

Invest in your spiritual health by: *Disciplined in prayer*

LESSON AT A GLANCE	
Facilitator Notes:	<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is prayer? ➤ How did Jesus pray? ➤ How can my relationship with God deepen through my prayers? <p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prayer is an opportunity given by God for human beings to enter into contact with Him. (Catechism Q&A question 715) ➤ Jesus prayed regularly and authentically in seeking a connection with His Father. ➤ Prayer strengthens faith and trust in God, and provides the assurance of security in God. (Catechism Q&A question 728) <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IGNITE Bible ➤ Catechism Q&A ➤ Chart paper or whiteboard and markers ➤ Something to play a video (TV, computer, tablet, projector, etc.) ➤ "What is Prayer?" video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LG_3pX88fM <p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Elements of a prayer</i>: 1 Chronicles 29:10-14, Psalm 51, Colossians 4:2, 1 John 1:9 ○ <i>Jesus' prays</i>: Matthew 26:39, Luke 5:16, Luke 9:28, Luke 11:5-13, Luke 18:1-8, Luke 18:10-14, John 17 ○ <i>Other</i>: Matthew 6:8-13, John 16:23, Acts 2:24-26, Romans 8:14-17 and 26-27, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, 1 John 5:14-15 ➤ Catechism Q&A questions: 630-642, 715-720, 722-728
PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
	<p>"Prayer is a genuine exchange with God." What does that mean? This week we will be talking about the discipline of prayer. Join us tomorrow for small group at _____.</p>
POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please keep the main message intact, but feel free to add local information as necessary. 	<p>Dear Parents,</p> <p>This week the "I wonder..." questions are about prayer. Take some time this week to discuss with your student your thoughts on prayer: How often do you pray personally? As a family? What prompts you to pray? Why do you think it's important to pray?</p> <p>As always, if you have any question about the topic, feel free to contact us.</p> <p>Your Youth Leaders</p>

SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon? ➤ What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn? ➤ So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday? ➤ Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
HOOK (up to 10 minutes)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. • Have a large piece of paper and markers ready to write. • For additional information on the Lord's Prayer, please see Catechism Q&A questions 630-642 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How are you and how are you feeling today? ➤ Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week? ➤ The Lord's Prayer Write out the phrases of the Lord's Prayer (as listed below and found in Matthew 6:8-13), then discuss as a group what each phrase means to the students and write down their answers. Review the following suggestions, and then answer the question at the bottom. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our Father – <i>God has adopted us into His family through Christ (Romans 8:14-17)</i> ▪ Hallowed be Your Name – <i>worship and adoration of the holiness of God, a reminder that we must have the proper attitude and respect for the name of God</i> ▪ Your Kingdom come – <i>we should live as citizens of God's kingdom already today – Jesus is King in our lives!</i> ▪ Your will be done – <i>we can talk to God about what we want, but we must trust that He will give the answer that is best for us.</i> ▪ Give us this day our daily bread – <i>we are dependent on God and ask Him to provide for our needs day to day</i> ▪ Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors – <i>we are sinful and need to confess our sins in repentance to God because we need His forgiveness and His strength to help us forgive others</i> ▪ Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one – <i>we ask God not to lead us to a place of testing (we can find examples in Scripture like Abraham and Jesus), and to protect us from the temptations of the evil one.</i> ▪ Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever – <i>these phrases return our focus to God. His kingdom has no end, He possesses all power in heaven and earth, His glory is forever.</i> ▪ Amen. – <i>So be it! Now I have to change so that I live in a way that is consistent with my prayer.</i> ➤ What does this prayer teach us? Why do you think we say it collectively every Sunday?

SET THE STAGE (1 minute)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preview the “I wonder” questions with the students. 	<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is prayer? ➤ How did Jesus pray? ➤ How can my relationship with God deepen through my prayers?
LESSON (up to 25 minutes)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p>	<p><u>Student Question #1</u> What is prayer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prayer is an opportunity given by God for human beings to enter into contact with Him. In prayer, the believer experiences: God is present, God hears, and God answers. (Catechism Q&A question 715) ➤ “Prayer is a genuine exchange with God.” (CA Schneider) It is not just us speaking to God, but an exchange, a conversation. Why is this important? ➤ Prayer is necessary for our faith. (Catechism Q&A question 716) In prayer, we experience that God is a loving Father who provides strength and support. Prayer grants insight and knowledge into the nature of God. ➤ When we don’t know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit helps us. (Romans 8:26-27)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In each of the elements, you can read the Catechism Q&A answers with your students for more information. In <i>1 Chronicles 29:10-14</i>, David gives us a wonderful example of worship in the beginning of his prayer. Read it together and discuss all the attributes of God that David prays about. Read <i>Colossians 4:2</i> together – what does this one short verse teach us about prayer? What would it mean to pray for everything “with thanksgiving”? <i>Psalms 51</i> is a beautiful example of a prayer of confession. Read it together with your students. Discuss how they could use some of the same words in their own prayers. 	<p><u>Student Question #2</u> What are different elements of a prayer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commonly used elements of a prayer are adoration and worship, thanksgiving, petitions, confession, and intercession (Catechism Q&A question 723) ➤ While every prayer doesn’t need to have all of these elements, they do give us a certain foundation to build on – let’s explore them a little more closely. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adoration and worship: this is where we should start. Telling God what you love about Him and what He means to you puts you in the right perspective. It focuses our attention on who we are talking to. (Catechism Q&A question 724) ▪ Thanksgiving: when we pray we should give thanks for everything that has been given to us by the goodness of God. (Catechism Q&A question 725) ▪ Petitions: turning to God in petition makes it clear that He is the One we can go to in all situations. All difficulties are the same to God, no matter how big they seem to us. He is not distant or indifferent to His creation, but rather He accompanies us and protects us. (Catechism Q&A question 726) ▪ Confession: <i>1 John 1:9</i> <i>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.</i> We should confess our sins to God in prayer, possibly even every day, and ask for His forgiveness. ▪ Intercession: we are not alone! God created us in relationship with those around us. Intercessions are expressions of our love for our neighbor. (Catechism Q&A question 727) Jesus’ intercessory prayer recorded in <i>John 17</i> shows us how He approached His heavenly Father as an Advocate on behalf of the Apostles and the church. (Catechism Q&A question 720)

- Read *Luke 11:5-13*. The “friend” in this parable doesn’t seem to be much of a friend, seeing as at first he’s too lazy or sleepy to get up and help. At first this might seem like a strange comparison to our prayers to God – but read down to verse 13 where Jesus says, “...**how much more** will your heavenly Father give...” What does this tell us about God? What do we learn from Jesus’ comparisons to God and the friend, or the father in these verses?

Student Question #3 How did Jesus pray?

- Jesus prayed regularly and authentically in seeking a connection with His Father. (Catechism Q&A questions 718-719) We can find many examples of His prayers in Scripture:
 - Jesus prayed alone and often – *Luke 5:16*
 - Jesus prayed for others – *John 17*
 - Jesus prayed with others – *Luke 9:28*
 - Jesus taught persistence in prayer – *Luke 18:1-8, Luke 11:5-13*
 - Jesus taught humility in prayer – *Luke 18:10-14*
 - Jesus placed God’s will above His requests – *Matthew 26:39*

Student Question #4 How can my relationship with God deepen through my prayers?

- Prayer strengthens faith and trust in God, and provides the assurance of security in God. (Catechism Q&A question 728)
- Prayer helps us resist evil. Jesus prayed often when He was faced with difficulties and we can do the same.
- Ending our prayers with the words “in Jesus name” acknowledges our unworthiness to receive favor from God and our entire dependence on Jesus Christ. (John 16:23 / 1 John 5:14-15) When we pray in Jesus name, we have to think, is this something Jesus would advocate for on my behalf? Is this something that Jesus would pray for?
- God does not answer every prayer how or when we think He should. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 that he prayed often for “a thorn” to be removed from him and God did not remove it. **As we mature and grow in our relationship with God and learn more about Him, we will be able to trust His love and wisdom, even when we don’t understand His actions.**
- Our inner and outer posture when we pray: (Catechism Q&A question 722)
 - *Folding our hands*: this signifies that we have ceased other activity and are focused entirely on God
 - *Kneeling*: this signifies humbling ourselves before God
 - *Closing our eyes*: this signifies our intention to keep ourselves free from distractions

- Perhaps when we are children, our prayers focus a lot on ourselves, what we want or need. Praying through the Psalms is an exercise that can help us focus our prayers on God. Psalms has been a prayer book for the people of God since the time of David. (Catechism Q&A question 717) In Acts 2:24-26 we see an example of the first Christians praying the Psalms and Jesus Himself quoted Psalms when He cried out on the cross to His Father. There are a few ways that you can do this:
 - Pick a Psalm and start reading it, pause at every verse and turn it into a prayer. This is easier or more difficult depending on the Psalm you pick, but for example, if you read "*The Lord is my Shepherd...*" just those few words could you lead you to pray in thanksgiving for God's guidance and provision in your life. Or perhaps there is a specific issue that you need direction on this week. Or you could pray for the strength to submit your life to God as a sheep does to a shepherd. Or perhaps you have recently felt God's protection and could bring praise and thanksgiving for those moments.
 - The "Three R's" method – **Rejoice, Repent, Request**. Read a longer passage (perhaps an entire chapter of Psalms) and ask yourself these three questions: (1) What about this passage gives you a reason to **rejoice**, to give thanks and praise? (2) Is there something in the passage that reveals a sin in your life that should lead you to **repentance**? (3) Does the passage prompt you to make a **request** of God for yourself or others?

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

Spend some time discussing the following questions:

- Why should you start and end your day in prayer?
- Why pray before a meal?
- How can you turn your prayers into a more ongoing conversation with God?

If there is time, consider showing the "What is Prayer?" video. Whether there is time in the circle of the discussion or not, consider including the video in the follow up message to the parents and encourage them to use the video as a conversation starter.

- "What is Prayer?" video
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LG_3pX88fM

Close with the "I Wonder..." questions

- Ask a student to read an "I Wonder..." question, and invite another student to answer with an "I Believe..." statement or an "I Believe..." statement in their own words.
- As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions.
- Remind the students that on their Confirmation day, they will or have already promised and committed to surrendering themselves to God in belief and obedience.

I wonder...

- What is prayer?
- How did Jesus pray?
- How can my relationship with God deepen through my prayers?

I believe...

- Prayer is an opportunity given by God for human beings to enter into contact with Him.
- Jesus prayed regularly and authentically in seeking a connection with His Father.
- Prayer strengthens faith and trust in God, and provides the assurance of security in God.

Point to Ponder...

- *"I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that He will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things."*
 – Mother Teresa

A Call to Action...

- In the next week, take the time to pray through a Psalm. Write down the verses that you read and write your prayer to God next to them. Take time to reflect after your prayer: how was this prayer different from your prayer last week? Did praying through a Scripture passage help you to focus more on God?

Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

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1. What is prayer?

2. What are different elements of a prayer?

3. How did Jesus pray?

4. How can my relationship with God deepen through my prayers?

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