

HOW to PRAY:

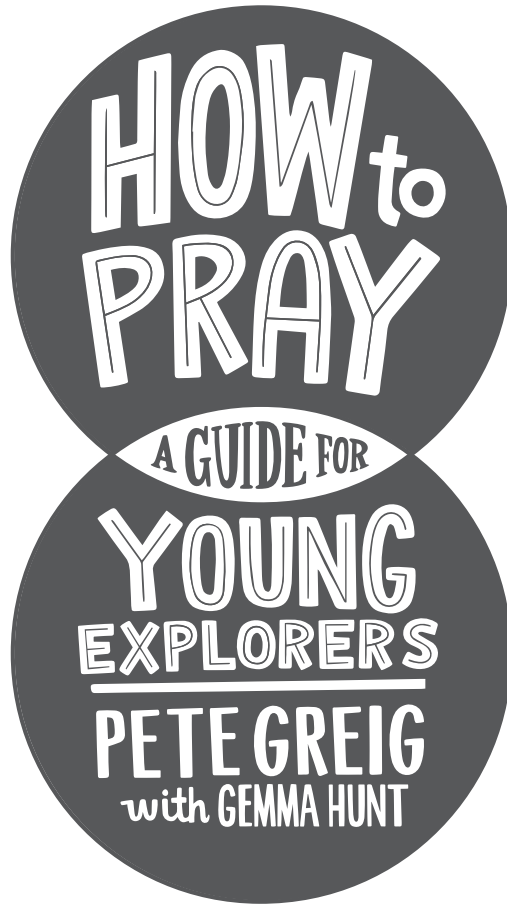
A GUIDE FOR

YOUNG
EXPLORERS

PETE GREIG

with GEMMA HUNT





Illustrations by Patrick Laurent



A NavPress resource published in alliance
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How to Pray: A Guide for Young Explorers

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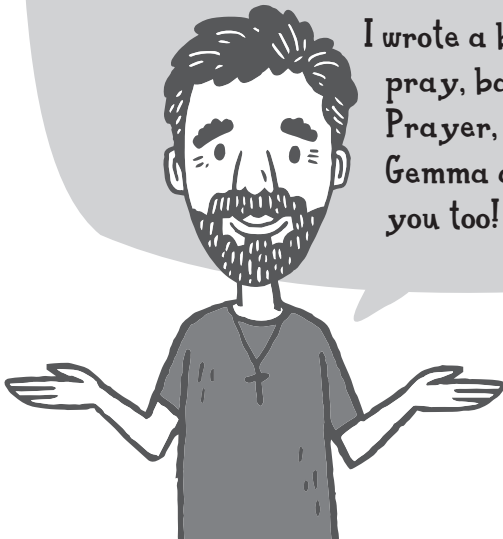
I'm Pete.

Quite a long time ago, before you were born, my friends and I set up a place to pray in a smelly, old warehouse. We didn't know the crazy-big adventure God had planned.

Today, that one little prayer room has become a huge movement of people from many different kinds of churches adventuring in prayer, mission and justice; a non-stop prayer meeting that has continued for every minute of this century so far, in over half the countries on earth.

I love prayer, and I do it a lot, but that doesn't mean I don't struggle with it sometimes.

Some people think prayer is boring but I disagree. When you pray God speaks and things change, and sometimes miracles happen which is the most exciting and amazing thing ever!



I wrote a book teaching adults how to pray, based on the world-famous Lord's Prayer, and in this book my friend Gemma and I are going to help you too!



INTRODUCTION

What kind of exploring do you prefer?

Do you hike fast and strong up the biggest hill to enjoy the view? Do you kick around the undergrowth and grass looking for the smallest of bugs, losing yourself in their tiny world? Do you like setting up camp and watching the sky change as the sun sets? Do you like to explore with friends or prefer to go on your own?

★ ★
**SOME OF THE BEST
ADVENTURES ARE WHEN
YOU EXPLORE IN WAYS
YOU'VE NOT DONE BEFORE.**

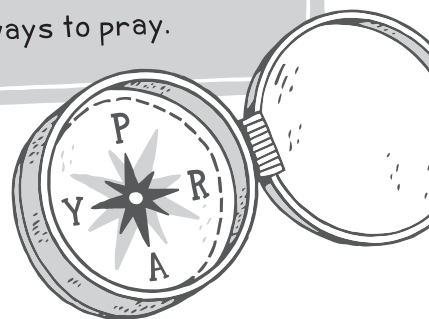


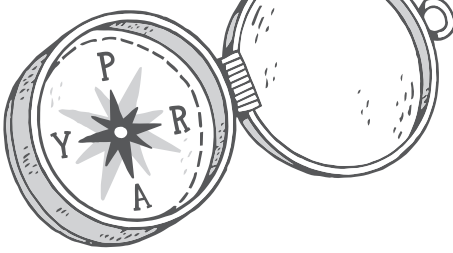
IN THIS BOOK WE GET A CHANCE TO EXPLORE PRAYER IN LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS.

The Lord's Prayer is world famous and is an excellent guide for our prayer adventure.



Sometimes we say the Lord's Prayer in one go, without stopping to think about the many kinds of praying that it maps out for us. As we look closer, we see that it shows us many different ways to pray.



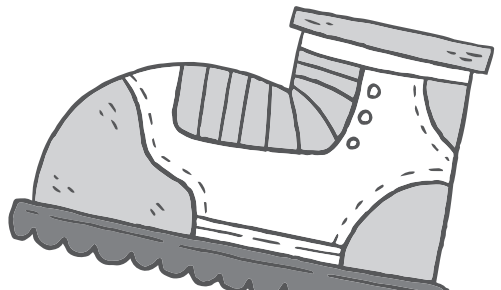


**TOGETHER WE'LL
USE A SIMPLE GUIDE:**

P.R.A.Y.
(PAUSE, REJOICE, ASK, YES).

**THIS WILL HELP US FIND A
GOOD DIRECTION TO HEAD IN.**

As we look at these four steps of prayer we'll explore all sorts of different ways to pray.





GEMMA SAYS:

Prayer is so much more than sitting with your eyes closed and your hands together. Sometimes I do pray like that, but I also really love all the creative ways we can speak to Jesus too. My hope and prayer for you is that you'll discover a way to pray that is really special to you, that will either gently encourage you to pray, like a reassuring hand on your back, or catapult you far and wide! Either way, this book will equip you with new kit to take on this prayer journey with Jesus. Strap in, it's going to be an awesome ride!

PRAYER

IS

EVERYWHERE





Around the world, people of many faiths pray.

On Easter Day every year, two billion people (that's more than a quarter of the people in the world) pray the Lord's Prayer. And people have always prayed.

There are cave paintings more than 35,000 years old which people think were painted as prayers.

In Turkey, there are some hilltop ruins that people think are the remains of a temple 6000 years older than Stonehenge, which may itself have been a place of prayer some 3000 years before Christ.

And today people are praying more and more. During the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Google data showed that more people had searched 'prayer' than ever before and, just in the UK, a survey from Tearfund found that over three million people said that they'd started praying.

Why Pray?

Prayer is something that we are naturally built to do. Surveys show that even people who don't think there's a God still ask for his help.




Four of the best words for prayer are 'PLEASE', 'THANKS', 'WOW' and 'HELP'. I said 'THANKS' to God when I held our babies for the first time. I said 'HELP' to him when my work was too busy and I knew I couldn't cope. I prayed 'PLEASE HEAL HER' when my wife was really ill in hospital. And I said 'WOW' in worship on the night I saw the awesome Northern Lights!

We can pray about anything and everything because God is interested in really big things like peace and healing, but also really small things like the way we feel or the things that worry us.

Prayer is like hanging out with the most famous and powerful person that ever lived.

THERE IS NOTHING MORE AMAZING THAN TALKING TO THE LIVING GOD, AND LEARNING TO LISTEN TO HIM TOO.



REAL PRAYER
IS A TWO-WAY
CONVERSATION
WITH THE LIVING
GOD WHO LOVES
AND LISTENS TO THE
THINGS WE SAY.

And, of course Jesus prayed too.

In fact, the greatest person who ever lived prayed *a lot*.

Before starting his work of teaching, healing and performing miracles, Jesus prayed and fasted for more than a month in the desert.

Before choosing his 12 disciples, he prayed all night.

After feeding the five thousand he must've been pretty tired, but he climbed a mountain to pray.

When he was dealing with the pressures that came with being famous, Jesus prayed.

When he was scared because he knew that he would soon be put to death, he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Even during those horrendous hours of pain on the cross, Jesus cried out to God.

After his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples to follow his example and put prayer above everything else.

And importantly, Jesus taught
his disciples to pray.

LORD, TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

Two thousand years ago, the disciples welcomed Jesus back from his regular time and place of prayer with one of the greatest requests of all time: 'Lord,' one of them said, 'teach us to pray'. (Maybe you're asking the same question?)

These were people who would go on to have extraordinary prayer lives. They would pray until buildings shook. They would break Peter free from a high-security jail by the power of prayer. Even their shadows and handkerchiefs would sometimes heal the sick.

The disciples were to become mighty prayer warriors, but it didn't happen by accident. Prayer didn't get beamed down on them from heaven. Prayer had to be learned and practised.

And so, of course, Jesus did teach them to pray. We know his instructions as 'the Lord's Prayer' and we'll be using them as our map as we learn about prayer here.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

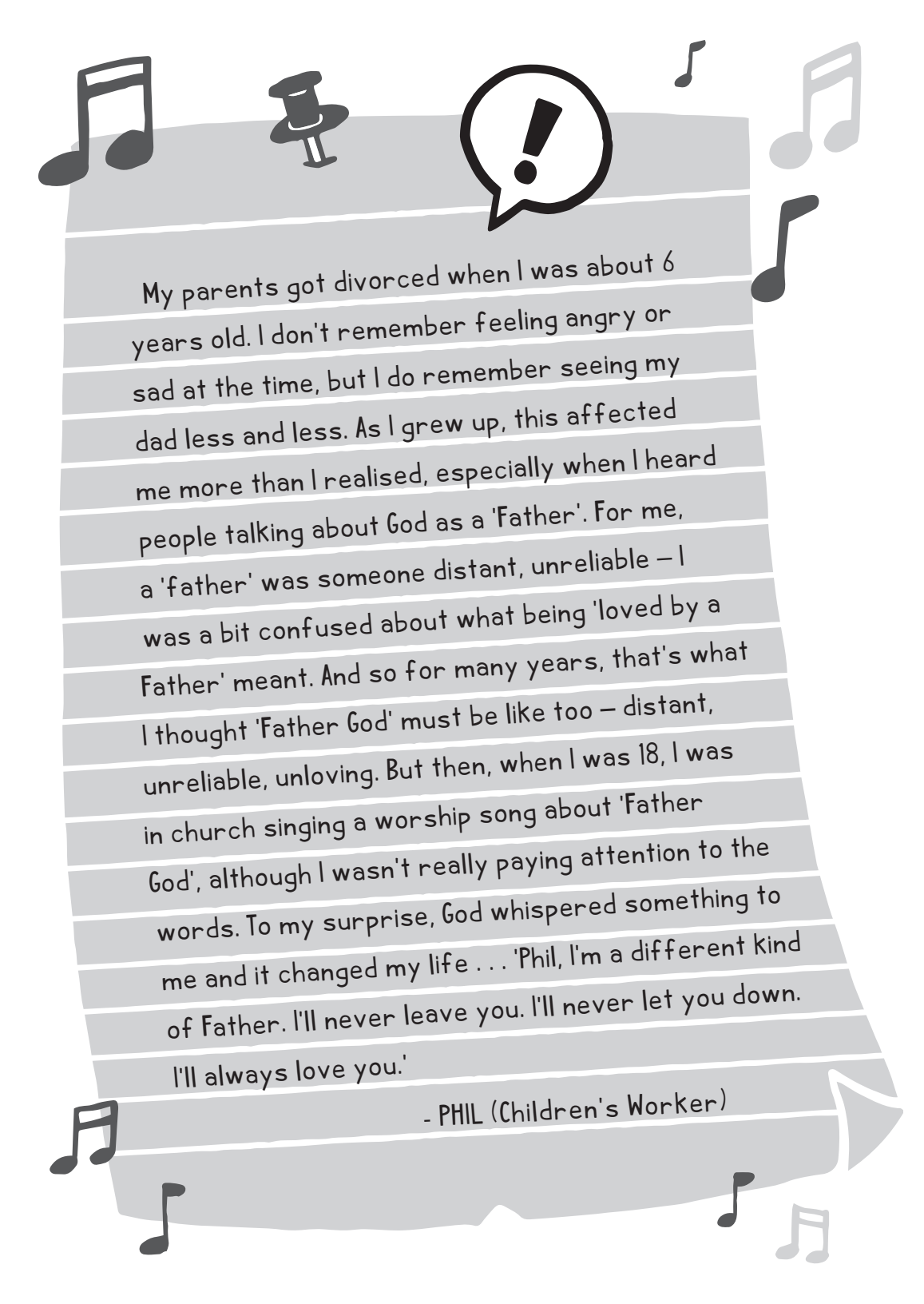
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

AMEN.

Although we commonly use the word 'Father' when we pray, God is much bigger than the father or mother figure we can fit in our brains.

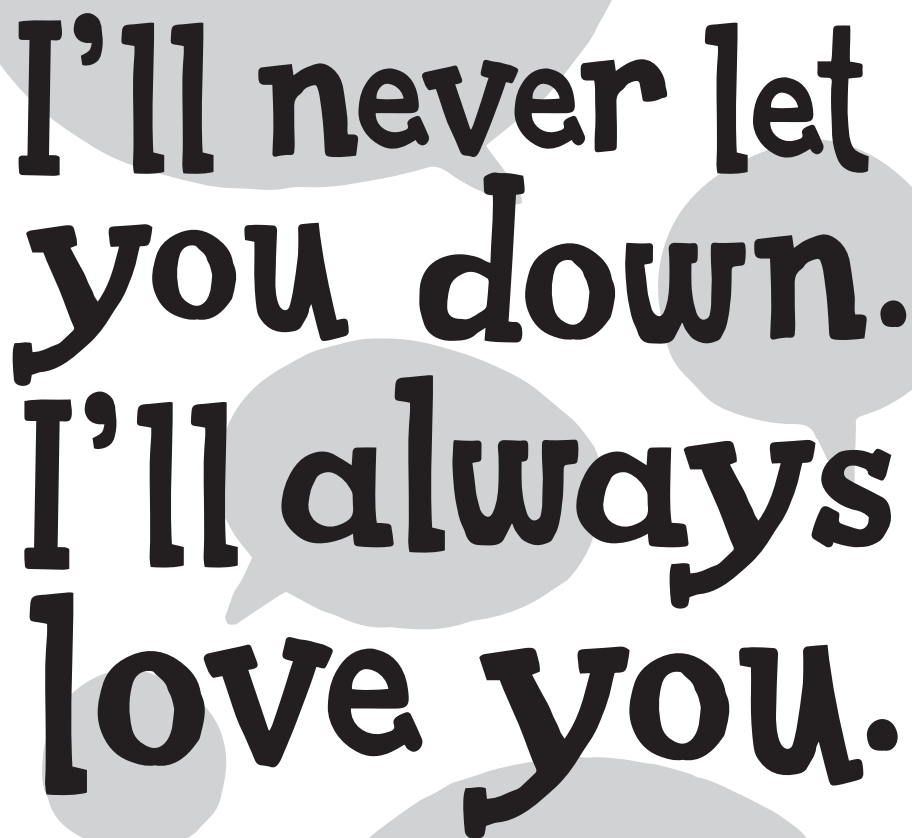
'Hallowed' is an old-fashioned way of saying 'holy', 'awesome' or really 'special'.

Sometimes you'll see 'trespasses' in this part of the prayer: they mean the same thing – when we've not quite done things the way that God intended.



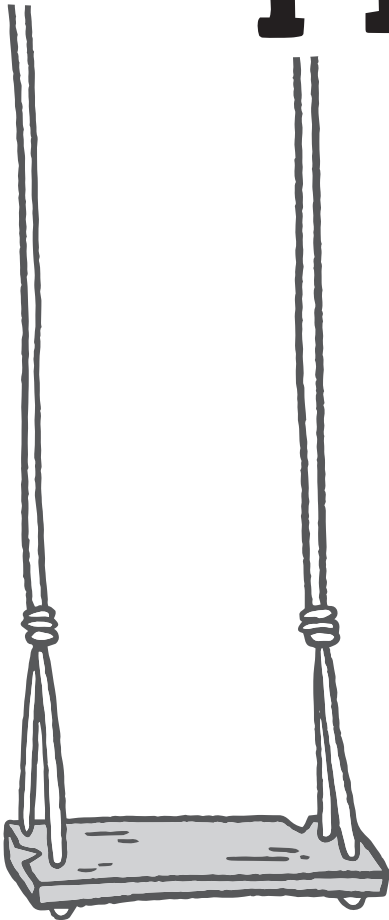
My parents got divorced when I was about 6 years old. I don't remember feeling angry or sad at the time, but I do remember seeing my dad less and less. As I grew up, this affected me more than I realised, especially when I heard people talking about God as a 'Father'. For me, a 'father' was someone distant, unreliable – I was a bit confused about what being 'loved by a Father' meant. And so for many years, that's what I thought 'Father God' must be like too – distant, unreliable, unloving. But then, when I was 18, I was in church singing a worship song about 'Father God', although I wasn't really paying attention to the words. To my surprise, God whispered something to me and it changed my life . . . 'Phil, I'm a different kind of Father. I'll never leave you. I'll never let you down. I'll always love you.'

- PHIL (Children's Worker)



**I'll never let
you down.
I'll always
love you.**

SPACE AND PLACE

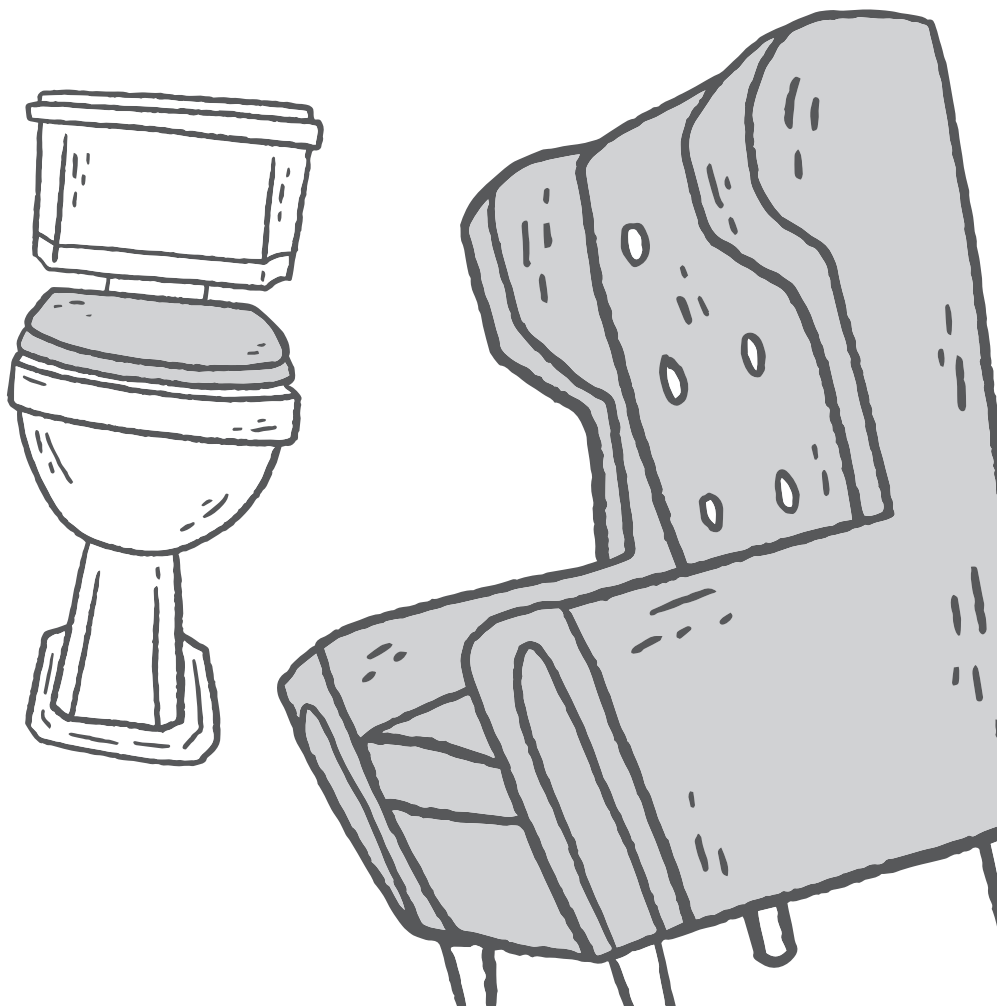


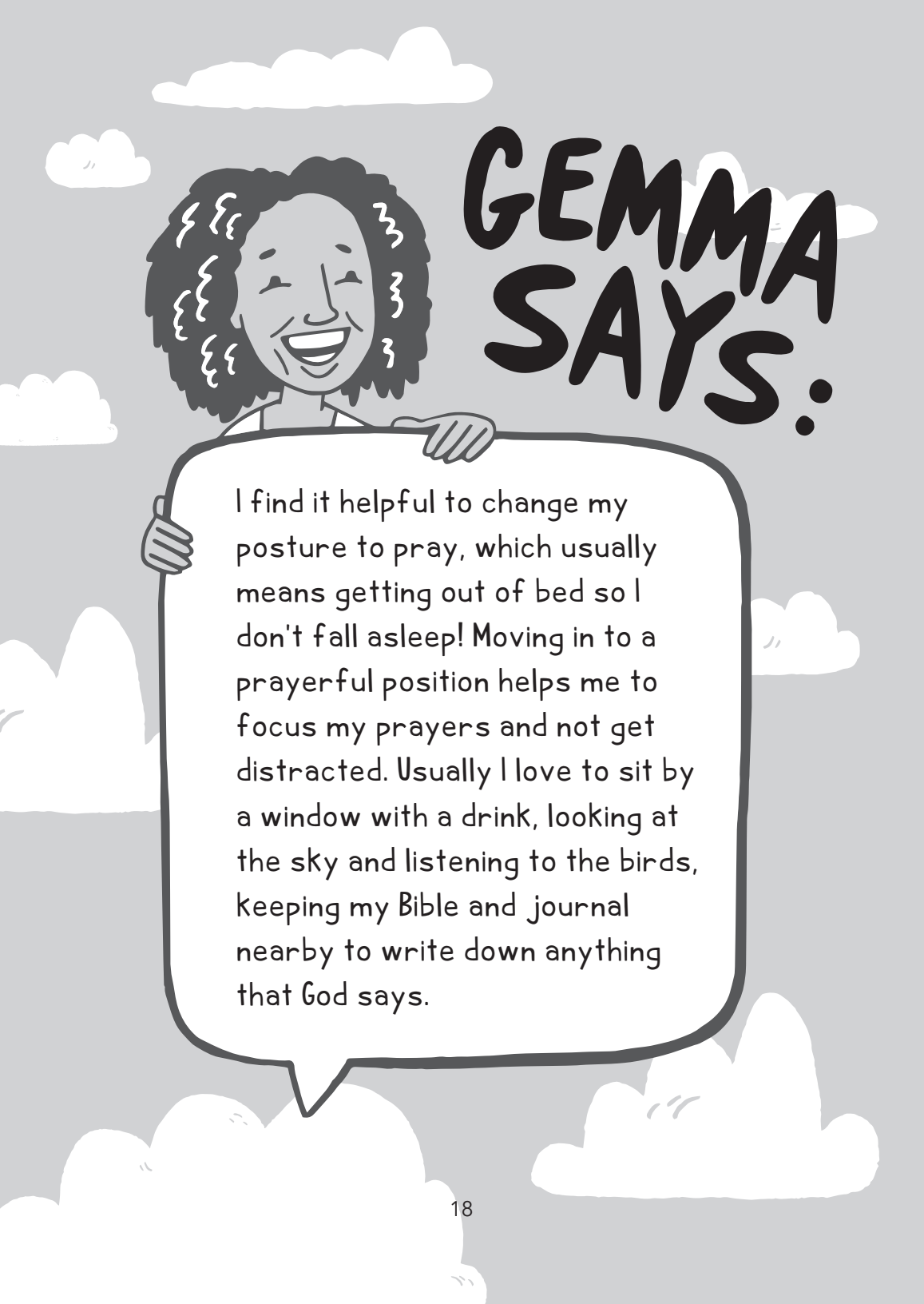
We know from the Bible that Jesus liked praying up mountains and in gardens. He also told his disciples, 'When you pray, go into your room, close the door' (Matthew 6:6).

You can talk to God anywhere, even on the toilet, but some places are especially good for prayer. So before we even think about how to pray, it's good to think about where to pray.

Your favourite place to pray

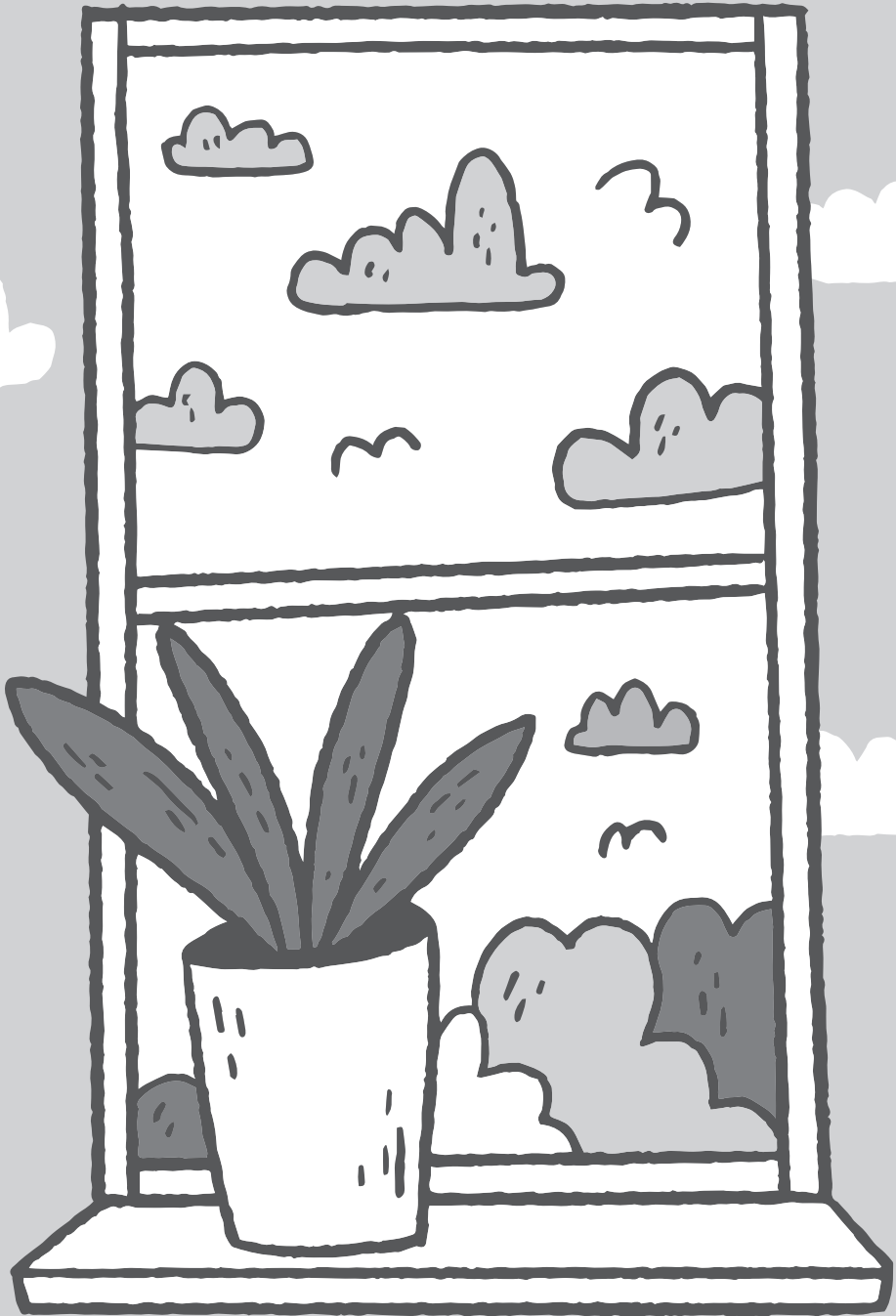
might be in your bedroom, or a particular chair in your house, on a swing in the park, as you walk to school, lying on your beanbag, or even hiding in the cupboard under the stairs.





GEMMA SAYS:

I find it helpful to change my posture to pray, which usually means getting out of bed so I don't fall asleep! Moving in to a prayerful position helps me to focus my prayers and not get distracted. Usually I love to sit by a window with a drink, looking at the sky and listening to the birds, keeping my Bible and journal nearby to write down anything that God says.





ACTIVITY:

create a

PRAYER

SPACE

” (keep it simple or you might have loads of clearing up to do!)

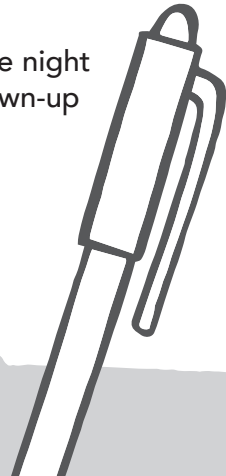
Can you find a quiet corner of your room or your bed where you could make your own special place?





USEFUL THINGS TO ADD:

- Cushion/chair to make it comfortable
- Paper or notepad
- Pens
- Things for colouring with
- Bible
- A cross
- Battery-powered candle
- Photo board with pictures of people/things to pray for
- An inflatable globe or a world map
- A torch** Praying in the middle of the night is totally in the Bible (although your grown-up might not be so happy about it!)



There are loads of ideas for setting up a prayer space here:
www.prayerspacesinschools.com

The background is a light gray color with abstract white line art. It features several curved, dashed lines that sweep across the page, and several sets of concentric circles of varying sizes, some solid and some dashed, scattered throughout. The overall style is minimalist and modern.

EMBRACE THE JOURNEY

GEMMA SAYS:



Lord God, we are excited to start this prayer journey. Help us to learn more about you and discover amazing new ways of praying and getting to know you more. Amen.