

Hands-On Prayer for Kids

Welcome Question

“When do you pray?”

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 some really cool prayer activities.

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. There are lots of distractions that can keep us from hearing what God wants us to hear. Elijah in 1 Kings 19, knew that when he waited for God on a mountain:

There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” 10 He said, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” 11 And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.
1 Kings 19:9-13

God wasn’t in the strong wind, he wasn’t in the earthquake, and God wasn’t in the fire. God was in the low whisper. Sometimes we want God to be in a loud booming voice, but he comes as a low whisper, one we have to stop and listen for. 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 and listen 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, fears, and even funny things. 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 matter! 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! To help you understand all the ways you can pray, we’re going to do a few prayer exercises.

I’m going to lead you through these exercises, some will be challenging and some will be easy. After the exercise, your small group leader will talk to you about what you experienced.

Break into small groups, have each group sit in a circle. Lead them through the prayer exercise, allowing the small group leaders to discuss after the exercise is complete.

Exercise #1: Listening Prayer*

Our first exercise is about listening to God. Do you know how a cucumber becomes a pickle? It has to sit and soak. That’s what we’re about to do, become pickles. We have to sit and soak up what God wants us to hear.

- Ask kids to think about their favorite name for God.
- Ask them what they want most from God.
- Tell them to sit quietly for three minutes and listen to what God has to tell you. Focus on breathing and if you get distracted say your favorite name for God in your head to help you focus.
- After three minutes, allow the small group leader to lead discussion.

Exercise #2: Doodle Prayer*

The next exercise is about praying for others without words. It’s called a Doodle Prayer.

- Ask your small group leader will give you a piece of paper and markers.
- Say: I’m going to read a verse & then play some music. I want you to think of one person to pray for. As the music plays doodle and draw while you pray for that person.
- Read Philippians 4:6-7, *“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*
- Play the song and allow the kids to draw and pray. After the song ends, allow the small group leader to lead discussion.

Exercise #3: Scripture Prayer*

This next exercise is all about listening to what God is telling you through His word.

- Tell the kids you will read a verse four times.
- The first time they will just rest and listen, the second time they will listen for a word or phrase that stands out, the third time they will picture what that word or

phrase is and the final time, they will respond and listen for what God is trying to tell them through that phrase. *(after the second reading, kids will tell their small group leader what they heard, saw, felt)*

- Jeremiah 29:11-13, “*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.*”
 - a. Read and kids will listen
 - b. Read and kids will listen for a word or phrase (small group response)
 - c. Read and kids will picture the word or phrase (small group response)
 - d. Read and kids will listen for God’s challenge to them. (small group discussion)
- After the fourth time, tell the small group leaders to discuss.

Exercise #4: Thankful Prayer*

Another aspect of prayer is being thankful to God.

- Ask kids what they felt the most grateful for today?
- Ask kids when they felt the most alive?
- Ask kids what has caused them to feel the most connected to God and others?
- Tell the kids to pray and thanks God for those things.
- Have each small group leader hand them a post it and marker. Tell them as music plays, for each kid to write a thank you note to God and place it on the poster. Then continue to thank God in prayer.
- When the song finishes, allow the small group leaders to lead discussion.

The small group leaders will take their last discussion and move into small group time.

Prayer: Small Group Questions

The large group leader will lead these exercises while kids are broken into small groups. Encourage your group to sit in a circle and away from anyone that would distract them.

Exercise #1: Listening Prayer

- What is your favorite name for God?
- What do you want most from God?
- Sit and listen to God in quiet for three minutes.
- Then discuss:
 - Did anyone hear from God during that exercise, if so what did you hear?
 - Was that a hard or easy exercise? Do we struggle with just sitting and listening?
 - How can we better listen to God?

Exercise #2: Doodle Prayer *(supplies: paper, markers for each child)*

The next exercise is about praying for others without words. It's called a Doodle Prayer.

- Give each child a piece of paper and markers.
- Kids will pray for a person and doodle and draw while music plays.
- After the music ends, ask these questions:
 - What did you think of that exercise?
 - Were you able to focus your prayer while you drew?
 - Who did you pray for and why? What does your picture mean?
 - How did God speak to you through this exercise?

Exercise #3: Scripture Prayer

This next exercise is all about listening to what God is telling you through His word.

- Jeremiah 29:11-13, *"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."*
 - a. Kids will listen to the verse.
 - b. Kids will listen for a word or phrase from the verse.
 - Ask kids what word or phrase stood out
 - c. Kids will picture the word or phrase from the verse.
 - Ask kids what they pictured from their word or phrase
 - d. Kids will listen for God's challenge to them.
 - Ask kids what God taught them from this verse.
 - Was this exercise difficult or easy?
 - What did it teach you about listening to God?

Exercise #4: Thankful Prayer *(supplies: one post-it & marker for each child)*

Another aspect of prayer is being thankful to God.

- What have you felt the most grateful for today?
- When have you felt the most alive?
- What has caused you to feel the most connected to God and others?
- Tell the kids to pray and thank God for those things.
- Give each child a post it and marker. As music plays, allow each kid to write a thank you note to God and place it on the poster. Then continue to thank God in prayer.
- When the song finishes, ask these questions:
 - What are you thankful to God for?
 - What have you felt most grateful for today? Why?
 - How often should we thank God?
 - What did God teach you through this exercise?

Small Group Discussion

1. Ask them what they thought about the prayer exercises.
 - Which one they liked the most? The least?
 - 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)*

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

Prayer:

Close out your time in prayer.