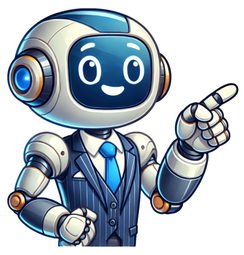
Click to verify



In the realm of faith and spirituality, prayer serves as a powerful conduit through which we seek divine intervention and guidance. One particularly profound practice is offering a prayer for the unborn. This act of faith not only asks for God's protection and blessings for the unborn child but also seeks to secure a future filled with godliness and grace. Rooted in biblical teachings, this prayer reflects a deep desire for the child to walk in the light of the Lord, even before they take their first breath. The Biblical Foundation of Praying for the Unborn The Bible is replete with references that underscore the sanctity and significance of life even before birth. In Jeremiah 1:5, God declares, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." This verse highlights the divine knowledge and purpose imbued in every life, affirming that God's plans for us begin long before we are born. Similarly, Psalm 139:13-16 provides a poetic and profound insight into God's intimate involvement in our creation: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb…Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." This passage not only speaks to God's omnipotence but also His intricate design and care for each life, further motivating us to pray fervently for the unborn. The Importance of Praying for the Unborn Praying for the unborn is an act of faith that seeks to cover the child with God's protection, wisdom, and love. It acknowledges that while parents play a critical role in nurturing and guiding their children, ultimate guidance and blessings come from the Lord. Here are several key reasons why such prayers are important: 1. Protection and Health One of the primary concerns for any expecting parent is the health and safety of their unborn child. By praying for protection, parents seek God's intervention in safeguarding the child from any harm or complications. Psalm 91:11 reminds us, "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways," offering assurance that divine guardianship is available for those who seek it. 2. Spiritual Foundation Praying for the unborn sets a spiritual foundation for their life. It is an invitation for God to be a central part of their journey from the very beginning. Proverbs 22:6 instructs, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." By beginning this process even before birth, parents lay the groundwork for a life steeped in faith and godliness. 3. Wisdom and Guidance As parents, praying for wisdom and guidance ensures that they are equipped to make the best decisions for their child. James 1:5 promises, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." This promise is a cornerstone for parents seeking divine guidance in raising their child. 4. Blessings and Favor Praying for blessings and favor invites God's goodness into the life of the unborn child. Numbers 6:24-26 articulates a beautiful blessing: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." Such prayers ask for God's continuous presence and favor upon the child. Crafting a Prayer for the Unborn Creating a heartfelt prayer for the unborn involves expressing specific desires and requests to God. Here is a structured approach to crafting such a prayer: 1. Opening with Praise and Worship Begin by acknowledging God's greatness and expressing gratitude for His blessings. This sets a reverent tone for the prayer. Example: "Dear Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts full of praise and thanksgiving. We acknowledge Your sovereignty and Your endless love for us. Thank You for the miracle of life and the gift of this unborn child." 2. Praying for Protection and Health Ask for God's protection over the unborn child, covering them from any harm or complications. Example: "Lord, we pray for Your mighty hand of protection over this unborn child. Guard them from any harm and ensure their health and well-being. We trust in Your power to sustain and nurture them through this journey." 3. Seeking Spiritual Foundation Invite God to be the guiding light in the child's life, even before they are born., Example: "Father, we ask that You lay a strong spiritual foundation for this child. May Your Word be a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. Surround them with Your presence and instill in them a deep love for You from an early age." 4. Requesting Wisdom and Guidance for Parents Pray for wisdom and guidance for the parents as they prepare to raise the child. Example: "Lord, grant us the wisdom and discernment we need to be godly parents. Help us to make wise decisions that will benefit our child and lead them closer to You. Guide our steps and strengthen our faith as we embark on this journey." 5. Asking for Blessings and Favor Seek God's blessings and favor upon the child's life. Example: "May Your blessings and favor rest upon this unborn child, Lord. Let Your face shine upon them and be gracious to them. Fill their life with Your peace, joy, and love, and may they grow to fulfill the purpose You have set for them." 6. Closing with Thanksgiving End the prayer with a heart of gratitude, thanking God for hearing and answering your prayers. Example: "Thank You, Lord, for hearing our prayer. We trust in Your perfect plan for this child and believe that You will guide and protect them all the days of their life. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen." Incorporating Scripture in Your Prayer Incorporating scripture into your prayer not only reinforces its power but also aligns your requests with God's Word. Here are some verses that can be included: Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Isaiah 44:24: "This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself. Psalm 127:3: "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. 3 John 1:2: "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." Here are 22 Prayer For The Unborn Dear God, thank You for the joy and blessings our children bring into our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen. Lord, I dedicate my unborn baby to You. Surround them with the protection of Jesus' blood. Amen. Lord, help my baby to arrive at the perfect time. Bless my labor and delivery, and guide the medical team to make wise decisions. Give me strength throughout the process. In Jesus' name, Amen. God, please take away any pain and hardship from my pregnancy and childbirth. In Jesus' name, Amen. Heavenly Father, I pray for a smooth delivery without any complications. In Jesus' name, Amen. I declare that no sickness or disease will affect my baby. In Jesus' name, Amen. I speak health and wholeness into my baby's spirit, soul, and body. In Jesus' name, Amen. I bind any spirit that is preventing my children from understanding and accepting the Gospel. In Jesus' name, Amen. I bind any spirit that is not from You, Lord, that hinders my joy in raising my children. In Jesus' name, Amen. Lord, let my child be filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb. In Jesus' name, Amen. God, let my child come to know You at a young age. In Jesus' name, Amen. I command anything that could stop my child from being a blessing to be destroyed. In Jesus' name, Amen. Lord, cleanse my child from any hereditary issues with the blood of Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen. Remove all bad influences from my child's life. In Jesus' name, Amen. I free my children from any form of evil control. In Jesus' name, Amen. My children will not stray from the right path. In Jesus' name, Amen. Father, eliminate anything in my children's lives that stops them from fulfilling Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen. Lord, fill my child with Your joy, peace, and love. In Jesus' name, Amen. God, I ask for the perfect development of my baby. Let there be no complications or issues. In Jesus' name, Amen. Lord, bless my child with a future filled with Your presence and guidance. In Jesus' name, Amen. Protect my child from all forms of evil and negative influences. In Jesus' name, Amen. Fill our family with Your joy and peace as we await the arrival of this new blessing. In Jesus' name, Amen. In Conclusion In conclusion, as expecting parents, your prayers for the unborn children are deeply rooted in faith, love, and hope. Through these heartfelt supplications, we seek divine guidance, protection, and blessings for the precious life growing within. From expressing gratitude for the gift of children to invoking God's presence and protection over every aspect of their lives, these prayers reflect our unwavering trust in His providence and goodness. As we journey through the miraculous process of pregnancy and childbirth, we are reminded of the power of prayer to shape our experiences and outcomes. Through prayer, we invite God into every moment, trusting in His wisdom to guide us, His strength to sustain us, and His love to surround us and our unborn children. May these prayers serve as a source of comfort, inspiration, and encouragement for all parents-to-be, as we entrust our children into the loving hands of our Heavenly Father. And may our faith continue to grow stronger as we witness the fulfillment of His promises in the lives of our precious little ones. Amen. (Apologies for any formatting errors in what follows – this poem's many indents make it hard to represent accurately in WordPress – this link has the full layout) This poem demonstrates, in obvious ways, what Louis MacNeice called the "dramatic" nature of lyric poetry. In 'Experiences with Images' (1949), he says that "all lyric poems . . . in varying degrees, are dramatic". Firstly, he argues this in relation to a poem's voice and mood: "though they may pretend to be spontaneous, [they] are in even the most 'personal' of poets . . . a chosen voice and mood". He also says "even in what is said (apart from the important things unsaid) all poems . . . contain an internal conflict, cross-talk, backwash, comeback, pay off . . . often conveyed by sleight of hand – the slightest change of tone, a heightening or lowering of diction, a rhythmical shift or a jump in ideas. Hence all poems … are ironic". In 'Prayer before Birth', (hear the poem read) the chosen, dramatic situation is obvious as the poem is spoken by an unborn foetus in the womb. And one of the ironies here is to what or whom this 'prayer' is directed: "O hear me". Besides the increasingly desperate tone of the repeated statements which open each stanza, except the last ("I am not yet born"), MacNeice's foetus cries out, pleading, hear me, console me, provide me, forgive me, rehearse me, hear me (again), fill me, kill me. Though there may be religious allusions in the poem, the evidence does not suggest this is a plea for any divine intervention. In fact, though the "human race" features largely as what is feared by the unborn child, the poem contains the kind of "cross-talk, backwash" that MacNeice finds in much lyric poetry, in that it is also to "humanity" that the poem appeals for protection and rescue. We are therefore present in the poem as both aggressor towards and potential saviour of the unborn child. MacNeice is dramatising the idea of 'choice'. This poet's early work can be read as journalistic, reports on 'chunks of life', as suggested by titles such as 'Belfast', 'Birmingham', 'Train to Dublin' and 'Carrickfergus'. This conception of poetry, consciously contrasted to the Ivory Towers of etiolated Romanticism and fin de siècle Aestheticism, is firmly rooted in MacNeice's vital political concerns. It produced his (now fatally compromised) description of the ideal poet: "I would have a poet able-bodied [sic], fond of talking, a reader of the newspapers, capable of pity and laughter, informed in economics, appreciative of women [sic], involved in personal relationships, actively interested in politics, susceptible to physical impressions". The epitome of this approach in MacNeice's work is the great achievement of Autumn Journal, published in 1939 (read here by Colin Morgan for the BBC). But the poems published in Plant and Phantom (1941) are already asking to be read more as 'parables' in that they combine more nakedly emblematic and moral elements and, as Edna Longley argues, they mark the beginnings of MacNeice's dissatisfaction with his journalistic verse, with societal panoramas, with 'chunks of life'. 'Prayer before Birth' (published in Springboard in 1944) is also to be read as parabolic, its liturgical use of anaphora/repetition one obvious sign of this shift in style: I am not yet born; O hear me.Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the xxxxxxclub-footed ghoul come near me. The 'this is' of MacNeice's earlier poetry has here been replaced by the parabolic, 'as if': in this case the imaginative conceit of a conscious, passionate, forward-looking, articulate foetus. MacNeice always liked to exploit the sounds of words and the clattering of the consonants in these opening lines, the internal rhymes and half rhymes, evoke the voice's fear of brutal treatment.I am not yet born, console me.I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me, xxxxxwith strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me, xxxxon black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me. In contrast to the soft sounds of "born" and "console", internal rhyming and alliteration work in the same 'brutalist' way in this next stanza. The thumping, thickly clotted monosyllables (tall wall wall / strong drugs dope / black racks rack / blood-baths roll) also achieve an impressive level of evoked threat and consequent fear.I am not yet born; provide meWith water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light in the back of my mind to guide me. The tone here changes as this stanza provides indications of the kinds of consolation mentioned in stanza 2. Comforts are largely pastoral in nature – water, grass, trees, sky, birds – which, given MacNeice's previous achievements in portraying the realities of mid-20th century life in Britain and Ireland, is rather disappointing. The choice of 'dandle' pushes irony to the point of sarcasm. He reaches for an easy option of traditional, Classical imagery here. The vague "white light" is also not altogether convincing or clear. Is this a religious image? Or a more humanistic one – the guiding light of rationality? Or of innate morality? Compassion?I am not yet born; forgive meFor the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me, my treason engendered by traitors beyond me, my life when they murder by means of my hands, my death when they live me. Stanza 4 complicates the moral position of the foetus' future life because it recognises that s/he will not only suffer but commit sins. The lines suggest a compulsion to commit such acts, a compulsion originating in "the world", interestingly operating via language and thought control, beyond these standing shadowy "traitors" and other figures unnamed. Probably such figures are developed more precisely in the following lines:I am not yet born; rehearse meIn the parts I must play and the cues I must take when old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white waves call me to folly and the desert calls me to doom and the beggar refuses my gift and my children curse me. A compulsion again is prominent (I must play / I must take), here derived from "old men" and "bureaucrats". This rings more true to the left-leaning, politically radical MacNeice, though the sense of a parable unfolding reasserts itself in the anthropomorphising of the mountains, waves and desert. The beggar's refusal and the children's curses are harder to interpret but seem also to derive from actions performed in bad faith – under compulsion.I am not yet born; O hear me,Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God come near me. Gun emplacement on Primrose Hill, London in WW2 – MacNeice lived close by. My favourite line from the poem appears here in the way MacNeice identifies the roots of evil at opposing ends of a spectrum: men who are bestial, men who believe they are God-like. I'd argue it's particularly the latter who are the focus of the final lines of the poem , "those" who deny or denigrate the individual's humanity, turn her/him into an automaton/cog/thing, whose disregard for the individual human life results in (a very effective return of the water image from stanza 3) the spilling of the individual's worth.I am not yet born; O fill meWith strength against those who would freeze my humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton, would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with one face, a thing, and against all those who would dissipate my entirety, would blow me like thistledown hither and thither or hither and thither like water held in the hands would spill me.Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.Otherwise kill me. The last phrase is dramatic but perhaps over-dependent on its rhyme and savage brevity for effect. The foetus' call for abortion is full of complex issues but perhaps less so if we keep reading the poem as parable (stepping away from more literal interpretation). The parable suggests the dangers, compromises and complicities that any individual coming into the world has to face. A natural response to the poem would be to hope – indeed take action – to alleviate such fears. There is a choice implied. In this, MacNeice is remaining consistent with his earlier political activism and associated journalistic style of poetry. In a 1941 essay, he argued that "the 'message' of a work of art may appear to be defeatist, negative, nihilist; the work of art itself is always positive. A poem in praise of suicide is an act of homage to life". This is how we ought to try to read the poem's final dramatic utterance. In the same essay ('Broken Windows or Thinking Aloud'), MacNeice looked around in 1941 and observed "we are all being dragooned by outside conditions, we look like shuttlecocks of War". Yet he also concludes, "it is therefore all the more necessary to think of ourselves as free agents". This is the path of resilience taken by the pragmatic empiricist as MacNeice sees her/him: "someone who follows an ideal that is always developing, implicit rather than explicit" – no room here for God-like, fundamentalist convictions. Freedom, justice and the happiness of the individual may be under threat – as 'Prayer Before Birth' makes all too clear – but the poet's belief remains in line yet with the optimistic, pragmatic, humanistic credo he expressed so elegantly towards the end of section II of Autumn Journal: I must go out tomorrow as the others do xxxxxxAnd build the falling castle; Which never has fallen, thanks xxxxxxNot to any formula, red tape or institution, Not to any creeds or banks, xxxxxxBut to the human animal's endless courage. Follow Martyn Crucefix on WordPress.com At Online Free Notes (OFN), we provide informative articles on various topics and textbook solutions, answers, questions, extras, pdf of different subjects (English, Alternative English, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, FIT, Environmental Education, Bookkeeping, Hindi etc.) for class 9, class 10, class 11, and class 12 under NBSE (Nagaland Board), SEBA (Assam Board), TBSE (Tripura Board), CISCE/ISC, WBBSE/WBCHSE, and those boards following NCERT published books. Here, you will find a summary and questions/answers to the poem "Prayer Before Birth" by Frederick Louis MacNeice which is a part of the Class 12 syllabus for students studying under the Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE). Photo by Juan Encalada on Unsplash Summary: An unborn child's agonised plea is conveyed in the poem. The unborn baby pleads with God before being born into this cruel world. It asks for the protection of the Divine and for forgiveness for all the evil that it will commit once it is no longer under the protection of the mother. The poem's dramatic style makes a statement about what is wrong with the world. Life is painful, but birth is horrifying. The child's cries are symbolic of the poet's grief, sadness, and fear in a world that's steadily devolving into hell. As a result of the unborn infant's haunting appeal, the poet depicts a world void of compassion, love, and remorse. In the poem, the poet expresses his utter dejection and hopelessness, expressing his belief that evil will not be corrected, but will instead perpetuate itself at an ever-increasing rate. By assuming that the child will live a life of evil, we paint a picture of a world that is nothing but hell. MacNeice employs alliteration and assonance to help create rhythm in the poem: "strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me." The expression "I am not yet born" is reiterated in order to give the poem a spiritual quality. Furthermore, the writer refers to himself as a "cog in a machine," implying that society will shape the child to become an insignificant part of the overall collaboration, rendering him worthless and insignificant. By using the words "I" and "me" as the first and last words of each stanza, the poem affirms individuality at a time when the world was mobilizing and exterminating individuals who did not fit into its categories. 1. I am not yet born; provide meWith water to dandle me, grass to grow for me,trees to talkto me, sky to sing to me, birds and a White Lightin the back of my mind to guide me. a. What is it that the speaker is seeking in these lines?b. Do you think the speaker is a lover of nature?c. What does the poet refer to as 'a white light'? Answer: a. The speaker wants to be provided with water to dandle him, grass to grow for him, trees to talk to him, sky to sing to home, birds and a white light in the back of his mind to guide him. b. Yes, the speaker is a lover of nature. c. Here, the "white light" that the poet refers to is the source of purity, awareness, or wisdom. 2. I am not yet born; forgive meFor the sins that in me the world shall commit,my wordswhen they speak me, my thoughts when theythink me… a. For what does the speaker seek forgiveness?b. Why is the speaker so sure that he will commit sins? Is it reflective of the world we live in? Answer: a. The poet of the poem "Prayer Before Birth" asks for forgiveness for the sins that the world will force him to commit. He asks forgiveness for his wrong words and his evil thoughts. b. He is certain that he will commit sins once he is born since it is inevitable. Yes, it is a reflection of the world we live in. Missing answers are only available to registered users. Please register or login if already registered 4. I am not yet born; O fill meWith strength against those who would freeze myhumanity would dragoon me into aLethal automaton,would make me a cog in a machine, … a. What is the speaker's plea in these lines?b. Whom does the speaker want to fight?c. Is it possible for the speaker to turn into a 'lethal automaton' or 'a cog in a machine? What do these phrases signify? Answer: a. In these lines, the speaker pleads for the strength of will to stand against tyrants that could destroy his humanity and individuality. b. He wants to fight against those who will starve his humanity, make him a killer machine, and make him lose his humanity and individuality, so that he becomes just a cog in a machine. c. It is possible for the speaker to become a lethal automaton or cog in a machine. This implies that the speaker's individuality and humanity will be lost. Since the poem was written in the Second World War, the poem contains references to war, where the phrase "lethal automaton" refers to deadly killing machines and soldiers, while the phrase "cog in a machine" describes just one among many. 1. Who is the speaker of these lines? What is the general mood of the speaker in the entire poem and why? Answer: These lines are spoken by an unborn child. In the entire poem, the speaker displays despair and fear. As it was written during the Second World War, the poem presents a bleak picture of the world. Many European countries were in ruins, with millions already dead, as the world faced a likely fascist future. The thought of bringing a newborn into such an environment must have seemed like a death wish. This poem, written by Louis MacNeice, evokes the fears and anxieties of a baby not yet born. Each stanza illustrates the reader's growing insight into the fears of adults, parents, generations, and demographics that have allowed such an environment to exist in the first place. 2. This poem was written during the Second World War. Do you think war, its torments and repercussions are understood well by the poet? Does the plea of the speaker have anything to do with the ravages caused by war? Answer: The poet knows war very well, its burdens and consequences. That's why he prays for freedom – freedom from fear, restraints and delusions. In this poem, Prayer Before Birth, written as the terrors of World War II struck the world, a baby not even born speaks the truths of his evil world. By speaking through a baby, the author enables readers to view the contrast between evil and innocence. The newborn baby is quite innocent, as he has barely taken his first breath. However, this infant's knowledge of all things evil enables the reader to understand the gravity of evils of the world and wars. Readers are moved by the thought of the innocent new baby, and what he or she will eventually face throughout life. They are motivated to protect his or her own innocence as well as that of their own children. In Prayer Before Birth, the unknown listener is called out as the only one who can protect him against the sins of the world. The speaker makes his views clear by speaking through the baby's mouth. Missing answers are only available to registered users. Please register or login if already registered 5. What message does the poem convey to the readers? Answer: In the poem "Prayer Before Birth" the speaker points out that the world is not suitable neither for children nor for adults. He tells this from the perspective of an unborn child. Frightened by this disastrous prospect, the child prays for protection and for forgiveness. In the poem, the poet expresses the fears that modern humanity faces, and the world as devoid of love, compassion, and regret. In MacNeice's day, the world was experiencing a particularly dark period when he wrote this poem. As the Second World War raged in Europe and elsewhere, the poet saw the world at its worst. MacNeice's poem refers to the social evils of wars, treason, violence, and progressive robotization of the individual. The unborn child longs to be free and to follow God's white light. In the poem, the unborn child pleads for death rather than being born into a world where he will become an inanimate object and be stone-hearted. Get notes of other boards, classes, and subjects 28th March 2015 Nibble ClothingThe newest clothing line that makes hard work and intelligence fashionable. At Nibble Clothing we believe that you should be able to wear clothes that embrace your inner nerd whilst still looking enviable out and about. Come check us out, new designs coming soon! Poet and contextA poet and artist, Blake was an extraordinary 18/19C poet; religious but not conventionally so, having an idiosyncratic view of the Creation, pertinent to this poem; independent thinking (perhaps because home educated for much of his youth); saw visions from childhood and felt these were a true perception of reality. Blake's "Songs of Innocence" show the wonder of childhood, whereas this is from the "Songs of Experience", which give an altogether more adult, fearful, questioning view of the worldContentQuestions the fundamental principles of creation which have led to the existence of a beast like the tiger.Mood/toneWonderment, awe, curiosity, fear.ThemesCreation, power, strength, religious belief.Form & StructureNote it is from "Songs..." and this is reflected in its structure, rhyme scheme and rhythm, all of which are regular (rhythm has been likened to blows of smith's hammer), simple. Six quatrains of rhyming couplets. Return to initial stanza in 6th, but with a significant shift in the verb (see below).LanguageQuestions form the whole poem: they are addressed apparently to the "tyger" itself but seem rhetorical. No answers are offered. Repetition is obvious from first line; words and phrases are repeated, creating parallel phrases ("And what shoulder, & what art").Metaphor ("forests of the night") are enhanced by alliteration ("Frame thy fearful..." "began to beat")Semantic field of fire, which both creates and destroys ("burning...fire...burnt...furnace" etc.) and this leads to a central image of Blake's vision of creation: the blacksmith's forge ("anvil...chain").Sense of horror of the creature created by repetition of "dread and "fearful".Juxtaposition with the lamb (from Blake's "Songs of Innocence" –also Biblical allusion – lamb of God) reinforces the power and horror of the tiger.Verb shift at end from "could" to "dare" (which has already been used repeatedly) changes focus of the question from the ability to create the tiger to the nerve or audacity of the creator.Vigorous, powerful imagery "twist the sinews" also assonant. 7th February 2013 Prayer Before Birth I am not yet born; O hear me. Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the club-footed ghoul come near me. I am not yet born, console me. I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me, with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me, on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me. I am not yet born; provide me With water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light in the back of my mind to guide me. I am not yet born; forgive me For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me, my treason engendered by traitors beyond me, my life when they murder by means of my hands, my death when they live me. I am not yet born; rehearse me In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white waves call me to folly and the desert calls me to doom and the beggar refuses my gift and my children curse me. I am not yet born; O hear me, Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God come near me. I am not yet born; O fill me With strength against those who would freeze my humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton, would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with one face, a thing, and against all those who would dissipate my entirety, would blow me like thistledown hither and thither or hither and thither like water held in the hands would spill me. Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me. Otherwise kill me. Louis MacNeice Context Written during the Second World War, more specifically in 1944. During 1944 London was being bombed to a large extent and as such it was a time of fear for the future. Content An unborn child expresses its fear of what the world can do to the innocent. It does this through the form of a prayer (possibly to God) in which it pleas to be preserved from the dangers that future on earth might hold, including its own corruption (4th stanza). Tone The tone of this poem can be interpreted in a number of different ways. The child seems fearful of the future and as such urgent and impassioned in its dialect. The poem also seems to have an apocalyptic or nightmarish feel to it. The continuous negativity could also illustrate the hopelessness of the situation. Themes · The world is cruel and dangerous · The world is manipulative · A plea for human freedom · Nothing is safe from corruption Form and structure The poem is written as a dramatic monologue which is spoken by an unborn child. This in itself is a very unsettling concept. The dramatic nature of the monologue is increased by a series of increasing stanzas (apart from the 6th and final stanza) which build up the potential horror on earth to a crescendo. This poem is also laid out in a very unconventional fashion. The cascading lines of the poem could represent the danger and chaos of life on earth, or maybe they are just used by the poet to speed up the delivery of the stanzas. The shorter stanzas near the end of the poem without cascading lines are successfully used to break this sequence. By surrounding the penultimate stanza with two of these shorter stanzas, the poet brings our attention to this stanza and highlights its content. Language · The repetition of 'I am not yet born' at the start of each stanza makes the poem like an incantation, which relates back to the idea of a prayer. The phrase also makes it clear that even though the child has not yet been born, it understands the danger and cruelty of the world, immediately creating a hopeless tone. · Each stanza also follows this repeated clause with an imperative. This illustrates the desperation of the child's plea. · The first stanza seems to illustrate the child's imagination. Alliteration of b in 'blood-sucking bat' and the classic horror image of 'club-footed ghoul'. Even children, unborn children are being corrupted by humans in their imagination. · Stanza 2 is all about what harm humans can do. The alliteration 'drugs dope' and the internal repetition of 'tall walls wall' and 'black racks rack' create a feeling of oppression and claustrophobia. Illustrates the hopeless task of trying to escape this danger and corruption. · Stanza 3 contains the child's optimistic view of what life on earth might hold. The sibilance of 'sky to sing to me' creates a soft hissing sound which is much gentler that the harsh alliteration of 'drugs dope' in the previous stanza. Personification throughout this stanza gives nature the properties that are usually used to describe humans, and this contrasts with the child's views of humans, emphasizing how the child wants to stay one with nature and how nature is now more human than humans themselves (anything human is corrupted). · In the 4th stanza the child expresses its fear of becoming corrupted like everyone else on earth. The use of the 3rd person pronoun 'they' is slightly disturbing. Gives a sense of the child being controlled by a faceless authority (manipulative nature of humans on earth). · The 5th and 6th stanzas replace the simple horrors experienced in stanza 1 with more abstract horrors experienced by adults. Personification of 'mountains frown at me' and 'white waves call me to folly' could suggest that the whole world, including nature could actually become human and threaten him also (such is the intensity of the corruption that not even nature can remain pure forever). Slightly ironic as the waves are 'white', a colour the traditionally symbolises purity and peace, but are actually leading the child into danger and evil. · In the 7th stanza the metaphor 'cog in a machine' could suggest how the world is manipulative and due to this manipulation you no longer have an identity. Most important though is the phrase, 'dragoon me into a lethal automation'. As this poem was written during the war, this phrase immediately creates the image of a soldier. The soldier must not show any emotion (be automated) and should kill whatever the cost. This is sort of like a person without any soul, controlled by his country and the humans that run it. A plea for freedom and a protest against total control. Pray for your babies even before they arrive! Cherish these 21 Bible verses you can pray over your unborn child, for their health, spiritual well-being and more!When you're expecting, there's a LOT to do to get ready for baby's arrival! And as a Christian mom, part of preparing ourselves for a new little one is spending time in prayer for our baby's health and spiritual well-being.A couple of months ago, I was convicted that I wasn't spending much time in prayer for our fourth baby specifically.We included the baby in prayers for our family but I wanted to be more intentional about speaking Scripture over my unborn child!I spent some time looking through my Bible and using Bible Gateway to find some beautiful passages that speak precious promises and God's truth over our baby from both the Old and New Testament.I'll share them with you in a moment, but first, know that you can certainly pray these over all of your children, as we know that the Word of God accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent (Isaiah 55:11-12) and that Scripture prayed over your family has great power.How do I pray for my unborn baby? That was the question I got from a reader that inspired this post many years ago. Whether this is your first pregnancy or your fourth, below are three quick tips for how you can specifically pray for your unborn child.For instance, one of the verses I am using is 2 Peter 3:18 – "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."So I might say something like this: "Lord, please help my baby (say their name if you've already decided!) to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. Thank you that you have all the glory and honor and that you will give our child the gift of faith to know you forever. Amen."Thank Him specifically for the blessing of a baby and the work He will do in you through your child's life. Your child is in God's hands and that is the best place for him or her to be. We can trust in the ways of God. He values human life and your child is the crowning glory of creation!In those early stages of pregnancy as this new life grows, you will probably experience exhaustion, morning sickness and anxiety. We can be assured of God's promises and God's mercy in our life and the tiny life we are carrying!James 1:5 tells us that if we ask for wisdom, God will give it to us! I find that it's so important to continually pray for wisdom as we parent this sweet little person who we will grow to love more each day.photo credit: freedigitalphotos/David Castillo DominiciI've also created a free printable with the verses I chose in case you would like to print it out and have it nearby when you have prayer time. It's an 8×10 so you could trim and frame it or put it in a page protector as is.Further down this post, you'll also find a link to download some printable prayer cards with these verses.They are a mix of NASB, NKJV and ESV verses.You could use these at night before bed and can include your older children in praying these over the baby during devotions, which is what we did!They are wonderful for memorization as well and can easily be used in a two-week cycle.Print out and share with a group of moms so they can pray these powerful words of Scripture over their unborn babies as well.1. Psalm 139:13-14 – For You created my inmost being, You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.2. Philippians 1:6 – For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in your will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.3. Psalm 127:3-5 – Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.4. 3 John 4 – I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.5. Isaiah 54:13 – All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.6. Psalm 90:17 – Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; and confirm for us the work of our hands; yes, confirm the work of our hands.RELATED: Struggling with morning sickness? Read this post for help!7. 2 Peter 3:18 – But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.8. Psalm 138:8 – The Lord will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever; do not forsake the works of Your hands.9. 2 Thessalonians 3:3 – But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.10. Colossians 2:2 – That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself.11. Titus 3:5-6 – He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.12. Psalm 37:23 – The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way.13. Psalm 145:4 – One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.14. 1 Samuel 1:27 – For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him.15. Luke 18:15-16 – Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.16. Psalm 139:15-16 – My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.17. Ecclesiastes 11:5 – As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.18. James 1:17 – Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.19. Psalm 91:1-2 – He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.20. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 – With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 21. Job 10:10-12 – You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose. When I was in my mother's womb, you knew me, and before I was born you set me apart.This last bonus Bible verse is for you as a pregnant mother as you await the arrival of this sweet little life and pray for a safe delivery. 22. Isaiah 26:3 – You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you.You'll notice almost half of them are from the Psalms. I love how the poetry and promises of this book of the Old Testament!Your child is created in the image of God. What an amazing truth! These Bible verses are a beautiful and effective way to pray God's blessing over your child's life, from the moment of conception to the day your little baby arrives.There are many, many verses you can pray over your unborn children, so if you have a verse I haven't mentioned that you currently pray over your children, please feel free to mention it in the comments.Below is the original version of this printable when I had only 14 verses. It fits on one page.To get the original 14 verses printable, just click here. A Dropbox page will open. You do not have to sign up for Dropbox, just X out if there are any sign-up boxes and you can safely download the file directly to your computer.I've created an updated two-page PDF with the 21 Scriptures for praying over your unborn child.Click THIS LINK to download it securely to your device. It is free!They are available to my email subscribers along with all the other printables in our free resource library, designed to help you have grace-filled confidence as a Christian mom in building a strong, faithful family! Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Prayers for the Unborn and their mothers facing unplanned or difficult pregnancies. Through two powerful prayers, we seek God's protection, grace, and guidance for all those affected, and intercede for a renewed culture of life where every child is cherished as a precious gift from conception onward. Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts full of love for the precious gift of life. We pray for all unborn children, that they may be protected and cherished from the very moment of their conception. Lord, we know that every life is valuable in Your eyes, knit together by Your loving hands in the mother's womb. We pray that all mothers facing difficulties and challenges with their pregnancies may be filled with Your strength, courage, and grace. May they be surrounded by love and support, and may they choose life for their babies. We pray for a renewed culture of life in our society, where every child is welcomed and cared for as a miraculous creation. Help us to build a world where pregnancy termination is unthinkable, and where all life is treated with the dignity it deserves. Give us the wisdom and compassion to reach out to those who are hurting after having terminated their pregnancy, offering them Your healing love and mercy. May they find peace and forgiveness in Your endless grace. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen. Holy Mary, Mother of mercy, we come to you pleading for the littlest and most vulnerable among us – the unborn. Intercede for all children whose lives are threatened before birth. Wrap them in your mantle of protection, and guide their mothers to choose life and love. Pray for women facing the anguish of unplanned pregnancy. Fill their hearts with courage and hope, that they may say "yes" to the new life within them, just as you did. May your tears of sorrow soften hearts, and awaken our world to the precious gift of human life. Amen. During World War II, Anglo-Irish poet Louis MacNeice wrote the poem "Prayer Before Birth," which was originally published in his 1944 collection Springboard. The speaker, an unborn kid, expresses tremendous wisdom regarding humanity's propensity for self-destruction and violence while praying for future direction and protection from the tragedies of the modern world