

Jesus Teaches Prayer

Matthew 26:36-45 and Luke 22:39-46*

Learning Objectives

1. The children will be able to explain why the Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray the Lord's Prayer.
2. The children will be able to name the different components that should be included in our prayers.

Memory Verse: *"When a good man prays, great things happen." --James 5:16*

Getting Started

Choose One Activity

Questions and Answers

Begin by asking the students a series of questions. Give each student paper and something to write with so they can answer privately. You can also have the questions written on an easel or post-it paper so that students can come right in and get started. The questions are:

- **Who do you spend the most time talking to each day?**
- **How much time do you think you spend talking to that person?**
- **How well do you feel like you know that person?**
- **How well do you think that person knows you?**
- **Why do you think communication helps us understand people?**

Today we're going to be talking about prayer—talking to God. A lot of people really have a gaping hole in their relationship with the Lord when it comes to prayer. Communicating with God is like talking with a friend—the more we do it, the closer we'll be. Let's find more about what Jesus, our teacher, thought about prayer.

Chaos to Order

Before the students come in, the teacher needs to create a big mess in the classroom! Have trash on the floor, tables and chairs overturned, things out of place, etc. As the students come in, ask them to look around. "We cannot possibly have class when the room is in such chaos!" Ask the students to help you put it back into order. Then discuss how this relates to prayer. When everything is chaos in our lives, prayer brings us order and calm, by talking to God.

Breathing

Begin by discussing the science of breathing. What do you use to breathe? (Lungs.) Discuss how you inhale the "good" oxygen in, and breathe out the "bad" carbon dioxide. Then give each student a balloon to blow up but tell them not to tie a knot on the end. When they blow air into the balloon, just hold it closed with their fingers. "When we pray, we breathe out all the "bad" things in our lives (petitions, transgressions, intercessions) and lay our burdens on the Lord and in His hands." Now ask them to let go of the balloon and watch it fly! All the air is gone, and in our prayers, all the concerns are gone, replaced with the "good" air. When you sincerely pray and put those "heavy" things that weigh you down in the Lord's hands, you often feel better afterwards.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message:

Jesus is our teacher.

Please note: The reason for the two Bible Text references in this lesson is to demonstrate to the children the different perspectives of events in the New Testament. Be sure to mention this to your students, or even ask them if they know why the story in Matthew is slightly different than the story in Luke? If further explanation is needed, talk about what happens when there is (for example) a car accident. The police officer takes witness statements, but they are very often slightly different. What one person sees from the left side of the street may be different from the person on the sidewalk across the street. Use this as a “teachable moment” to shed some light on our understanding of scripture.

Matthew:

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, “Sit here while I go over there to pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. ³⁸ He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁹ He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

⁴⁰ Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, “Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? ⁴¹ Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!”

⁴² Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, “My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³ When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open.

⁴⁴ So he went to pray a third time, saying the same things again. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But look—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Luke ~ Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives:

³⁹ Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. ⁴⁰ There he told them, “Pray that you will not give in to temptation.”

⁴¹ He walked away, about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” ⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

⁴⁵ At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief. ⁴⁶ “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the significance of when it says in scripture: “Sweat dripped from his face as if he were bleeding”? (*Discuss the intensity and sincerity of Jesus’ prayers to God.*)
2. “My Father, if it is not possible for this painful thing to be taken from me, and if I must do it, then I pray that what you want will be done” (**Matthew 26:42**). Discuss the similarities of this statement that the Lord Jesus prayed in the Garden to the Lord’s Prayer. What do they have in common? (*both are asking for God’s will to be done, not our will – Discuss what this means*)

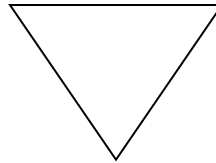
Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

3. What do we put in our prayers? (*Take student answers, praise and thanks to God, intercession for others, petitions for ourselves.*) *This might be a good time to introduce the A.T.I.P. acronym for prayer – see below).*
4. How should we pray? (*discuss: from the heart, emotions and feelings behind our prayers, focused and not distracted, in clear language*)

Application to Real Life

On the board, introduce the acronym of A.T.I.P. for what should be in a prayer.

A – Adoration
T – Thanks
I – Intercession
P – Petition



Discuss what each section means. Don't be afraid to pull out the dictionary for help. Stress that order is important in our prayers; we begin with praising God and telling him what we are thankful for. God comes first! Then we move to prayers for others, and lastly, prayers for ourselves. It is like an upside-down pyramid. Adoration and Thanks are the biggest sections we pray for, with Intercessions for others slightly less, and our Petitions for ourselves even less. Discuss how, often in a prayer, by the time we get to our own petitions, they seem small compared to the rest of the things we pray for. Our own petitions should be smaller, and more time in our prayers should be devoted to adoration and thanks.

Allow the children time to go and find a quiet place in the church and pray to God.

Another Approach:

Remind the children that we can all pray no matter what we are going through in our lives. We can pray to God anywhere, anytime, about anything. The memory verse tells us that our prayers are powerful and that they can make things happen. When we pray, we want to remember to (this is the "five-finger" model – use a picture of a hand and label each finger):

1. PRAISE God
2. THANK God
3. Pray for OTHERS
4. Pray for ME
5. Ask God for FORGIVENESS for the specific things we have done wrong, and for His help so that we may "do better" to walk in His ways.

Allow the children time to go and find a quiet place in the church and pray to God.

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Choose One Activity

Homework...taking it further

On a board or poster, write the following question words: Who? What? Where? When? How? Leave a space after each word. Discuss with the students what goes into a prayer. As you discuss, the students will also be writing on their own paper. Refer to the students' homework and the verses they looked up at home for help in finding the answers to the following questions (see below):

Who do we pray for?

What do we pray for?

Where do we pray?

When do we pray?

How do we pray?

Homework Reference Verses:

Psalm 65:2 (*God hears prayer*)

Proverbs 15:8 (*Our prayers please God*)

Matthew 5:44 (*We should pray for our enemies*)

Matthew 6:5-7 (*Prayer is private*)

Mark 1:35 (*Jesus prayed...a lot*)

Acts 4:31 (*We should pray with other Christians...it's powerful*)

Telephone Game

Our prayers also need to be clear to God. To illustrate this, play the game of telephone with the students. Make the sentence a little long, as this will more clearly illustrate how things can be misconstrued if we are not clear. (If you have a small class, recruit some volunteers to play too). Examples could be:

-- "A church in which people feel at home and, inspired by the Holy Spirit and their love for God, align their lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thus prepare themselves for His return and eternal life." (Church vision statement)

-- "Within the iServe³ initiative, young people will experience "serving the power of Three" by engaging body, soul and spirit in choosing specific endeavors to serve Christ through their families, congregations and communities."

Adding Emotion to our Prayers:

Our prayers also need some emotion behind them. Give the students the following scenarios, or you can write them on slips of paper, and have the students draw a slip and act out a prayer. For each one, discuss if the prayer has emotion behind it, or sounds more like a robot praying.

1. *Dear God, Thanks for the day. Thanks for giving me protection. Thanks for mom and dad. Bless that we can have a good day. Amen.*
2. *Dear Heavenly Father, you are amazing! I love you and I want to say thank you for everything you have done for me. You are awesome God!*

Look up and read the memory verse, James 13:16. What do you think it means in your own words? What does it mean to you?

If you're honest, how much time do you spend praying about your own needs/wants? Why do you think it would be better to not pray for yourself but instead focus on the needs of others?

How much time each day do you spend talking to God, honestly? How can those habits change, and you still be able to go to school and eat and sleep?

Homework Ideas

- Read: **Matthew 5:1-12** about Jesus' teachings and the Beatitudes.
- Learn the Memory Verse:
"When a good man prays, great things happen." --James 5:16
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith
- Think about your favorite teacher at school. What was so special about him/her? What did they teach you? Write about it and bring your thoughts to Religious Instruction next week.
- "How Am I Blessed?" Worksheet – see attached.



How Am I Blessed?

What is there in our life that we can be proud of? What can we do well? What do we possess that makes us happy? Take a few moments to jot down some of the things you are blessed with and why. At least three or four things you do well, and three or four possessions you truly value or are proud of. Fill in the blanks below and bring your answers to Religious Instruction next week.

Things that I can do well

1. _____ Because: _____
2. _____ Because: _____
3. _____ Because: _____
4. _____ Because: _____

Possessions I truly value:

1. _____ Because: _____
2. _____ Because: _____
3. _____ Because: _____
4. _____ Because: _____



Take Home Page: Jesus Teaches Prayer

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that Jesus is our teacher. The children explored the different components that we should include in our daily prayers.

Help me learn my memory verse...

"When a good man prays, great things happen." --James 5:16

Ask me...

1. What kinds of things should we include in our prayers?
2. Do you think it is important to pray from your heart? Why or why not?

Live Your Faith...

Share with your child how prayer has made a difference in your life. If possible, share a specific example of God answering your prayers. Talk together about the importance of finding time each day to pray to and connect with God. Encourage your child to make that a priority each day, and to learn to talk to Him about everything.