

LESSON 7

Talking With God: Prayer

GOAL/PURPOSE: Similar to the lesson on Scripture, this lesson is a challenge for students to make their relationship with Christ a reality in their lives. As they read and discuss prayer, the goal is for them to understand that communication with God is essential to knowing God and being in a relationship with Christ. The lesson goes over these specifics concerning prayer (all are worth discussing!):

- Anyone can pray.
- We pray to build and maintain our relationship with God and know God's plans for our lives.
- We can pray at any time.
- Lives change, people are healed, and big things happen when we pray.
- Both answered and unanswered prayers tell us a lot about God.
- There are a variety of different ways to pray.

****Begin the class with prayer and ask students how they are coming with the Scripture reading they committed to last week (book with keywords listed on the board).***

****Offer a quick review of last week's lesson or the material so far.***

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

#1 * Listening

Get the whole class to sit in a circle. Have everyone begin to snap in unison. Walking around the circle, one adult leader begins to read Matthew 5:1-26. The second adult (or selected student) also walks around the circle and reads Genesis 1:1-31. After a few minutes of all this noise, have all the sounds stop. Ask the students what they heard. Make your questions specific. (i.e. On what day did God create the animals? What did Jesus say would happen to the meek?)

Then have everyone get very quiet, shut their eyes, and listen again while you read the Matthew verses. Ask what they heard this time.

****The point is that we can hear God speaking when we shut out the distractions and take time to listen.***

MATERIALS NEEDED: none

#2 *The Bible on Prayer: Pass out two slips of paper to each student. Each slip of paper has a different Scripture reference on it about prayer. Have the students look up the Scriptures and tell the class what God has to say about prayer as described in the scriptures.

- Matthew 6:7 (We should not be insincere when we pray.)
- Matthew 21:21-22 (Whatever we ask for in prayer, we will receive.)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 (We should pray without ceasing.)
- Colossians 4:2 (We should devote ourselves to prayer.)

- James 5:14-16 (We should pray for the sick; prayers of righteous men are powerful and effective.)
- Joshua 1:8 (We should meditate on God’s Word.)
- Psalm 46:10 (We must be quiet at times to really know God.)
- Psalm 55:17 (We should pray regularly.)
- Matthew 5:44 (We should pray for our enemies.)
- Matthew 6:5-7 (We should pray secretly and honestly.)
- Matthew 6:9-15 (Prayer implies relationship—“Father.”)
- Matthew 26:41 (Prayer will keep us from sin.)
- Luke 18:1 (Prayer will give us courage.)
- John 16:23-24 (Prayer involves asking.)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (We should pray at all times, giving thanks.)
- James 5:13-14 (We should pray for those with deep needs.)
- Others?

MATERIALS NEEDED: slips of paper with Scripture on it; copies of “Prayer Triggers” worksheet (see end of lesson guide)

OPTIONAL EXERCISE:

Have someone read aloud James 4:1-10. Ask how that passage relates to the way we pray. Note especially verses 2 and 3. Ask:

According to this passage, why aren’t some people’s prayers answered? (b/c they ask with false motives)

What is the relationship between a person’s prayer life and his or her closeness to God? (the more we communicate with God, the closer we are to Him)

What causes people to be separated from God? (friendship with the world)

What can we do to become close to God? (submit to God... **prayer is a great way to do this!*)

DISCUSSION:

- 1) Do you ever feel like you are not a good enough “pray-er”? If so, how can you overcome your insecurities?
- 2) Do you ever feel like prayer is a “private” thing? Why?
- 3) How can prayer help you grow in your relationship with God? (communication, knowing God better)
- 4) Think about your life. What time is good for you to pray? (in the morning when you’re not sleepy, with your family at the dinner table, etc.)
- 5) Is there ever a time when we cannot pray? (no)
- 6) Can you remember a time when you or someone-you-know life or circumstance was changed because of God’s answering prayer? If so, please share!
- 7) How can we pray throughout our day?
- 8) Discuss ACTS that the students read about in the lesson. Go through each letter and what it means. How can ACTS help them stay focused during prayer?
- 9) Take the last few minutes of class to encourage “prayer triggers” to help increase students prayer life. (See next page; copies will be in your teaching packet Sunday.)

**Finish with anything else they'd like to discuss (Go the extra mile) and then close the class in prayer.*

PRAYER “TRIGGERS”

Growing: *(These are few ideas to help make prayer a regular part of your daily life.)*

- Alarm / Trigger – use an alarm clock, timer, or other trigger (bell at school, red lights, airplane, etc.), to be a short time of prayer.
- Journal – Use one page a day to write down your prayers. Helps keep prayers focused, is an opportunity to see God more clearly, is an encouragement for the future, and helps to sort out life.
- Prayer List – Listing prayers helps “track” them. Recall God’s faithfulness.
 - Date of Request - Brief Description of Request - Answer(s) to the Request - Date of Answer
- Prayer Time – Make a specific time (and place) to pray.
- Meditate – Use a meditation *opener* and focus on God’s word. Empty out yourself and fill with God.
- Partner – Find someone to pray with or someone to hold you accountable to praying.
- Team – Ask several people to be praying for you as you commit to growing in prayer.
- Creative – Put action to prayer. Keep it lively.

Prayer Ideas: *(These are different ways of praying)*

- **Burning Prayers** – Write your prayers of confession on paper. Burn the piece of paper and read 1 John 1:8-9 after burning the prayers.
- **Prayer Chains** – Write your prayers on small sheets of paper and form them each day into paper chain. Hang the chain somewhere where you will see it. This is good for a family and use to talk about the strength that comes from prayers and family unity.
- **Sugar Cubes** – When you want to give something to God use this method. Take a sugar cube and a glass/bucket/pool of water. Hold the sugar cube in your hand and pray to God the thing you would like to give up. “Transfer” your prayer to the cube and then throw it into the water. It is now God’s and you have let it go.
- **Molding** – Get some play dough and form it as you pray. Maybe form yourself and as you pray about certain situations, form the clay into the mood in which you felt in that situation.
- **Candles** – Candles can be used in a number of ways: to symbolize the Holy Spirit, be a light to the world, hope in a time of darkness, etc. Light a candle and focus on the idea of light as you pray.
- **Map** – Draw a map of the places God has taken you through prayer, or of the places you would like God to take you through prayer.
- **Penny in Shoe** – Place a penny in your shoe. Each time you feel the penny throughout the day say a little prayer.
- **Rock in Shoe** – Put a small rock in your shoe. After it has burdened you enough take it out, hold it and pray about the things that have burdened you. “Transfer” your prayers to the rock and then throw the rock as far as you can away from you.
- **Knots** – Get a piece of string and tie several loose knots in it. Pray for those things that have got you “tied up” in life, and untie a knot each time. At the end of the prayer time the string will be knot free.

- **Round the Clock** – Commit to praying at the top of the hour for an entire day.
- **Without words** – Use some medium to express your prayers (paint, color, draw, dance, etc.) Read Romans 8:26-27 to help guide your prayer.
- **Ice** – Hold a piece as you pray for unjust things or “cold hearted” people. See how even the smallest of warmth melts the frozen ice. Know that God is a God of justice and can warm the hearts of anyone...including our own hearts.
- **Blessing Bracelet** – Take beads and place them on a string. Each time you place a bead on the string thank God for a blessing in your life. After you have finished praying, tie the string around your wrist/neck and continue to be mindful of God’s blessings.
- **Newspaper** – Cut out things from the paper that need praying for. Pray for one or two of the articles each day.
- **Prayer Walk** – Walk around an area that needs prayer. Kid’s room, business, bed, etc. and each time you make a lap pray for something specific.
- **Moving On** – Get a moving box and place in it all the things that are holding you back in life. Once the box is full get rid of the box – move on.
- **Balloon stomp** – Blow up balloons and pray for those things you want to “stomp out” in your life. Once you are done praying. Stomp on all the balloons.
- **Tree of Life** – Get a branch and stick it a flower pot. Commit to praying for healing or renewal in others lives. Write the prayers on different sizes of green paper. Tape the paper to the branch and watch your tree *grow*.
- **Cooking** – Spend time cooking something. As you add each ingredient pray for a specific item you would like to see grow/transform/complete/etc. Once the cooking is completed know that God uses all kinds of things to make new things.
- **Thirsty** – Set a certain time in the day that you will not drink anything. Make it an extended time. Then spend time praying that you will thirst for something (God’s love, holiness, justice, etc.). Recognize your physical thirstiness with your thirst for the something else. After praying, enjoy your favorite drink and know that God give us *living water*.
- **God Is...** - Make a list of all the things God is and give thanks for those things.
- **Shopping** – As you shop think about what you are buying and offer a prayer related to the item. Ex. Bread = Christ will be the bread of your life. Fish = how you might be a fisher of people. Etc.
- **Nature** – Find time to spend in nature. Give thanks to God for God’s creation and God’s continued work in creation.
- **Themes** – Take on a theme for the week and pray for that theme all week. Ex. Friends, family, justice, healing, moral choices, etc.
- **Everyday Things** – Pray while doing the everyday things. Brushing teeth, shower, driving to work, etc.
- **Expounding** - taking a known prayer, usually a familiar one, and adding to it.