


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

How to pray

Jesus teaches people about prayer; paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, from Matthew 6

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
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Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main point of the previous story: “Last time we read that Jesus was able to make a sick lady better and able to bring Jairus’ daughter back to life. Jesus has power over sickness and death. We also memorized a verse about Jesus’ power to take away our sin.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “John 1:29 — ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, ask: “Does God want us to talk to him? If you think God wants us to talk to him, stand up quickly now. Good, sit down. Does God hear us when we talk to him? If you think God hears us when we talk to him, stand up quickly now. Good, sit down. What is talking to God called? Correct, prayer.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To expend energy and learn about prayer.

Materials: None.

1. Say: “God wants us to talk to him about anything and everything. When we talk to God we can say ‘thank you.’ We can thank God for who he is and for the things he has given us. Let’s do that now. Think of something you want to thank God for. Go around the circle and when it is your turn, jump up, say ‘Thank you, God, for ...,’ name the thing you want to thank God for, and then sit down. Ready?”

2. Prompt as necessary so that the children are thanking God not just for things he has given them, but also for who he is and what he has done; e.g., “Thank you God for ... forgiveness, being holy, loving us, sending Jesus, etc.”

3. Repeat this exercise, but this time say: “When we pray to God we say ‘thank you’; we can also say ‘sorry.’ We can say ‘sorry’ to God when we do things we should not do, or when we don’t do something that we should have done. We can say ‘Sorry, God, for being angry’ or ‘Sorry, God, for not obeying’ or ‘Sorry, God, for lying.’ Think of something you want to say sorry to God for. Everyone starts with the words ‘Sorry, God, for ...’ Ready?”

4. Repeat this exercise one last time, but this time say: “When we pray to God we say ‘thank you’ and ‘sorry.’ We can also ask God, ‘Please help me’ and ‘Please help other people.’ We can ask: ‘Please, God, help me obey,’ or ‘Please, God, help people who are sick,’ or ‘Please, God, help people in Africa.’”

5. Play again, trying to get a variety of answers so the children ask for help for themselves, people they know, people in other countries, etc. Encourage them to think of things like God helping the poor, as well as people who do not know Jesus.

6. At the end of the activity, say: “We can talk to God and pray for all those things. We can pray about anything and everything. Where do you usually pray? Raise your hand if you pray in bed. Raise your hand if you pray at school. Raise your hand if you pray in church. Thank you, hands down. In our story today there are some people who pray in the middle of the street. Let’s find out why.”

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher so that this activity does not take too long.

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 222–227 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD2 track 14.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9–13, sets out two goals for petitionary prayer: first, to put the world right—"your kingdom come"—and second, to put your heart at rest—"your will be done." The first purpose is external. Through our petitions, God says we affect the circumstances of history (James 5:16–18). He will work justice in the world through our prayers (Luke 18:7–8). There are many things he says he will not give until we ask (James 4:2). When we do ask, he will give us above and beyond what we have asked for (Ephesians 3:20). Yet we also see that the second purpose of prayer is internal. Through our petitions, we receive peace and rest—a resting and trusting in God to care for our needs.

Jonathan Edwards in his sermon on Genesis 32 entitled, "The Way to Obtain the Blessing of God Is Not to Let Him Go Except He Bless Us," argues that prayer is not to press God repeatedly because we believe we deserve it. Often our prayer is motivated by a sense of what we have merited because of a good life. We say, "God, I have served you—now, you serve me!" Also, prayer is not to press God repeatedly because we are simply desperate out of inordinate desire. When our good things become ultimate things, we lose all inner contentment. There are some things that become so nonnegotiable to us that we can't imagine going on if we don't have them. So we pray out of pure anxiety and fear. Instead, Edwards argues, our duty is to press God in prayer because he calls on us to do it. It is the way God wants us to seek him and his good things. When we don't pray, we are robbing ourselves of our joy; we are blinding ourselves to the graciousness and goodness of God.

When we examine the Matthew 6:5–8 passage, we see that God also wants "secret," private prayer. The word "room" refers to an inner room—a storeroom in the inner part of the house, a room without windows. The issue here is motivation. Jesus is concerned about people who are regular at corporate prayer and corporate worship, but have no private prayer lives. A. H. McNeile wrote about this passage, "The secret of religion is religion in secret." He means that private prayer is the one thing you do when no one is watching, and therefore you won't do it out of duty or because you are caught up in excitement or peer pressure. No one sees your private prayer life, so it is one of the key indicators that your Christianity is inner and true and that your heart is beginning to rest in God as the reward or ultimate prize of your life. Jesus' teaching here is that the only "reward" for secret prayer is a relationship with God—God himself is the "reward."

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand more about prayer and to become familiar with the Lord’s Prayer.

Materials: 11 large cards, each with one clause of the Lord’s Prayer written/printed on it (see table below); crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: “Jesus teaches us how to pray. The prayer you heard in the story is actually a version of the Lord’s Prayer; you may have heard it in church. We are going to learn that prayer. I have written it on these cards.”
2. Put the cards upside down in a pile in the center of the circle. Make sure they are in the correct order. Ask the children in turn to go to the center, collect the card at the top of the pile, return to their seat, and then hold up the card for all to see. Everyone should read aloud together what is written on the card.
3. Once all the cards have been collected and you have therefore read the prayer aloud together once, say that you are going to read the prayer aloud together again, but this time you are going to pause in between some cards to ask questions to help understanding. Remind everyone to hold their card so that everyone can see it. Ask the questions in the table below after the appropriate card is read.

CARD	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS
Our Father in heaven,	Who are we praying to? Stand up if “our Father” means we are praying to God. Sit down. Stand up if we pray “our Father” because God loves us. Sit down. Stand up if we pray “our Father in heaven” because God is ruling over everything and he is powerful and he is King. Sit down. Let’s read the next card.
hallowed be your name,	Does this mean that we should treat God and God’s name as a little bit important or very important? Say the answer all together. Good, next card.
your kingdom come,	Who is the King? Say it all together. Correct, Jesus. We are praying here that people will treat Jesus as King, that his kingdom will grow, and that one day the whole world will be under his rule. Let’s read the next card.
your will be done,	Whose will do we usually want to do, ours or God’s? Say it together. Let’s read the next card.
on earth as it is in heaven.	Let’s read the next card.
Give us today our daily bread.	Raise your hand if you think this means we are asking God for food and nothing else. Raise your hand if you think this means we are asking God for things we need. Thank you, hands down. Who knows what we need better, us or God? Say the answer together. Good, next card.
And forgive us our sins,	When we say we are sorry for our sins, does God forgive us? Yes or no? Say it together. Good, next card.
as we also forgive	And the next card.
everyone who sins against us.	When anyone hurts us or wrongs us, must we forgive them? Yes or no? Say it together. Good, next card.

CARD	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS
And lead us not into temptation,	And the next card.
but deliver us from evil.	What is temptation? Correct, it is when we want to do something wrong. Here we are asking God to keep us safe from anything that we might do wrong, and to keep us safe from evil.

4. Ask half the children to put down their cards so no one can see them. With only half the lines visible, recite the prayer again.

5. Switch so the other half of the cards are hidden and repeat.

6. Collect and put away the cards.

7. If you have time or as an alternative, you may want to give each child a piece of paper with a copy of the Lord's Prayer printed on it, have them glue it onto colored construction paper, and then decorate it.

8. Give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: "You can see a picture on your paper of some people praying and their thoughts as they pray. I'll read them aloud. As I read, circle the thoughts that please God about prayer and cross out the ones that do not please God."

9. Read the thought bubbles aloud and then say: "Raise your hand if you circled any of the thought bubbles. Good, no one should have circled any of the thought bubbles. God does not want us to pray with long words or for other people to see us. How does God want us to pray?"

10. Get answers like: talking to someone you really love, using your normal voice, etc.

11. Say: "On your paper you can also see the words of the Lord's Prayer. You can see that there is a box leading out of each line of the prayer with some words for you to fill in. I will read the line from the Lord's Prayer and then read the sentence in the box. The word you fill in to finish the sentence is up to you; it is something you want to pray for."

12. Read each sentence in the Lord's Prayer followed by the corresponding sentence in the box; e.g., "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, I can pray to God because he is ... Fill in your answer in the box."

13. Ask a few children to share their answer and then move on to the next line.

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles of 11 children, each with a teacher and a set of cards. This means that each child will have a card and each teacher can then help their circle understand and learn the Lord's Prayer.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “Jesus teaches us to pray. The prayer he teaches us is known as the Lord’s Prayer.”

Say: “We pray to God, praising him and thanking him and asking that his will be done. We also ask God for what we need and tell him we are sorry for our sins.”

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray the Lord’s Prayer aloud together.

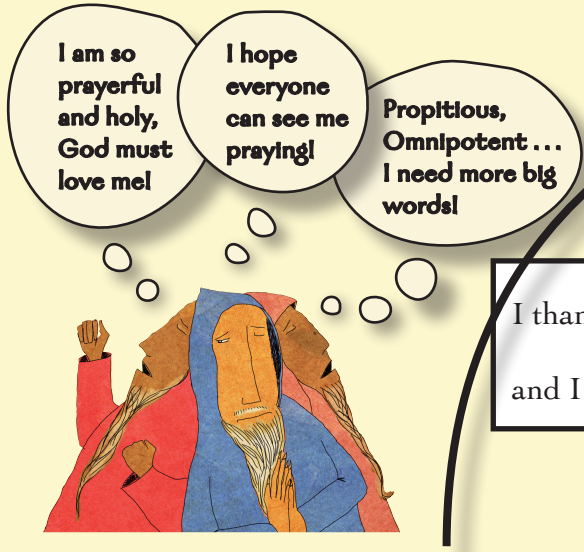
Ask the children to look at what they wrote on their handout and in any order, in short sentences, to pray those things aloud. At the end, say: “Thank you, God, because you listen to us and you hear our prayers. Amen.”

To Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Say: “Instead of memorizing a verse, please memorize and pray the Lord’s Prayer.”

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents.



I can pray to God because he is _____

I pray for _____ who do not know Jesus, that they will see him as King.

I thank God for _____
and I ask God for _____

I ask God to forgive me for _____

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 And forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Jesus in the Story



What did you discover about Jesus from this story?

Jesus

To Learn at Home

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Notes for parents: From the story we learned the Lord's Prayer. We also learned how we are to pray to God, praising him, thanking him, and asking that his will be done. Please help your child to learn and pray the Lord's Prayer.