

What Is Prayer?

Quarter 7 • Lesson 1

Focus on Spiritual Formation

- 1. Connecting:** Do an activity about the importance of listening.
- 2. Teaching:** Talk to God anytime, anywhere (James 5:13; Mark 1:35; 1 John 5:14).
- 3. Responding:** Practice praying with different actions.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse Poster
- Student Pages
- *The Action Bible*, image of Jesus praying
- Crayons

Unit Introduction: This unit will teach children basic information about praying to God. It will give them ideas and tools they need to feel confident talking to God. Still, the best way for them to develop a habit of praying regularly to God is to see prayer modelled. Encourage families to pray with their children, not only during the next 4 weeks, but also whenever possible. It is also important for the children to observe you praying. Consider adding a prayer at the beginning or end of every lesson. You may even choose to make this part of your routine with the children. The more the children see and listen to others praying, the more they will be encouraged to pray as they grow up.

Before teaching the lesson that follows, prepare a short, simple prayer song. The words are: "Good morning, Lord! Thank You for this day. I am quiet and listening. I want to know Your way." You will use this song in the Teaching section of this lesson. You can create your own melody or use one you know. Children love to sing, and it is a great way to talk to God.

Teacher Devotion

*Here is what we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer.
If we ask anything in keeping with what he wants, he hears us.*
1 John 5:14

We know from the Bible that Jesus prayed often. Jesus was always in communication with His Father to know His will. We know from the Bible that Jesus often went away to spend time alone with God. Jesus knew the Father heard Him when He prayed. This Bible verse assures us that when we come to God in prayer, He hears us.

Prayer is a way to communicate your joys, your needs, your concerns, and anything else you want to talk to God about. God hears your thoughts. But just like your family and friends like to talk to you about what is happening in your life, God also listens to you when you speak to Him. When you pray, it is also important to listen to what your Father wants to tell you! He will speak to your heart as He guides, corrects, encourages, and strengthens you. Prayer is an important part of being a Christian because it helps you to build a relationship with God. Take a moment to talk to God about what is going on in your thoughts and in your heart, and know that He hears you!

Family Connection: Encourage families to pray with their children each night before going to bed. Praying will bring peace before sleeping.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Do an activity about the importance of listening.

Welcome the children, and as they enter, ask them to form a line.

I am so glad you are all here today! I will ask you some simple questions. You can call out "Yes" or "No" to each question.

- Do you like to talk?
- Do you like for people to ignore you when you talk?
- Do you like it when people listen and care about what you are saying?

You probably want to talk to someone who cares about what you say and will listen to you. Let's see how it feels when you talk to someone who does not listen to you.

Start at 1 end of the line. Ask the child at the end of the line to stand next to the child at the front of the line. Ask the rest of the children at this end of the line to form a new line behind this child. Send the children 1 at a time until there are 2 lines with the same number of children. Designate the first line as Line 1 and the new line as Line 2. Have the children in both lines turn so that the Line 1 children are facing the children in Line 2.

The child who is across from you is your partner. The children in Line 1 will be the talkers and the children in Line 2 will be the listeners. The talkers will talk about anything they want. This may include what they like to do, the weather, their families, their friends, or what they like best about coming to church.

There is a problem, though! The Line 2 children will not actually be listening to the talkers. The Line 2 children will stay where they are, but they will look around, talk to themselves, sing, or do other things to ignore the talkers. Ready? Begin!

You may need to repeat the list of things the children can talk about if the talkers are not talking. Give a signal or ask the children to stop talking after about 30 seconds.

Now the Number 2 children will talk, and the Number 1 children will not listen. Remember, the Number 2 children can talk about anything they want, but the Number 1 children will not listen to them.

Repeat the list of things to talk about if needed. Give a signal or ask the children to stop talking after about 30 seconds.

Wow! That was really sad to watch each group talk while the other group ignored them!

- **How did you feel when you were talking and your partner did not listen to you?**

Allow 3–4 children to respond.

It is not a nice feeling when others ignore you when you are talking. You may have felt angry, sad, or upset. When someone listens to us, it makes us feel valued and respected.

People can be distracted and often do not really listen to what is said. Answer these questions quietly in your mind.

Read the following questions, pausing briefly after each for the children to answer to themselves.

- **Are there times when you do not really listen to what your teacher is saying?**
- **Are there times when you do not really listen to what your family members are saying?**
- **Are there times when you do not really listen to what your friend is saying?**

People do not always listen well to others, but did you know that God always hears you when you talk to Him? You cannot see Him, but God is big and awesome. He always hears you when you talk to Him. He not only hears you, but He really listens to you and cares about you.

2. Teaching: Talk to God anytime, anywhere (James 5:13; Mark 1:35; 1 John 5:14).

Teacher Tip: For those children whose families follow a religion other than Christianity, it is important to remind them that you pray to the One True God. This is who the children will pray to during the lesson.

*Optional: If possible, share the image from *The Action Bible*.*

Today you will learn about prayer. Prayer is a way of spending time with the One True God. It is important you know and believe that God listens to you when you talk to Him. You can also be quiet and listen so God can speak to your heart.

Let us pray.

God, I thank You for each child here today. I thank You that Your children can talk to You anywhere and at any time. I praise You because You are a loving God and You hear us when we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Let's listen to our memory verse for the next 4 weeks. It says:

Read this verse directly from your Bible. If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

Here is what we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer.

If we ask anything in keeping with what he wants, he hears us.

1 John 5:14

- **What does this verse tell us God will do when we pray?**

He will hear us.

I will read it again. This time, put your hand by your ear when I read the part about God hearing.

Repeat the verse and put your hand by your ear when you say, "He hears us."

This verse says that God hears us. This is an important part of prayer. When you hear me say the words, "He hears you," point up to the sky with me. Let's practice.

Say the phrase, "He hears you" and have the children point the sky.

When Jesus lived on earth, He showed us how important prayer is. Even though He is God the Son, He still knew it was important to talk with God the Father. Listen to what Jesus would often do.

*It was very early in the morning and still dark.
Jesus got up and left the house.
He went to a place where he could be alone. There he prayed.*
Mark 1:35

Jesus showed us that everyone needs to spend time talking with and listening to God the Father.

- **What do you think you can talk to God about?**

Allow the 2–3 children to respond.

Teacher Tip: There are no wrong answers to this question. However, if children mention anything that goes against what the Bible says, gently tell them that God wants us to pray to ask for help as well as to thank and praise Him.

You all had good ideas. You can talk to God about anything. You can talk to God about happy things or sad things. You can talk to God about your problems. You can talk to God about things you do not understand because when you come to God in prayer, He hears you (point up).

Listen to this verse in the Bible about prayer.

*Is anyone among you in trouble? Then that person should pray.
Is anyone among you happy?
Then that person should sing songs of praise.*
James 5:13

This Bible verse says you should pray to God when you are in trouble. You can talk to God anytime because He hears you (point up). This Bible verse says you can sing songs of praise when you are happy. When you are in trouble and when you are happy are opposites. You can talk to God at any time. You can talk to God when things are hard.

You can talk to God when things are good because He hears you (point up).

There are many ways to pray. The verse that I just read said you can even sing your prayers. Singing praise is a way to talk to Jesus. You can turn any words into a song. You can say, "Thank You, Jesus." You can also sing, "Thank You, Jesus."

Demonstrate this by singing the words "Thank You, Jesus" to a melody.

Now you try it. Say, "Thank You, Jesus."

Pause for the children to say, "Thank You, Jesus."

Now sing, "Thank You, Jesus."

Pause for the children to sing, "Thank You, Jesus."

It is easy to turn words into a song. Here is a simple prayer you can sing to God when you wake up each morning.

**Good morning, Lord.
Thank You for this day.
I am quiet and listening.
I want to know Your way.**

You can sing this prayer every day when you wake up. When you start your day with God, it can help you to focus on Him throughout your day. You can sing out loud or you can sing it quietly in your thoughts. Let's stand up and form a circle. Let's march around in a circle and sing this prayer together. It is very simple, and you will learn it quickly. Listen to the words and sing along as you learn it.

Lead the children in marching and singing the simple prayer. Continue marching and singing until the children remember the words. After they have learned the song, have the children sit down again.

When you wake up this week, remember to sing this prayer to God. You can sing out loud for a voice prayer or use your brain for a thought prayer. Thought prayers are silent prayers because you talk to God in your thoughts. Sometimes it may not be safe to pray out loud, but you can always pray in your thoughts because He hears you (point up).

As you read each of the prayer actions that follow, show the children what each one looks like.

There are different prayer actions to help you focus when you pray.

You can fold your hands and close your eyes.

You can pray with your eyes open.

You can raise your hands.

You can kneel.

These are prayer actions that might help you focus when you talk and listen to God.

There are not rules that say you must pray only 1 way. You can pray anytime and anywhere. You can pray in your thoughts when you are walking down the street or playing with friends. The important thing is that you talk to God.

3. Responding: Practice praying with different actions.

Teacher Tip: If any of the children in your class are not Christians, remind them that the prayers you are going to pray are only to the One True God.

Let's use some prayer actions as we pray to the One True God. First, you can fold your hands and close your eyes. This helps you to focus on Jesus because you do not see what is happening around you. Let's practice this way to pray. With your hands folded and your eyes closed, listen to me and repeat the words I say when I pause.

God, thank You for Your love (pause).

Thank You for sending Your Son to die on the cross (pause).

Thank You for giving me life here on earth (pause).

I praise You (pause).

You are the Creator of heaven and earth (pause)!

I thank You and praise You, Lord (pause).

In Jesus' name, amen (pause).

You can open your eyes now. This was a prayer of thanksgiving and praise! We thanked God for all of the good things He has given us.

Teacher Tip: If you live in a place where it is unsafe for children to pray out loud, remind them that they can pray silently in their thoughts when it is not safe to pray with their voices.

Let's all say another prayer of thanksgiving and praise. This time you will say a silent prayer in your thoughts. Let's lift our hands up to God for this prayer. You may keep your eyes open. Talk to God in your thoughts. Thank and praise Him because He loves you. We will all be silent for a few seconds as we say a silent prayer of thanks and praise to God.

Allow about 20 seconds for the children to say silent prayers.

God is your friend, and you can talk to Him anytime and anywhere. It is also important to respect Him as the One True God. One way to show Him your respect is to kneel. Kneeling helps you remember He is the Creator of all things. Sometimes people in the Bible lie facedown on the ground to pray. This shows respect for how awesome God is. Choose whether you want to bow or lie facedown as we say a prayer of respect. Repeat each line of the prayer when I pause.

God, I bow before You (pause).

You are an awesome God (pause).

I respect You (pause).

I love You (pause).

I know You hear me when I talk to You (pause).

In Jesus' name, amen!

Let's stand now. Remember, you can talk to God anytime and anywhere. There are many ways to pray. You can pray with your voice or in your thoughts. You can sing a prayer to God. You can pray with your eyes closed or with your eyes open. You can pray kneeling, standing, sitting, walking, playing or lying down to sleep. Prayer is talking to God like you would talk to a friend.

Let's sing the prayer song you learned today. You can sing this prayer to God every day.

Good morning, Lord.

Thank You for this day.

I am quiet and listening.

I want to know Your way.

Our memory verse reminds us that when we pray, God hears us!

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

Here is what we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer.

If we ask anything in keeping with what he wants, he hears us.

1 John 5:14

Clap your hands in rhythm as you read the verse. Then repeat the rhythm as you read the verse with the children 3 times.

End class by saying this blessing, based on 1 John 5:14, over the children.

Blessing: May you know that you can come to God in prayer. May you talk to God anytime and anywhere, knowing that He hears you.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

"Raise a Hallelujah" by Bethel Music https://youtu.be/JvXBf_dEiHU