

DETAILS



Kaylee Prays for the Children of the World God Hears Every Prayer

May 13, 2025 | \$18, 32 pages, hardcover | 978-1-5140-0916-1

God Is with Us when We Pray

“After breakfast, Kaylee wants to sit with God and think about the boy in Turkey. She takes the photo to her room and perches on the edge of her warm, soft bed, imagining the boy sitting inside his flimsy blanket tent.

‘God, do you care about this boy?’ she wonders.”

—taken from *Kaylee Prays for the Children of the World*

Kaylee and her grandfather Halbi love reading the newspaper, faithfully fetched each morning by their dog, Keedo. As they read, they look for ways to pray for the children of the world. But when Kaylee encounters the photo of a sad boy halfway around the world she wonders, *Does God really care?*

This story tenderly guides readers of any age toward the God who hears and answers our prayers—even when we feel overwhelmed or can’t find the right words. From author Helen Lee and illustrator Shin Maeng, *Kaylee Prays for the Children of the World* features a Korean American family whose desire to seek after God will resonate with families of faith all around the world.

About Helen Lee



Helen Lee is an author, wife, mom of three young men—which means she lives at Costco in her spare time—and the dog mom of a Mini Bernedoodle named Simba. She has written books for adults and is working on her first middle-grade novel. *Kaylee Prays for the Children of the World* is her first picture book.



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Q & A



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Join God's Work Around the World Through Prayer

What inspired you to write *Kaylee Prays for the Children of the World*?

Helen Lee: Years ago, I had written a more focused draft of a children's book called *God Cares for the Children of Bangladesh*, and I'd always wondered if it was something that could be publishable. And after IVP Kids launched, I then wondered if it would be the kind of book that IVP would be interested in. I reached out to executive editor Elissa Schauer in September 2022 with a pitch, and over the course of many conversations and emails, that idea eventually turned into *Kaylee Prays for the Children of the World*. I'm grateful for all the wonderful feedback I received from Elissa, (then) editorial assistant Kaitlin Murphy, designer Kate Lillard, and the IVP publishing committee along the way, without which the book would not have emerged in its current form.

What is distinctive about your idea?

Helen: As a mom, I had a difficult time finding children's books with representation of Asian American and Korean American characters. Thankfully, the situation for parents searching for diverse stories is better today compared with 15-20 years ago when my boys were young. But underrepresentation is still a reality, especially in the Christian children's publishing space, with the IVP Kids line a strong exception. *Kaylee* features a Korean American multigenerational family, and it includes a number of cultural references that will be familiar to those who grew up in a similar context, while also offering a message and Scriptural truths that will resonate with all Christian families.

What do you want readers to take away from your book?

Helen: I would love for readers young and old to be reassured that it is all right to experience struggles as we pray. Prayer is as near and as accessible to us as God's presence, which is always near us, and yet many of us experience challenges for a variety of reasons when we pray. My hope is that these moments of struggle are normalized for the readers, and that children and parents both are reassured that God's presence does not rely upon how we feel about our prayer life. I also would want for readers to recognize the presence of the triune God through the story, in particular the presence of the Holy Spirit which we may not always find easy to talk about with our children, so the book gives parents an opportunity to recognize the active participation of God's Spirit through the story. Prayer in this book is presented both individually and communally, which I hope will help children feel comfortable with the practice, and it is also offered as a key means through which we can participate with God in his work around the world. I hope the book gives parents new ways to talk about prayer and about connecting with God and his mission to love the whole world and to bring people from every tongue, tribe, and nation into a saving knowledge of himself.

How did IVP find your illustrator, Shin Maeng? What can you tell us about him and his work?

Helen: I've known Shin through our shared connection within InterVarsity, and I knew that I wanted Shin to illustrate the book right from the start. I couldn't be more honored and pleased that he was willing to partner with IVP and me on this project. As a fellow Korean American, he understood the importance of including details that would be unique to our cultural context without alienating the broader scope of potential readers. He is extraordinarily talented, and hopefully this project will continue to help others discover his artistic gifts.

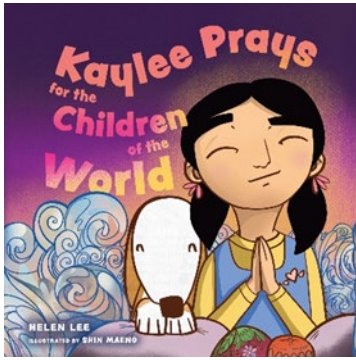


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Is there anything else you would like readers to know about your book?

Helen: One of the practices that the book depicts is known within the Korean Christian context as “praying in one voice.” It’s not unique only to Korean Christians, but it has its roots within the Korean church in the 1907 Pyongyang revival, which is when the multitudes gathering began to pray together, out loud, simultaneously. If families have never tried or experienced this kind of prayer, it’s a dynamic, exciting way to pray together, and I hope that children in particular will enjoy trying this practice within their families.

Also, an important subtheme in the book is to be aware of and care about the needs of others, near and far. Although most families today may not read the newspaper together like Kaylee and her grandfather do, information is right at our fingertips 24/7 through our phones and computers, and it’s never been easier to find resources to help us learn about both domestic and global issues. I hope the story will inspire other families to make a regular habit of praying, as Karl Barth has been quoted as saying, with the Bible in one hand and the proverbial newspaper in the other.



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