

## LESSON 1: WHY PRAY?

*This first Sunday school lesson of a series that will introduce children to the importance of prayer in their daily lives.*

Today our lesson is about another way we communicate. More specifically, it is about how we communicate with God.

### OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE (see end of the lesson)

### MEMORY WORK

**"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" Jeremiah 29:13 NIV.**

### SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction:

Today we will learn that prayer is communicating or talking with God.

(Ask the following questions): *Does anyone here like to talk on the phone?*

- *Do any of you talk on the computer with emails, IM, or Skype?*
- *Who do you like to talk to and what about?*
- *How many of you have cell phones?*
- *How many of your parents have cell phones? Do they get upset if they lose their phones?*

Talking with people is important to us! We make sure that we can call others whenever we want. We also make sure people can reach us wherever we are.

*So if talking to people is easy and we do it all the time, why is it so hard to spend time talking with God? We may not be able to call God on the telephone or send Him a letter, but prayer is just as real as e-mail or newspapers*

Why should we pray? Because it makes our relationship with God stronger. Could you imagine trying to have a best friend without communicating with them? Prayer is seeking God and His direction for our lives. Praying also helps keep us out of trouble. Jesus told us to pray, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." (Matthew 26:41)

#### Read James 5:13-16 (The Prayer of Faith)

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Confess *your* trespasses<sup>[a]</sup> to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is prayer? (*Prayer is spiritual communication between ourselves and God.*)
2. Can you pray when you are in trouble? (*Yes.*)
3. Can you pray when you are happy? (*Yes.*)
4. What is another name for happy prayers? (*Praises.*)
5. What are some of the examples of why to pray mentioned in James 5:13-16? (*When you are in trouble, when you are happy, when you are sick, to show faith, for confession of sin, and to pray for others.*)
6. What else can we pray for? (*Some examples include: Guidance, Protection, Strength, Wisdom.*)
7. Is the prayer of a righteous man powerful? Is it effective? (*Yes the Bible tells us in James 5:16b that the prayers of the righteous are both powerful and effective.*)

### **APPLICATION**

Why pray? It's simple, to talk with God and to get His direction for our lives. God is so good and will help us when we are happy, sad, sick or even when we're in trouble. God will give us wisdom, strength and understanding if we only ask Him. In fact God is willing to give us many good things as long as we ask for them in accordance to His Will. God answers our prayers with signs, the Holy Spirit and His Word, the Bible. When we pray our relationship with God grows.

**CLOSING PRAYER** (see end of the lesson)

## **LESSON 2: HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?**

*The second Sunday school lesson of a series that will introduce children to the different ways in which we can pray.*

### **OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE**

#### **MEMORY WORK (12 minutes)**

**"Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!" Psalm 66:20 NIV**

### **SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction:**

Last week we learned that prayer is communicating or talking with God. So how should we pray? When we pray, God wants us to pray with all of our heart (Jeremiah 29:13) We should pray earnestly and not half heartily. We should not pray just so other people will think we are godly.

*Why is it important to talk with God?*

1. God wants us to know Him.
2. God really does answer prayer.
3. God loves us through prayer.
4. We love God through prayer.

*Why is prayer so important?*

1. God commands us to pray.
  1. Pray without giving up (Luke 18:1)
  2. Watch and pray ( Luke 21:36)
  3. Pray with supplication, watchfulness, and perseverance (Eph 6:18)
  4. Pray earnestly, vigilantly, thankfully (Col 4:2)
  5. Pray continually (1 Thes 5:17)
  6. Pray seriously and watchfully (1 Pet 4:7)

**Read Jeremiah 29:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Will God listen when we pray? (*Yes, God listens to our prayers.*)
2. What kind of plans does God have for us? (*Plans to prosper, for hope and a future, and plans to keep us from harm.*)
3. How can we seek and find God? (*We can find God when we earnestly seek Him with all of our hearts.*)
4. God wants to give us hope and a \_\_\_\_\_? (*Future.*)
5. When we pray we should pray with \_\_\_\_\_? (*All of our hearts.*)

## **APPLICATION**

God does not want us to pray mechanically like robots. He wants us to pray heart-felt prayers. He wants us to tell Him our desires, our fears, our hopes, and He wants us to sing songs of joy to Him when we are happy. Praying before meals and bedtime is good, but He wants to hear from us more often than that. He wants to be involved in our lives, to comfort us when we are sad, strengthen us when we are scared and laugh with us when we are happy. God will give true meaning and direction to our lives. We need to make Him part of our lives throughout the day by reading His Word, the Bible and seeking Him through prayer.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

## LESSON 3: THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

*The third Sunday school lesson of a series that introduces children to the purposes of prayer.*

### OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE

### MEMORY WORK - SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION

"May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice." Psalm 141:2 NIV

#### **Introduction:**

In the last two weeks we will learned that prayer is communicating or talking with God and that we should pray earnestly and not half heartily. Today we will discuss the purpose of prayer or in other words what do I pray for? The word ACTS will help you remember what to pray for.

#### **A = Adoration**

**Adore God, love Him and praise Him for who He is.**

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all." 1 Chronicles 29:11

#### **C = Confession**

**Admit your sins to God, ask for His forgiveness through faith that Jesus died for our sins.**

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

#### **T = Thanksgiving**

**Thank God for answered prayers, for the good things He has done in your life. For growth.**

"Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20

#### **S = Supplication**

**Pray for your family and friends, for those who are sick or sad. Pray for those who are not Christians yet. Pray for your own spiritual growth and any other needs that you may have.**

"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

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1) What is a good word to remember when you're trying to remember the purpose of prayer? (*ACTS*)
- 2) What does the letter A in the word acts remind us to pray for? (*Adoration*)
- 3) What does the letter C in the word acts remind us to pray for? (*Confession*)
- 4) What does the letter T in the word acts remind us to pray for? (*Thanksgiving*)
- 5) What does the letter S in the word acts remind us to pray for? (*Supplication*)

## APPLICATION

Today we learned the purpose of prayer. A neat way to remember the purpose of prayer, is to remember the word ACTS. We can pray for A - Adoration of God, C - Confession, T - Thanksgiving and S - Supplication. We also learned that God wants to be involved in our lives on a daily basis, so we need to pray, read our Bibles and acknowledge that the world we live in was created by God. Look around you, see the beauty, and be thankful.

### Prayer Practice:

Spend some time practicing prayer. Assign one of the letters of ACTS to four different and willing children. One can give a prayer of adoration, how great is our God. A second child can give a prayer asking God to forgive everyone when they sin. The next child can give a prayer of thankfulness for all the blessings God gives. Finally, the fourth child can pray for someone in the church who needs special comfort, healing, or wisdom.

### Talking to God with Your Hands

It teaches the basic elements of prayer and encourages children to establish prayer as a habit in their own lives. Lord Teach Us to Pray

### Keep a Prayer Plan.

Write down how to pray. Pray that way. Write down praises, prayer requests, and verses that mean a lot to you. Keep it simple or else you won't keep doing it.

Today our hands are going to help us learn how to pray.

- 1. PRAISE:** Praise is saying what you love about someone. It's saying, "God, I love that you are good. I love how you made the ocean. I love that you sent Jesus for our sins."
- 2. CONFESS:** Confession is a big word for spit up. It means to get the junk out of your life. It's when you ask for forgiveness of your sins. It's saying, "I'm sorry that I lied. Forgive me for getting in a fight with my brother. I'm sorry for not loving you like I should."
- 3. READ:** Reading God's word helps us see ourselves as in a mirror. It helps us understand who God is and who we are. It helps us to pray because we know who we're praying to. (Mimic turning pages or holding up a mirror.)
- 4. ASK:** God says in Matthew 21:22 that, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Pray for others. Pray for yourself. Ask for people to be saved, for God to provide, for wisdom to understand, for help in temptation, for people to be healed.
- 5. THANKS:** God has done so much for us. What can you be thankful for today? (Invite children to list items. Lead the children in a lively worship song of praise/thanksgiving such as "He has made me glad." Have them clap their hands in thanks.)

## Note below for opening prayer and closing prayer

### OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE

The Opening Prayer is an important part of every lesson for several reasons. First, it signals that it is time to start the class. The opening activities used while waiting for kids to arrive allow the children to converse and catch up on week long activities. When it is time to get serious, a prayer works great to facilitate this action. Also, an Opening Prayer will set the mood for the lesson while inviting the Holy Spirit to be in control.

#### The Opening Prayer should always include the following:

1. Praise to God for the opportunity to meet and for the attendance of everyone present.
2. A request for guidance, especially for the teacher so that the Word of God can be shared in a meaningful way.
3. Asking the children to be open to learning the Word of God and to invite the Holy Spirit to be present in both everyone's heart and in the classroom.

Because you are not as restricted to how much time you have left, the Opening Prayer works best for including prayer request and praises. With a new class, the children may not feel comfortable speaking up, but as they get to know each other they will be more open to sharing praises and prayer requests. Sharing like this can take a while, so it is important to make sure the kids stay focused on giving only a praise or a prayer request and not to become side-tracked on other issues.

#### When including prayer request and praises, always consider the following:

1. Ensure everyone has a chance to contribute.
2. Rather than trusting your memory, be prepared to jot down what is said.
3. Be sure to touch on each child's requests. It is important to them to know that you care about them and that their prayers are important.
4. Make sure special needs of your church or church members are also mentioned.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Just as the Opening Prayer is extremely important to the day's lesson and structure, so too is the Closing Prayer. Not only does it signal that the class has ended, but it also gives you the opportunity to reinforce the lesson and share what was taught one more time. The children will know the lesson has real life application and meaning when it becomes part of the closing prayer. The closing prayer should be brief. Remember, the children are probably anxious to go on to the next phase of their day, and will not likely keep still to hear a long closing pray.

#### The Closing Prayer should always include the following:

1. Praise to God for the opportunity to be able to hear His Word and learn from it.
2. Application of the Lesson. For example if the lesson was on "Temptation," your prayer may include asking for the Holy Spirit to help everyone during the week whenever they are tempted.
3. Safety and health for the children.
4. That others may see Jesus in our lives.