

Grow Series: Prayer

Welcome Question

“When do you pray?”

Recap From Last Week *(Use this section only if teaching this lesson with the series)*

This is our last week of our Grow Series, where we learn how to grow as a follower of Jesus. We've talked about worship, the Lord's Supper, baptism and last week we talked about Community. Community is all about loving Jesus and loving others. In community we help one another do that and we can also care for our city. Does anyone remember our verse from last week? *(give kids a chance to say it)* “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:37-40

Large Group Lesson

This week we are talking about prayer! Prayer is something we all know about and it's a very, very important part of being a Christ follower. Today we're going to answer a few questions about prayer and then do a really cool prayer activity.

What is prayer?

How many of you like to talk? I know quite a few of you are big talkers. Prayer is talking to God. It's telling Him what's going on, asking for help, thanking and praising him and seeking forgiveness. Prayer is also about listening to God. Sometimes we talk too much about what we want and fail to listen to what God is telling us.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 says, “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the LORD, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*”

Why do we pray?

God already knows what is going to happen, He has already gone before us. But He wants us to talk to him because He wants a RELATIONSHIP with us. Think about your best friend. If you never talked with them, hung out with them or even looked at them, are they really your best friend? No. God wants to be our best friend. He wants us to talk with him and tell him our worries, our fears, and even funny things that happen to us. We can talk to God about everything!

Here's what we know about prayer

1. **God wants us to know Him:** He created us for a relationship with him. He wants to be our best friend!
2. **God really does answer prayer.** God in his sovereignty chooses to use our prayers to accomplish his purposes, his will. So, God has ordained that certain things would happen in response to our prayer. Basically what we're asking in prayer matters! This is so cool and should cause us to pray without ceasing or stopping!
3. **God loves us through prayer:** We get to know God through prayer and He loves us through it. We feel closer to Him and that means we feel His love even greater.
4. **We love God through prayer:** When we worship God through prayer, we tell Him we love him. We thank Him for everything He has done.

Sometimes it can be hard to come up with the right words. We don't always know what to say, but the Bible says the Holy Spirit speaks for us! Romans 8:26, "*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*" God gave us the Holy Spirit to make it even easier to talk to him!

When can we pray?

So, when can we pray? The answer: All the time! Prayer is not supposed to be just before dinner, bed and at church. We are to pray and talk to God all the time. Prayer is about you and God. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "pray without ceasing", in other words don't stop praying. You can pray in the car on your way to school, at school, in a bathroom, in your own room, you can pray with friends, with adults, with strangers even. All the time!

What do we pray for?

We can pray anytime and we can pray for anything! Philippians 4:6-7 says, "*do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*" God wants it all! But, if you need help finding a way to pray, I'll teach you by using your own hand:

Thumb: Praise God

Pointer: Confess your sins- tell him how you've messed up and ask forgiveness

Middle: Thank God

Ring: Pray for others

Pinky: Pray for yourself

Palm: Close

That's just one way to help guide you through your prayer. Let's go over it one more time.

To help you understand all the ways you can pray, we're going to rotate through Prayer Stations. *(Explain all the prayer stations before they begin)*

Prayer Stations

(Break children into smaller groups, help rotate between each station. If they finish all the stations, they can go quietly back to their seats and pray until everyone is finished)

1. **Praise Wall:** Instruct each child to write or draw your praise to God. Tell him why you love Him and why He deserves praise.
2. **Forgiveness Station:** *(Using washable marker)* Have each child write a sin or struggle they have on their hand. Ask them to pray to God and ask forgiveness for that sin and then they can wipe/wash the sin away.
3. **Thank God:** Give each child a post-it note and help them write one thing they want to thank God for.
4. **Healing Wall:** Each child will take a band-aid and write the name of a person they know who needs healing. Pray for that person as they put the bandaid on the wall.
5. **Burden Basket:** Each child will take a rock and write a worry or fear they have. Then they will give God that burden in prayer and place the rock in the basket.
6. **"Rest" Room:** Children will practice listening to God in this area. They will sit quietly for a few moments and listen to what God is telling them.
7. **Map Prayer:** Have children choose a place on a map. Circle it and then pray that people in that country would know Jesus as their Savior and for missionaries to go there.
8. **Prayers for our City:** Children will pray for our city and write one word for what they hope God will do in (your city).

Close the time in Prayer Stations with prayer.

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Small Group Questions

1. Ask them what they thought about the prayer stations.
 - a. Which one they liked the most? The least?
 - b. How can they do this at home? At school?
2. Why does God want us to pray to Him? *(so we can have a relationship with Him)*
3. Does God like it when we pray to Him? *(Yes, it helps us learn more about Him)*
4. When can we pray to Him? *(all the time)*
5. What are some things we can talk about with God when we pray? *(Allow for answers)*
6. What is the hand prayer? *(go over with them)*
 - **Thumb:** Praise God
 - **Pointer:** Confess your sins- tell him how you've messed up and ask forgiveness
 - **Middle:** Thank God
 - **Ring:** Pray for others
 - **Pinky:** Pray for yourself
 - **Palm:** Close

Bible Challenge:

Review last week's verse and introduce this week's verse. Practice saying it together.

This week's Memory Verse:

"Lord, hear me when I call; have mercy and answer me." Psalm 27:7

Last Week's Verse: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-40*

Prayer:

Close out your time in prayer.

If time allows, return to Large Group. Choose one child to share what they learned for Large Group Recap.