



HOW SHALL WE PRAY?

Life & Ministry of Jesus • U6#2 1st-3rd Grade • Dec.10, 2023

Concept

Prayer is talking and listening to God.

Goal

Students will learn the focus of prayer as taught by Jesus in the “Lord’s Prayer.” They will be encouraged to reflect on how they relate to God and be motivated to spend time praying.

Passage

Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11

Key Verse: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Matthew 7:7

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Adam Raccoon and the Race to Victory Mountain</i>, Glen Keane <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ask, Seek, Knock Cards</i>, 1 set/classroom <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>1 small ball</i>	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “My Prayer Journal” cardstock cover and printed sheets, 1 set/student• “How to Use Your Prayer Journal”, 1/class• Yarn• 4 hole punches• Crayons/markers• Stampers• Stamp pads• Variety of stickers

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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“Christianity isn’t a religion—it’s a relationship!” This truth is the difference between the bondage of “works” and the freedom of God’s grace.

But how is this relationship expressed?

“As His disciples heard the Master pray, they could not help but discern the depth of intimacy that existed between Him and His Father. Aspiration after a similar experience was kindled in their hearts, and they asked Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray... (Luke 11:1). ... In replying to their request, Jesus said, ‘When you pray, say: ‘Father’” (Luke 11:2). ... Jesus thus impressed upon His students the important principle that in prayer God must occupy the supreme place, not we ourselves, or even our urgent needs. What a wealth of meaning was compressed into that single word, ‘Father,’ as it fell from the lips of Jesus. If God is not accorded the chief place in our prayer life, our prayers will be tepid and pallid. It is significant that in the pattern prayer, it is half completed before Jesus instructed them to mention their own personal needs.[1]

“Life is really under control only when our attitude is what Jesus’ attitude was: one of continual need and constant expectation. God is always the same, and on that great unshakable rock, faith continually rests. Giving is his job, ours is to receive. Prayer, then, is to be our life and our breath so that no one need urge us to pray any more than they would urge us to breathe or to eat. We know we must pray.”[2] “... If we who are Christians are failing in this vital area, it is simply because we have not yet seen what prayer is and the part it plays in Christian living. Somehow the enemy has blurred our senses and dimmed our eyes so that we do not see this clearly. Shall we now... cry, out of desperate, hungry, powerless lives, ‘Lord, teach us to pray’?

“One thing is immediately evident. When we say these words from our hearts, we have already taken the first and most important step toward discovering the power of prayer. When we ask, ‘Teach us to pray,’ we do so out of a sense of need. Prayer, as we have seen, is simply the expression of human need to an eager Father—the cry of a beloved child to a Father who is ready to pour out all that he has to give.”[3]

[1] J. Oswald Sanders, *Enjoying Intimacy with God*, Moody Press, 1980, pp. 21,22.

[2] Ray C. Stedman, *Talking to My Father*, 1975, Multnomah Press, p. 45.

[3] Ray C. Stedman, *Talking to My Father*, 1975, Multnomah Press., pp. 34, 35.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Activity stations

- **Survey – “What Is Prayer?”**
 - **Instructions:** On the white board, record the answers the students give to the question, “What is prayer?”
- **Reading – Adam Raccoon and the Race to Victory Mountain**
 - **Instructions:** Read and discuss what happened to Adam. Adam didn’t stay on the course. Living the Christian life is difficult with all the things to distract us. It’s hard to stay on course. But, if we learn to pray and spend regular time praying, God will show us when we start to get off course and help us turn back.
- **Craft – Prayer Journal**
 - **Instructions:** Set out the yarn, markers, scissors and hole punches. Give each student a “My Prayer Journal” cover and a set of pages. Decorate covers with markers and shapes, letters, stamps, stickers, etc. Place the journal pages inside the cover, making sure the instruction page is first. Fold in half to make a booklet. Punch two holes on the folded side through the cover and pages. Cut yarn into 6” pieces; thread a piece through each hole and tie to bind the book together.
 - If you’d like, make a prayer journal to keep track of your small group prayers. Keep it in the classroom so it can be used each week.

Introduction Lg. Group

Do any of you know a person who always loves and accepts you no matter what you do? They never laugh at you or make fun of you. They are always available and glad to listen to what you have to say. They want to know what makes you happy and what makes you sad. They want you to tell them about your day and are very interested in every detail. They love you enough to discipline you when you make bad choices and are always ready to forgive you. They want to help you make good choices. If you do know someone like that, then you have an idea what God is always like.

While Jesus was living on earth He spent a lot of time talking to God. He told Him everything and asked God for help in everything He did. He didn’t want to make any decision without first talking to God. Jesus knew that He had to be in close contact with God all the time so He could do God’s will. He spent a lot of time alone with God, sometimes staying up all night. Other times He prayed with His disciples or even in the middle of a crowd. As the disciples watched Him, they knew that Jesus always prayed. That’s why He understood people, did miracles, and always did what His Father wanted.

When you came in to class some of you answered the question, “What is prayer?” Let’s look at your answers here on the board. (Quickly go through the answers.)

Let's gather together to read Matthew 6.

The disciples had been watching Jesus. They saw Him pray at all times of the day and night. They were curious. How could Jesus spend so much time praying? Why did He want to talk to God so much? Finally, they asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Let's look in **Matthew 6:9-13** to see what Jesus said. Listen as I read.

Have you heard this prayer? Many people call this the Lord's Prayer and they say these exact words when they pray. But Jesus said pray like this, not say these exact words. For example, what would you think about a friend who came to visit you and said, "<<child's name>>, you are my good friend. I like you very much. I hope you have a nice day. Thanks for being my friend. Good bye." Then the next day this same person came to visit you again and said, "<<child's name>>, you are my good friend. I like you very much. I hope you have a nice day. Thanks for being my friend. Good bye." And the next day she came and said, "<<child's name>>, you are my good friend. I like you very much. I hope you have a nice day. Thanks for being my friend. Good bye." And what if this happened every time this friend came to visit you? Would you know that friend very well? Would that friend know you very well? This would be the same as us repeating the same prayer each time we wanted to talk to God.

Good News

Let's look how Jesus taught us to pray. Why did Jesus start with, "Our Father in heaven" in verse 9? Prayer is talking to God. Just like when you talk to your dad, or a friend, you say their name. But wait, God isn't everyone's Father. Can you tell me why He isn't our Father in heaven? That's right. It's because we are separated from Him by our sin. Who would like to tell me how we can become His child so He is our Father? We admit that God is perfect and we are not. Jesus came to earth so He could live a perfect life and then take the punishment we deserve for our sin by dying on the cross. He was able to take our punishment because He NEVER sinned. When we tell Jesus we want His death to count for us, we become part of His family and God becomes our Father in heaven.

So Jesus tells us to pray by saying, Father in heaven, I'm here to talk to you. Verse 10 says, "may Your name be kept holy." Who can tell me what "holy" means? It means "to be set apart." Why would Jesus want God's name to be set apart? What does that mean? He is not like us and it's important that we remember that He is God and we are not. How is God different from us? (Created us and the whole world, perfect, knows everything, all powerful, loves everyone perfectly, etc.) Jesus says we must begin this way because we have to know who we are talking to.

Lesson Continued

“Your will be done” means we should have the attitude that we are willing to do whatever He wants us to do. He wants us to do His will because His will is the best for us.

As we think about and thank God, we recognize how much we need Him. In vs. 11-13, Jesus changes the focus from who God is to what we need. We need Him to give us food and to forgive us for our sins so we can have a relationship with Him. We need Him to protect us from our evil desires and Satan’s temptation. He wants us to ask for all the things we need – physically, relationally and spiritually.

After Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, He encouraged them to keep praying in this way. Our key verse today is in the next chapter, Matthew 7:7. “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” God loves when we ask and He loves to give to us. Let’s look at these cards to help us learn the verse.

- **Card 1:** (side 1) Ask, (side 2) and it will be given. We all know what it means to ask. Is there anything we can’t ask God? (No.) Does God always answer? Yes, He promises that if you ask it will be given. But, does He always answer, yes? What are some reasons He might answer, no?
- **Card 2:** (side 1) Seek, (side 2) and you will find. It’s a different way of asking. When we seek we are looking for something. What do we seek from God? (God, what He wants for us, His plan for us.)
- **Card 3:** (side 1) Knock, (side 2) and the door will be opened to you. When you have a friend you really like, you want to be close to them, don’t you? Have you ever asked someone if you can be their friend? That’s what you can do with God. You can knock on His door and ask Him to be your friend. Not only is He glad you want to be close to Him, but He will open the door to understanding and loving Him.

Transition

The Puppet Team has a puppet show for you. Let’s see which puppet prays the way Jesus taught.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Drama - “Does Anyone Really Know How to Pray” presented by the Puppet Team

Transition

There was really a difference between the way Penelope, Sherman and Chris prayed. We’re going to go back to our classrooms and get in our small groups.

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

- What did you think of the way Sherman prayed? Did Jesus say you have to be some Extra-Super-Holy person to pray? Do you have to say special words or use a special voice? (No, we talk like we would to a friend.) Where do we pray? (Anywhere, everywhere.)
- What did you think about Penelope's prayers? How was Penelope's prayer different from what Jesus said?
- How was Chris' prayer like what Jesus said?
- What is our key verse? How do you think knowing this verse will help you talk to God?
- Do you talk to God? What are some things you say to Him? Do you tell Him when you're afraid? ... excited? ... thankful? ... what you're thinking? Is there anything you're afraid to ask Him?
- Think about your answer to the question, "What is prayer?" What do you usually pray? Has your thinking about prayer been changed by what you've learned today? Do you think you will talk to God more or less from now on?

Mission Prayer: Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

Let's talk to God the way Jesus taught us. We'll begin by thinking about who God is and thanking Him that He is so good and so powerful and that He loves us so much. Key verse.

Transition

Our key verse today is "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). Let's play a game to remember what happens when we ask, seek and knock.

Learning Activity# 3 Lg. Group

Game -- Ask, Seek, Knock

- **Instructions:** This game is played like hot potato using the key verse. Have students sit on the floor in a circle. The teacher will begin by tossing the ball to the first student and saying, "Ask, seek or knock." When the student catches the ball, he/she must immediately and correctly respond with the other half of the phrase, i.e., "it will be given to you," "and you will find," or "and the door will be opened to you." If the student hesitates or says the wrong thing he/she will scoot back out of the circle. Play until all but one student is eliminated. Keep the game moving so the students who are watching will stay involved with the action.

Complete journals & discuss the joy of learning about & talking with God.

Optional Activity

“Does Anyone Really Know How to Pray??”

Cast: Penelope. Sherman, Chris

Concept:

An illustration of the different ways people tend to approach God in prayer.

Enter Penelope, Sherman, Chris

Penelope: *(Recite prayer quickly like a grocery list of demands.)*

I have so much to do today, but let's pray before I do anything. Would you guys like to pray with me. Prayer is very important if we want to get anything from God. Dear God, please help my mom not to yell so much, and my brother to quite picking on me, and my team to win this Saturday even though we missed our last two practices, and me to get an “A” on my book report, and Lauren to get a nice bike for her birthday—but not nicer than mine—and please make that old bully A.J. stop picking on me in reading and help Grandpa's big toe to feel better, and help Shadow to get over his cold. It's hard to see a cat sneeze all the time, plus he keeps sneezing in my face. Yuck! In Jesus name, Amen. Oh yeah! And please work on making Mom let me watch an extra half hour of TV. I'm missing the best shows! Amen.

Sherman: *(Embellish with dramatic emphasis indicating that he thinks he is deeply spiritual for his large vocabulary.)*

Are all of you listening? I am going to pray now—you might want to take notes. Oh most gracious omnipotent potentate, please condescend to listen to the cry of your humble servant. Oh magnificent one, Thou art from everlasting to everlasting, and Thy good will shall ever be done. I plead with Thee, that Thou mightiest bestow upon me, your humble servant of servants, your glorious blessings. Our ministry needs one million dollars to carry out our latest project. I thank Thee, O Mighty One. I'm sure you'll be prompt. Oh and let me not forget to intercede in supplication for my unrighteous heathen comrade. May he bow to the propitiation made on his behalf at Calvary. Amen.

Chris: Hello again, Father! I just wanted to thank You so much for helping me to make a new friend. Your story about the good Samaritan really got me thinking. You know I've been scared of Juanita because she comes from a different country and says things differently. But I remembered what You said, and when she needed a partner for her book report I asked You for the courage to volunteer. You sure came through! You helped me to not be such a scaredy cat, and I found out that even though we're different we have a lot in common. You are awesome! Lord, how can I be a good friend to Juanita? Hmmm. I hadn't thought about asking Juanita if she'd like to come to our Bible study. ... *(continued on next page)*

But I'm not sure what Juanita will think of me. And I don't know what my friends will think. I'm not sure I want to do that. I feel really weird. Please help me to think all this through and do what you want me to do. I'm so glad I can talk to you about everything.

Sherman: Penelope, do you think God exists to give you only the things you want? You are so demanding when you pray.

Penelope: Well, Sherman, you're one to talk. You think you can impress God and everyone who is listening with your big, fancy words.

Penelope and Sherman turn and look at Chris

Penelope: Chris, it sounded like you were talking to your best friend.

Sherman: Yea, it was as though you were talking to your best friend, right there with you. I wish I could talk to God that way.

Chris: You can. God is my best friend and I love to talk to Him about everything. It's so amazing, the more I talk to Him and read what He says in His word, the better I get to know Him and the more I want to talk to Him and ask for what He wants to give me.

Sherman looks down at his wrist

Sherman: Oh my gosh! Do you know what time it is? Our soccer game started 10 minutes ago! Enough of my impressive words and your ridiculous demanding, Penelope. Let's get going!

Exit