 at the time) was fascinated by the broken house, and nearly every morning he would request (*read: loudly insist from the backseat of the van*) that we drive by to look at it. At the time, the house was clearly not in a livable state, and after a few weeks of driving by this house (slowly, maybe creepily?), I started to feel guilty that we were making a spectacle of someone else’s suffering. Mostly as a way to appease my own heart, I started praying, out loud and without warning, each morning for the people whose home that was, for the workers there fixing it, and for whomever would live in the house next. We did this same routine - insistence, drive-by observation, out-loud prayer - nearly every morning for a few weeks. One day, though, I forgot to say the prayer. My son still insisted, we still drove by and checked on the progress of the repairs, but I hadn’t done my part of the routine. When we were driving away from the broken house that morning, my son shouted (with a slight sense of indignance), “Mommy, you forgot to pray!”



It was then that I realized, even at 2 years old, my son was paying attention, and that my prayers, our prayers together, were shaping him. It was then I realized that prayer had become part of his morning routine, and I think we all know (and research tells us) that routines shape who we are and who we become.

That is the heart behind this resource. We already have routines and rhythms established throughout our days as we are raising children whether we realize it or not. Sometimes I've seen prayer as "another thing," something else to fit in the already-busting-at-the-seems- schedule. But I don't think that's how God sees prayer. Maybe, just maybe, if we can incorporate prayer into our already-established daily routines, we can slowly start to turn our gaze upward, in all that we do, to acknowledge that it is only with and through and for God that we care for ourselves and others.

We pray the Holy Spirit would use this practice of prayer to set deep, lasting roots in your family, shaping you into people who love and trust the Lord, acknowledging his presence in the mundane, messy routines of your lives.



How to Use This Resource

In writing this resource, we imagine it as a “buffet” of sorts. We hope you pick and choose whichever prayers are helpful or applicable to your family. Then, we hope you adapt them to fit your family, changing the language, shortening, elaborating, whatever feels right. Because here’s the thing – it isn’t about the words. Though the words of the prayers below are beautiful, the practice of prayer isn’t about perfect recitation.

So then, if it isn’t about the words, why give you a book full of words? If you’ve been around for long, you know there are moments in life when you just don’t have the words to describe the magnitude of joy, or sorrow, or reverence (or fill in the blank with whatever emotion you want) you’re feeling. Or maybe you’re exhausted at the end of a long day, or in the morning after a long night, and you want to pray, but you just have nothing left in yourself to form coherent thoughts, much less eloquent words. In one of my most beloved books (and a foundational reference for this resource) Kayla Craig writes, “God requires no sonnets or soliloquies. He requires no special sacrifice, demands no magic words or rituals. God just desires our presence; he just wants us” (To Light Their Way, p xviii).

We hope this, then, is a resource you can fall back on or return to when you need bolstering. Maybe you pull it out and read the words verbatim. Maybe you paraphrase. Maybe you use some of the memorization strategies below to “store the words in your heart.” However you use it, our prayer is this resource is one we can use to come alongside you as we bear one another’s burdens, encouraging one another toward love (Hebrews 10:24).

Copy, cut, or write out these prayers and tape, hang, or frame them around your home, vehicle, etc. in places that make sense for the context of the prayers and the routines your family has

already established. Some prayers are for your family to pray aloud together, and we think some would be better suited for parents or caregivers to pray aloud to or pray for their children individually. Some include opportunities for kids to participate. Some are active. Some can be sung. Prayer doesn't have to look just "one way" (e.g., silent, eyes closed, etc.). With kids, especially young kids, these prayers are likely going to be anything but quiet or still. That's okay! Embrace it. In his book, *Habits of the Household*, Justin Whitmel Earley writes, "Like the rest of us, children are hungry for patterns and will pick up on them. Thankfully, those patterns don't have to be complicated. Because the most powerful truths are the simplest ones, the most enduring prayer are the shortest ones, the places where these patterns unfold are the messy ones, and God loves messy things" (p 127).

General Memorization Strategies

- **"Repeat after me"**
A grown up says one line (or part of a line) of the prayer, then the child(ren) repeat(s).
- **"Fill in the blank" readings**
A grown up recites the prayer but stops to omit key words. The child then fills in the blank as a way of memorization and participation.
- **Add motions to the words/phrases**
You could even let your kid(s) record motion videos and send to a friend or swap ideas with another family.
- **Add visuals**
Draw pictures to represent key words.

A Blessing to Begin

Raising children is sanctifying work, for both the child and the adult. In no other way have I seen my own selfishness and sin more clearly than in parenting (though this is, of course, not the only life situation the Lord can use for our sanctification). A mentor and friend of mine once had this quote by Annie Dillard written on a chalkboard in her living room, and it's stuck with me for almost a decade - "How we spend our days, is of course, how we spend our lives." Scripture tells us that caring for others, when done with a right heart, is an act of worship (Luke 10:34-40). So, here's a prayer to begin, taken from Kayla Craig's book, *To Light Their Way*:

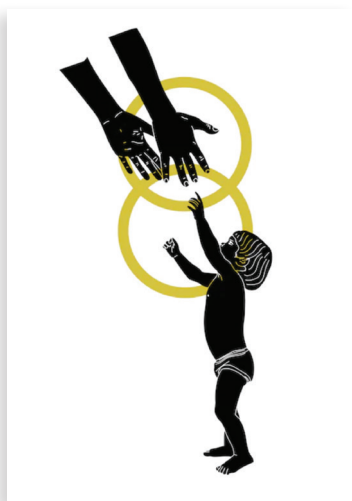
May all your life
Be a prayer -
A holy kiss
Atop sticky foreheads and matted curls.

May all your life
Be a prayer -
Learning each day afresh
What it is to see God in you
And God in your neighbor.

May all your life
be a prayer -
an offering of presence and peace,
poured out and replenished
between parent and child.

May all your life -
Your fantastic,
Dirty,
Messy,
Holy
Life -
Be a prayer.

Up Kingdom



This print is called “Up Kingdom” by Scott Erickson. I have this print hanging in my kitchen as a reminder that what I do for my kids or the guests in my household, no matter how mundane and unseen, is an act of worship. I love to give this print and a handwritten prayer as a gift at baby showers or adoptions. It’s available for purchase here:



Morning Time

General Ideas for use:

- Hang a prayer on the mirror in your bathroom to look at while you're brushing teeth, etc.
- Frame a prayer and put it on your nightstand.
- Write a prayer on a sticky note and put it on top of your phone so you must read the prayer before you get on your phone in the morning.



For When You Wake Up in the Morning

(a breath prayer from *To Light Their Way*)

Pray this before getting out of bed. See general strategies above.

Inhale: Because of your mercy

Exhale: light is about to break.

Inhale: Illuminate the darkness

Exhale: guide us to peace.

Breathe in God's tender mercy; breath out the truth that the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us. As you breathe, remember that God gives light to you and your children, even in the darkness, and guides you on the path of peace. This is taken from Luke 1:78-79.

To Center the Heart Upon Waking

(from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 3*)

Pray this before getting out of bed. See general strategies above.

O God, even as you brought me
from the rest of last night
into the joyous light of this new day,

bring me also from the light of this new day,
into the supreme light of eternity.

A Daily Liturgy for the Pilgrim

(from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 3*)

This could be prayed with and for an older child. Either you could mirror the motions with them, or when applicable, lay your hands on them as outlined below.

Lay hands the on ground.

Jesus, light the path ahead
and guide me in your way today.

Touch the feet.

Bless these weary, wandering feet
and give them strength to follow you.

Touch the shoulders.

may my burdens tumble free
so I can walk in Grace and Hope.

Touch the ears.

Let no clamor of the world
drown out your voice that calls my name.

Touch the eyes.

let me see your beauty bloom
in every flower and every face.

Touch the lips.

Bless my words that they may bless
each person that I pass this day.

Lay hands over the heart.

Lord and lover of my soul,
bind up the broken parts of me -

Lift hands to the sky.

So I with broken-heart-made-whole
may praise your everlasting love.

Spread arms wide.
Make me a pilgrim's inn
to welcome all who wander near.

Wrap arms around oneself in an embrace.
and when the day is done, O Jesus,
bring me safely home to you.

A Liturgy for the Pilgrim, Preschool Version

(written by Kristin Jeffries)

Put your hands on the ground.
Jesus, guide my way today.

Touch your feet.
Help me to follow you

Touch your shoulders.
Jesus, take my troubles away.

Touch your ears.
Help me to hear you.

Touch your eyes.
Jesus, help me look to you.

Touch your lips.
Help me use kind words.

Put your hands over your heart.
Thank you, Jesus, for loving me.

Lift hands to the sky.
Help me to give you praise!

Spread arms wide.
Jesus, help me be a friend,
Give yourself a hug.
And bring me home again.



A Liturgy for the Ritual of Morning Coffee

(from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 1*)

Tape this prayer next to your coffee pot and pray while the coffee is brewing. Or, if you drink your coffee in a consistent place in your house (maybe it's the couch or a cozy chair, etc.), display it there in a picture frame.

Meet me, O Christ,
in the stillness of morning.

Move me, O Spirit,
to quiet my heart.

Mend me, O Father,
from yesterday's harms.

From the discords of yesterday,
resurrect my peace.

From the discouragements of yesterday,
resurrect my hope.

From the weariness of yesterday,
resurrect my strength.

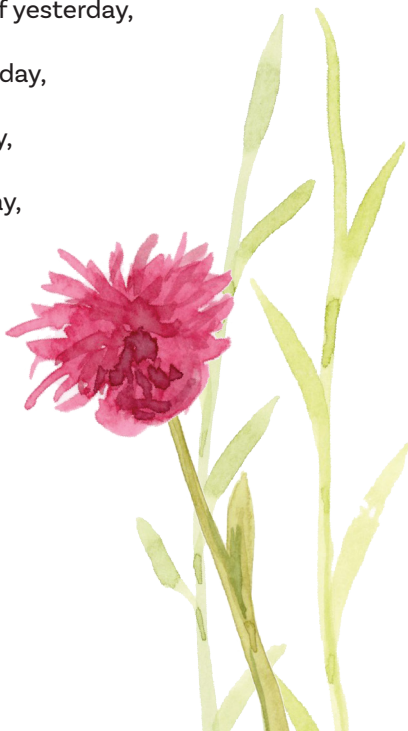
From the doubts of yesterday,
resurrect my faith.

From the wounds of yesterday,
resurrect my love.

Let me enter this new day,
aware of my need,
and awake

to your grace,
O Lord.

Amen.



Before Going Out Into Your Day

A Gathering and Sending Prayer

(from *Habits of the Household*)

Hang this on the garage door or front door (wherever you leave your house through). You could also put in the dash of your car or hang a copy on your rear-view mirror. You could use memorization strategies to help kids recite this prayer, or you could have a grown up say each line first, then child(ren) repeat.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thank you for this day.
Bless us as we work, study, and play.
Be present with us in all we do.
May we bring glory and honor to you.
Amen.

A Car Prayer

(written by Kristin Jeffries)

Blessed are you, LORD our God,
King of the universe who puts breath in our lungs (*take a deep breath*).
As we go about our day
help us to love you more with our hearts (*bring hands to chest/heart*),
know you more with our mind (*point to your head*),
praise you more with our words (*bring hands to mouth*),
and spread your love with our actions (*make a big sweeping motion with your arms*).
Amen.

Prayers for Your *Daytime*

For Daily Stewardship of Gifts

(from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 3*)

Pray this aloud as you start your work or whatever home tasks are on your to-do list. You could also pray this with or for a teenage or college-age child before they start work or schoolwork. Print a copy of this prayer and use it as a bookmark, tape it to your planner, or put it on your desk at work.

By today's small stewardship of my gifts,
let me bless others, serving them well
in view of that promised day
when in worship
and with great joy,
I will lay this modest
offering, and the offerings
of all my other days,
at your feet.



A Child's Prayer for Going to School

(from *To Light Their Way*)

Help your child(ren) memorize this prayer so they can recall it as they enter school or pray it together before you separate at drop-off (words could be adapted to be prayed at any separation, like activities, childcare, etc.).

Dear God,
You are with me
at school,
just like you are at home.
Help me be brave.
Help me have fun.
Help me remember
[Mommy/Daddy/Etc.] always comes back.
In Jesus's name,
Amen.

A Prayer for Homeschool

(from *To Light Their Way*)

O Jesus, who asked questions and told stories,
Help us teach our children to see the power of asking
why
And to sit in the wonder of someone else's story.

Help us kindle curiosity
When the world whispers there's just one way.
Help us spark imagination
When the world prefers the way it has always been.
Help us fuel passion
When the world shouts that it's easier not to care.

Help us model empathy
When the world whispers, "Why bother?"
Help us clothe ourselves with compassion
When the world prefers a hard heart.
Help us embody love
When the world says some don't deserve it.

O Jesus, who knows the aches of humanity,
We ask for your help in teaching our children,
Knowing that if we want kids to be
Curious, imaginative, and passionate,
We must create space for it in our home;
Knowing that if we want kids to be
Empathetic, compassionate, and loving,
We must live it out ourselves.

Help us to teach our children,
And help us learn from them too.



A Liturgy for Resting in God

(from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 3*)

Maybe you pray one of these aloud to your kids before rest time or save this in a note in your phone to read before sitting down to read a book or watch a movie at the end of a long day.

God who loves me,
allow me to rest in you above all else.

My heart cannot truly rest
Unless it rests in you.

For When You're on Overdrive

(a breath prayer from *To Light Their Way*)

Inhale: My heart is glad.

Exhale: and my body can rest.

Inhale; exhale. Allow your shoulders to release and remember that you can find rest in God's love. This breath prayer is from Psalm 16:9 - "My heart is glad and my tongue rejoices, my body also will rest secure."

For When You Need to Be Reminded of God's Presence

(from *To Light Their Way*)

This prayer could be used if you can't seem to slow your mind, or if you or a child is struggling with separation or when a child has a bad dream or has trouble sleeping. Repeat a few times if needed.

Inhale: You are with me.

Exhale: You will never leave me.

Inhale a reminder of God's presence, and exhale God's promise to never leave you. We don't know what the future holds, but we can meditate on this truth. This is from Deuteronomy 31:6.



Mealtimes

A Prayer for Dirty Hands

(adapted from *To Light Their Way*)

Print and hang this prayer at the kitchen or bathroom sink. Pray this aloud while you wash/help wash your child's hands. (P.S. This is a sneaky way to get the full recommended 20 seconds in.)

We pray for the small, sticky hands
And the fingerprints they leave behind.

As we gather at the sink
To rinse tiny, soapy palms,
Cleanse our hearts, as this water now cleanses our
hands.

Unfurl our fists and open our hands,
Because you are living water
For all your children.

A Prayer for a Meal Together

(adapted from *To Light Their Way*)

Have one person (maybe a parent or caregiver) read the paragraph aloud, with child(ren) joining in on the repeated last line ("we give thanks"). You could also paraphrase each paragraph, praying for the main idea of each stanza.

O Jesus Christ, who says take, eat,
And do this in remembrance of me,
We give thanks.
For the gift of your presence
And the gift of gathering at the table,
Sharing our laughs and lows, stillness and joy,
In the sacred space of together,
We give thanks.

For the soil and sunlight you provided,
For the farmers who grew and picked,
For the workers who washed and packaged,
For the drivers who delivered and the grocery-store
workers who stocked,
For the hands who prepared this meal and those that
will clean up after,

We give thanks.

We pray now
For the growing bodies and minds
Gathered around the table,
Hungry to be nourished and nurtured,

We give thanks.

May we remember that we find fullness only in you.

As we eat with our family,
Help us to remember our neighbor.
May we give out of what we have,
Even if it's just a few loaves and a few fish,
For what is ours is really yours,
For you desire for all to eat.
For all that we have, Lord,

We give thanks.



Bedtime

A Momentary Liturgy Upon Feeling the Pleasure of a Warm Shower

(from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 1*)

Hang a copy of this prayer outside your shower or above your child(ren)'s bathtub. Use memory strategies to help your child(ren) remember and recite this at the start of bath time. This would be a fun prayer to add some motions to!

Thank you, O Lord,
for gifts of water and warmth,
and for the cleansing and comfort
you offer both body and soul.

Excerpt from “A Liturgy of the Hours: Nightfall”

(from *Every Moment Holy, Volume 1*)

Feel free to adapt the language on this one! It's written as a call-and-response, but you could also just pray the entire prayer together.

Caregiver: Here at day's end, we seek you, O King of Earth and Heaven.

Child(ren): You have been our sustenance across the sunlit hours.

Caregiver: Be now our counselor, comforter, and protector in the dark of night.

Child(ren): Amen.

One possible adaptation for younger child(ren):

Caregiver: King Jesus, now at the end of the day, we come to you.

Child(ren): You gave us everything we needed today.

Caregiver: Be near to us now with your comfort and protection through the night.

Child(ren): Amen.

A Bedtime Prayer

(written by Kristin Jeffries)

This can make a fun call-and-response with young children. Pause before the bolded words once you've said it a few times to them and see if they can fill in the blanks!

Thank you, God, for (child's name),
and may (s)he **love** you all his/her **days**.
Give him/her your **light**,
teach him/her your **ways**,
and make sure that (s)he never **strays**.
Thank you, God, for (child's name).

A Squeeze Blessing

(from *Habits of the Household*)

Dear Lord,
may this child feel your love wrap around them
all the days of his/her life.
(Squeeze the child in a big, tight hug.)
Amen.

There are several more interactive bedtime blessing prayers like this by Justin Whitmel Earley available. If you subscribe to his mailing list, you will receive a free download. Scan the QR code below to visit his website and subscribe.



A Bedtime Benediction

(written by Megann Fleming)

I used the same idea/structure as Earley's bedtime blessings to write this nightly prayer for my kids. The words come from "The Blessing" by Kari Jobe, which draws on scripture from Deuteronomy 31:8.

*Tickle/rub/rest your hand on your child's chest.
May His presence go before you,*

*Tickle/rub/rest your hand on your child's back.
And behind you,*

*Tickle/rub/rest your hand on your child's arms/
shoulders.
And beside you,*

*Tickle/move your hands around your child's torso.
All around you,*

*Wrap your child in a hug.
And within you.*

*Said while looking into your child's eyes.
He is for you.*

*Kiss your child's forehead.
God is always with you.*



A Parting Word

There are, of course, many other routine moments throughout our days of raising children. The resources we've pulled these prayers from cover it all, from prayers for playing together, for walking together, reading together; prayers for navigating sibling conflicts and for praying before discipline. There are prayers for specific parenting seasons, like prayers for night wakings and diaper changes if you're raising an infant, or prayers for bullying, navigating friendships, and media consumption if you're parenting older children. There are also prayers for those who are parenting alone, or those parenting kids in foster care or impacted by a disability. If you've found this resource to be helpful, we encourage you to check out the other resources listed in the references section on the following page.

With grace and peace,

Crossing Kids

P.S. Pages 25 and on are designed for you to remove from the book to put up in your home. Page 31 has been left intentionally blank for you to write out the prayer of your choice.



References

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A Gathering and Sending Prayer

(from Habits of the Household)

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Be present with us in all we do.

May we bring glory and honor to you.

Amen.



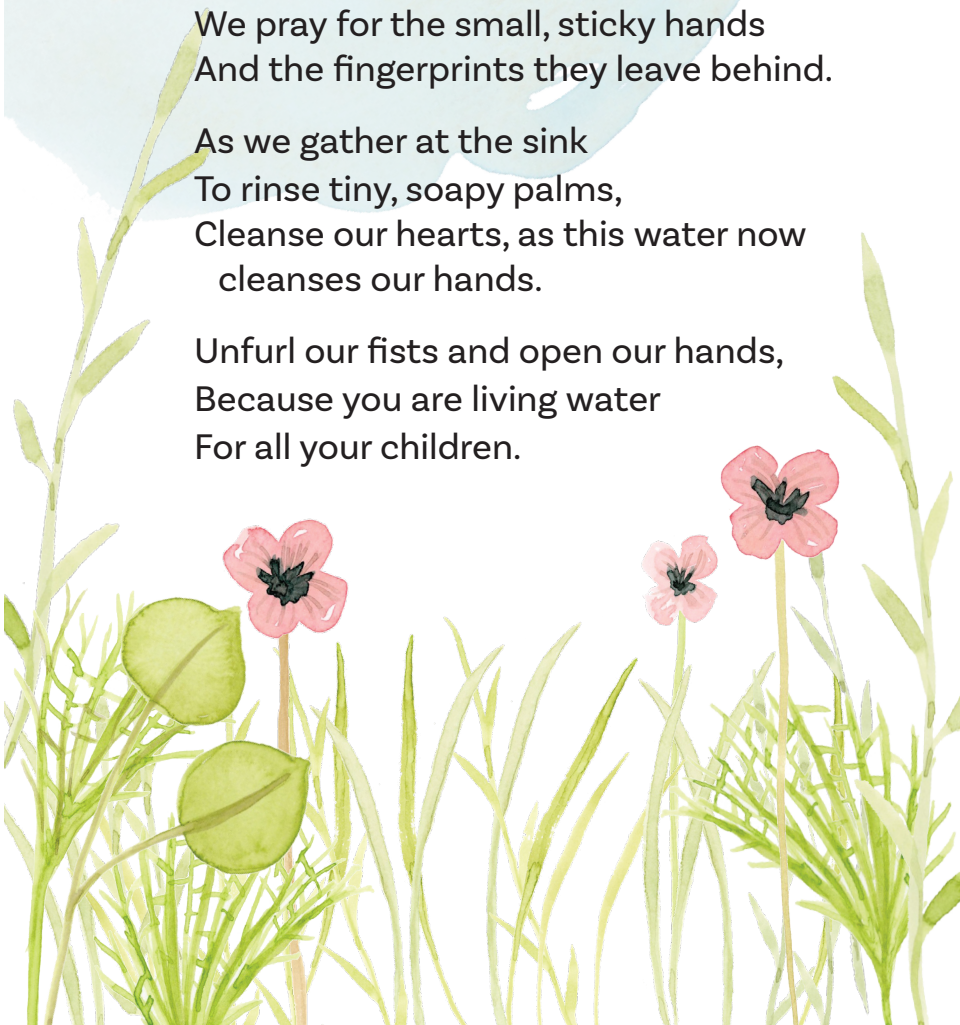
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For all your children.



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All around you,

*Wrap your child in a hug.
And within you.*

*Said while looking into your child's eyes.
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*Kiss your child's forehead.
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