

Prayer

(A 6-Week Study for Ages 7-13)

Throughout the six weeks, foster an environment of openness and encouragement, where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, experiences, and prayer requests. Encourage them to develop a habit of prayer that they can carry with them beyond the Sunday school lessons.

Week 1: Introduction to Prayer

Icebreaker: Play a game where students share one thing they are thankful for and then lead the group in a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

Discussion: What is prayer? Why do we pray?

Activity: Create a "Prayer Box" where students can write down their prayer requests throughout the week and place them in the box. At the end of the session, pray together over the requests in the box.

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord's Prayer)

Homework: Encourage students to pray before bedtime each night, thanking God for something specific from their day.

Use "9 Tips for Teaching Kids to Pray" on pages 8-9 in this lesson and future lessons to help make your teaching points.

Week 2: Learning How to Pray

Icebreaker: Have students pair up and practice saying short prayers for each other's needs or desires (e.g., "God, please help Sarah with her math test tomorrow.").

Discussion: Different ways to pray - silently, aloud, with words, with thoughts.

Activity: Prayer bead bracelets - Provide beads and strings for students to create their own prayer bead bracelets. Explain how each bead can represent a different prayer topic (e.g., family, friends, school, world).

Scripture: Philippians 4:6 (Do not be anxious about anything...)

Homework: Have students use their prayer bead bracelets each day to guide their prayers, touching each bead and praying for the corresponding topic.

Week 3: Praying for Others

Icebreaker: Share a story about a time when praying for someone else made a difference.

Discussion: Why is it important to pray for others? How can we remember to pray for others regularly?

Activity: Prayer chain - Provide strips of paper for students to write down prayer requests for others. Link the strips together to create a paper chain, then spend time praying together over the requests.

Scripture: James 5:16 (Pray for one another...)

Homework: Encourage students to choose one person outside of their family to pray for each day this week and write down their prayers in a prayer journal.

Week 4: Public Praying

Icebreaker: Practice leading the group in a simple, short prayer together.

Discussion: How do you feel when you pray in front of others? Why is public prayer important?

Activity: Group prayer skits - Divide students into small groups and have each group create a short skit demonstrating a public prayer scenario (e.g., praying before a meal, praying at church). Afterwards, discuss what went well and what could be improved.

Scripture: Matthew 18:20 (For where two or three are gathered in my name...)

Homework: Have students practice leading a prayer at home with their family or with a small group of friends.

Week 5: Listening in Prayer

Icebreaker: Play a game where students take turns whispering a short prayer to the person next to them, who then repeats it aloud to the group. Discuss the importance of listening to God in prayer.

Discussion: How can we listen to God when we pray? What are some distractions that might prevent us from listening?

Activity: Listening prayer walk - Take a walk outside and encourage students to listen for God's voice in nature. Afterwards, gather to share what they heard or felt during the walk.

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:11-12 (God speaks to Elijah in a gentle whisper...)

Homework: Encourage students to spend time in silence each day, listening for God's voice and writing down any thoughts or impressions in their prayer journal.

Week 6: The Power of Prayer

Icebreaker: Share a personal testimony of answered prayer.

Discussion: Examples of answered prayer in the Bible and in our lives today. Reflect on the power of prayer to bring about change.

Activity: Prayer walk for the community - Take a prayer walk around the neighborhood or community, praying for specific needs and concerns.

Scripture: James 5:16 (The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.)

Closing: Encourage students to continue growing in their prayer lives, reminding them that God hears and answers their prayers.

9 Tips for Teaching Kids to Pray

Here are the basics of teaching children how to pray.

1. Help children talk to God.

Everyone—especially children—would find sitting down to prayer easier if we could find a way to forget our notions of “correct prayer methods” and just start talking. To do this, avoid focusing on form in prayer. Rather, model for your children an easy, comfortable way to simply talk to God as you’d talk to a friend. Urge children to talk to God just as they’d talk to anyone else. They can tell God about their day, express their fears, and even be a little mad if they want to.

2. There’s nothing too big—or too small—for God.

It’s true; God can help us face the hardest moments in our lives. God is also there to share in our smaller moments, too. He wants to know how our day went. He enjoys hearing that the rainbow we saw early in the morning made us smile, and that the bully on the playground scares us.

3. Anything is okay to talk to God about.

Don’t discourage a child from including a song from Frozen in her prayer. Let her thank God for her favorite movie and share what’s in her heart.

4. Making prayers relevant to children’s lives enables them to grow in prayer.

Because kids have a strong tendency to view the world in terms of me, my, and mine, capitalize on this very normal stage of development by focusing prayer on kids’ everyday concerns. For example, many adults make the mistake of asking young children to pray for church missionaries. Chances are kids don’t understand what they’re actually asking God for. As a result, God becomes more remote. A better idea would be to focus kids’ prayer requests on asking God to heal Damon’s chickenpox, giving thanks for Jasmine’s new puppy, or asking for help for Alex, who may find it difficult to sit through class quietly.

5. God listens to ALL prayers.

God is always there, willing and eager to listen to what we have to say. But kids aren’t always so sure; sometimes they need proof. So give it to them. The best way to help children realize that God truly listens is to point out answered prayers. Did you ask for the quick recovery of Andi’s cold? When she’s feeling better, thank God for answering your prayers.

6. Make answered prayer visual

by creating a prayer wall where kids write their prayer requests on one side of a divider. When the prayer is answered, move the prayer request to the other side. Thank God for each answered prayer.

7. Help children understand that God may answer prayers in several ways.

God may answer exactly as children requested. But God may also answer in a different way, wait to answer, or say no. Help children see these answers to prayer also.

8. The right place is any place.

The Bible describes a variety of ways to pray: kneeling, standing, lifting hands, and even lying on a bed. Encourage children to pray whenever-and wherever-they want to. Even if it means a quick “Please make Janie all right” on the playground when a friend is hit with a ball.

9. Prayer is never inappropriate.

Especially when it comes straight from the heart. In the end, that’s all you really need to teach children to help them communicate with our God who’s always listening.

HOW TO PRAY

ADORATION

A

Adoration is deep love and respect.

Adoration gets to the heart of who we are. To truly worship God, we must let go of our self-worship. We must be willing to humble ourselves before God and surrender every part of our lives to His control.

CONFESSION

C

Confession is to acknowledge sin to God.

"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

THANKSGIVING

T

Thanksgiving is the expression of gratitude, especially to God.

Thanking God specifically for all He has done for you.

SUPPLICATION

S

Supplication is humbly and earnestly presenting your requests to the Lord.

God-Centered, God-Commanded, Others, and Ourselves.